# History of Ancient Philosophy (12 ECTS credits)

## Prof. Maria Luisa Gatti

Module 1 (Semester 1) (6 ECTS credits)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to critically present the most important issues, periods, philosophers and texts of ancient thought.

The course content is divided into two modules as follows:

Module 1 aims first of all to critically introduce the problems, phases, exponents and the most significant writings of ancient philosophy, based on a direct approach to the texts, introducing students to the specific philosophical lexicon and to characterising themes and topics.

As a special focus, the course will critically analyse texts of great importance for ancient political thought, Plato’s *Statesman* and *Seventh Letter*, which will be studied paying particular attention to lexicon, problems and topics, with reference to the platonic political doctrines and the philosophical and cultural framework in which they fit. (Students can choose either text for the exam).

By the end of the course, students will be able to achieve the following objectives: knowledge of authors, trends, problems and the most significant works of ancient thought; the ability to read and critically interpret the different types of philosophical texts; the knowledge and use of tools and methods of ancient philosophical historiography; enrichment of philosophical lexicon and argumentative skills. In this way, they will acquire in-depth knowledge of the history of ancient philosophy and the relative methodology, enabling them to access master’s courses in the fields of philosophy, literature, history, education and communication.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1) *Problems of ancient thought on the basis of their history*

2) *The political* *thought of Plato in reference to “Statesman” and “Seventh Letter”*

***READING LIST***

- G. Reale, *Il pensiero antico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2001 (pp. 3-258; 293-312; 319-340; 349-355).

- Plato, *Politico*, Bompiani, Milan 2001 (or other editions on the market); or Plato, *Settima lettera*, Carocci, Rome 2020.

- Centrone, *Prima lezione di filosofia antica*, Laterza, Milan 2015 (any two chapters); orM. Migliori, A. Fermani (eds.)**,** *Filosofia**antica. Una prospettiva multifocale*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2020 (any two “Approfondimenti”, on pp. 545-577).

***TEACHING METHOD***

30 hours of frontal lectures.

Students will be notified in lectures and on Blackboard of specific seminars related to the course content.

Lectures will be supplemented with material relevant to the syllabus (PowerPoint presentations, texts, maps, short essays) which will be published on Blackboard. Students will have the opportunity to give presentations, write reports, and conduct in-depth studies, written, oral or digital on the various themes and materials (to replace parts of the exam, subject to agreement with the lecturer).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam on the texts on the reading list

The oral examination can be divided into a discussion on the general part (the indicated pages of Reale's textbook, *Il pensiero antico*), as well as any selected parts by Centrone, *Prima lezione di filosofia antica*, or by Migliori, Fermani (Eds.), *Filosofia antica*. The general part will include one additional question about either *Statesman* or *Seventh Letter* by Plato.

The final mark for Module 1 will be based on the average of the marks obtained for the following parts: 1) general part (with questions on the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, Stoicism and scepticism, and on the chapters chosen in one of the two texts for further reading); 2) *Statesman* or *Seventh Letter* by Plato. Any participation in seminars, written assignments or presentations will also count towards the exam.

For students on the year-long course, the mark for Module 1 (50%) will be added to the mark for Module 2 (50%) to calculate the final, average mark.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

As this is an introductory general course, related primarily to the early history of philosophy, there are no prerequisites.

Module 2 (advanced) (Semester 2, 6 ECTS credits)

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Module 2 aims to reconstruct ancient Greco-Roman thought, from a philosophical, political and religious perspective, focusing in particular on a period gaining increasing attention in scientific research and publications on ancient philosophers, namely the imperial period.

There will be two main focus areas. 1) The course will present themes, authors and works that characterise the philosophy of the imperial period in the Greco-Roman sphere, highlighting certain aspects in relation to Platonism. 2) There will be a particular focus on authors and texts that explore the relationship between philosophy, power and religion, especially in relation to the problems of the relationship between philosopher and king, and between politics, philosophy and theology, in the multifaceted late-ancient context.

By the end of the course, students will be able to achieve the following objectives: knowledge of the problems, thinkers and most important works of the imperial period in the Greco-Roman context, with characterising vocabulary and arguments; knowledge of philosophers and texts concerning the link between philosophy, politics and religion. They will acquire the ability to read and interpret the texts of ancient philosophers, as well as to use the most up-to-date tools and methods of ancient philosophical historiography; they will expand their philosophical lexicon in relation to Greek and Latin and learn to explain and use specific argumentational strategies. In this way, they will gain fundamental knowledge of the history of ancient philosophy, with a focus on thought in the imperial and late-ancient periods and on philosophy, politics and theology, that will support their transition to the master's degree classes in philosophical, literary, historical-political, theological, educational and communicative fields.

***COURSE CONTENT***

1) *Greco-Roman themes, movements and thinkers in the imperial age*

2) *Philosophy, politics and religion: Problems, authors and texts*

***READING LIST***

G. Reale, *Il pensiero antico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2001 (pp. 341-345; 375-381; 386-397; 413-442; 445-477; 484-485).

R. Chiaradonna (ed.), *Filosofia tardoantica*, Carocci, Rome 2012 (any chapter); or S. Gastaldi, *Introduzione alla storia del pensiero politico antico*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2008 (any of the last three chapters, pp. 189-268).

Any three of the following:

Seneca, *La clemenza,* Rusconi, Milan 2017 (or Libri dell’Arco, Rimini 2022).

Filone di Alessandria, *L’erede delle cose divine*, Rusconi 1994 (a PDF version is available on request).

Plutarco, *La fortuna o la virtù di Alessandro*, in Idem, *Tutti i “Moralia”*, Bompiani, Milan 2017, pp. 610-643.

Giuliano Imperatore, *Al filosofo Temistio*, in Idem, *Lettere e discorsi*, Bompiani, Milan 2022, pp. 470-493; or in Idem, *Alla madre degli dei e altri discorsi*, F. L. Valla/Mondadori, Milan 2013, pp. 5-39.

***TEACHING METHOD***

30 hours of frontal lectures. Students will be notified in lectures and on Blackboard of specific seminars related to the course content.

Lectures will be supplemented with material relevant to the syllabus (PowerPoint slides, texts, short essays) which will be published on Blackboard. Students will have the opportunity to give presentations, write reports, and conduct in-depth studies, written, oral or digital on the various themes and materials (to replace parts of the exam, subject to agreement with the lecturer).

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam on the texts on the reading list

The general part, based on Reale's textbook *Il pensiero antico*, on the specified pages (with additions in the PPT, available on Blackboard), will also include: any of the three works indicated (supplemented by PPT presentations and short essays); Chiaradonna (ed.), *Filosofia tardoantica* (any one chapter), or Gastaldi, *Introduzione alla storia del pensiero politico antico* (any one of the indicated chapters).

The final mark for Module 2 will be based on the average of the marks obtained for the following parts: 1) general part (with questions on the Middle Stoa, Neo-Aristotelianism, Neostoicism, Philo of Alexandria, Middle Platonism, Neopythagoreanism; Neoplatonism); 2) any three texts chosen from among the four indicated; any one chapter chosen from the Chiaradonna text or the Gastaldi text. Any participation in seminars or additional assignments such as essays or presentations (as a substitute for parts of the exam, subject to agreement with the lecturer) will also count towards the final mark.

NB: For students on the year-long course, the mark for Module 2 will count for 50% of the final mark. Therefore, for students on the year-long course in History of Ancient Philosophy, there will be a single final mark based on the average of the marks for the two modules (50% for Module 1 + 50% for Module 2).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

As this is the second module of an introductory general course, there are no prerequisites.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.