The course "C.3-6. Introduction to Greek Philosophy"

General

This course offers a comprehensive socio-analytical and cultural-historical reconstruction of ancient Greek thought, focusing on the genesis of pre-philosophical wisdom and its transition to specialized philosophy.

Using the fourfold structure of wisdom — divided into

- informative (epistemology, logic and mathematics),

- pre- or extraconstitutive (theology, mystery religions and the theory of Ideas),

- constitutive (natural philosophy and the sub-physics of humanity, history and medicine) and

- normative philosophy (henology, ethics and politics) — the course reveals how ancient humanity understood the cosmos.

From the archaic cosmology of the Milesians and Pythagorean numerical harmony to Socratic conceptualism, Platonic ideocentrism and Aristotelian categories, the course demonstrates how the unravelling of the interaction between physis (nature) and nomos (law), fanera (visible facts) and afana (invisible principles), as well as the cosmic law of hubris and nemesis, definitively shaped Western foundational inquiry.

Summary

1: Sophio-Analysis, the Structure of Wisdom and the Cultural-Historical Framework

The course formulates a fundamental distinction between "philosophy" in the broad sense (general cultural development and emancipation) and in the narrow, technical sense (specialized philosophy, introduced by Pythagoras). To understand the origins of thought, the course uses sofio-analysis, a three-stage approach consisting of sofiography (description of phenomena of wisdom), sofiology (analysis of the substantive structure of wisdom) and philosophy (epistemological and axiological evaluation).

The universal structure of wisdom is clarified through a hiero-analytical interpretation of the myth of Narcissus. Within chthonic (earth-bound) religion, this story illustrates how human existence is subject to an objective order of fate: transgression of boundaries (hubris) inevitably provokes the sanction of restorative justice (nemesis).

This structure of wisdom comprises four dimensions:

- *Informative:* faithfully representing reality;
- *Constitutive*: the ordering, cybernetic natural structure of reality itself;

- *Preconstitutive:* the transcendent or divine power that establishes order;
- *Normative*: the ethical and political guidance of conduct in accordance with that order.

From a cultural-historical perspective, the course situates Greek thought within the Aegean complex (Minoan, Mycenaean and Pelasgian cultures). General history is divided into the Dark Ages (-1200/-800), the Archaic Period (-800/-500), the Classical Period (-500/-338), and the Macedonian-Hellenistic and Roman Period (-338+).

In studying this wisdom, alongside externalist methods (anthological, literary-historical, psychological and sociological methods), the course primarily employs the internalist method, which takes the intrinsic structure of wisdom and the ontological transcendentals (ens, unum, verum, bonum) as its norm.

2: Informative Philosophy – Epistemology, Logic and Mathematics

Informative philosophy investigates the means of knowledge and the laws of thought through which reality is disclosed. The course contrasts two major logical traditions of antiquity: classical Aristotelian term logic (centered on terms and categories) and Megarian-Stoic logic, rediscovered by modern logicians as a fully developed propositional calculus. Dialectic and eristic (the art of disputation associated with Zeno of Elea and Protagoras) also formed important elements of logical debate.

A pivotal element within informative philosophy is mathematics and the lemmatic-analytic method. This method incorporates Peirce's triad of reasoning: one begins with a working hypothesis or assumption (lemma / abduction), analyses its necessary consequences (analysis / deduction), and tests the outcome against empirical and logical results (inductive verification or falsification). This approach was applied not only in Platonic dialectic and Euclidean axiomatics, but also formed the basis of classical Greek medicine.

Epistemologically, this informative inquiry rests on the tension between fanera (facts directly perceptible to the senses through empeiria) and afana or adela (invisible structures of being, accessible only through rational reasoning (logismos), theoretical contemplation (theoria), divine inspiration (enthousiasmos) or ecstasy (mania)).

3: Preconstitutive Philosophy – Theology, Mysteries and the Theory of Ideas

Pre- or extra-constitutive philosophy deals with the foundations that precede visible nature. W. Jaeger emphasizes that all Greek philosophical systems are, in essence, permeated by the study of the gods (theologia). Archaic natural philosophy rested on a polytheistic dynamism in which the universe was experienced as a living, ensouled whole (hylozoism).

This metaphysical layer also included sacred and paranormal practices:

- *Divination and Magic:* the art of interpreting oracles, dreams and omens, alongside operative magic and temple sleep (incubatio at Asclepius's sanctuary) for the healing of illnesses.

- *Mystery Religions*: the agrarian Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Kore represented the chthonic cycle of nature (descent into the underworld and resurrection); the Dionysian and Orphic Mysteries sought, through orgiastic ecstasy (mania) and ritual purification (catharsis), to liberate the divine soul (daimon) from the chain of reincarnations.

The Theory of Ideas emerged in this context. The Idea is not an abstract mental invention, but the pre-existing model, cosmic harmony and perfect number (arithmos teleios) that guide processes in matter. The principle of knowledge rests on the classical principle similia similibus (like knows like): the mind can understand the objective structure of the cosmos only because an essential similarity or "noble yoke" (kalon zugon) exists between the knowing subject and the known object.

4: Constitutive Philosophy – Natural Philosophy, Sub-Physics and Enlightenment

Constitutive or physical philosophy investigates physis (nature) and genesis (the origin and coming-into-being) of things. Whereas religion pragmatically sought life and fertility, Milesian natural philosophy (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes) transformed this concern into disinterested contemplation (theoria). Nature is analyzed as an interaction between the threefold structure of matter, energy (dynamism versus mechanism/atomism in Democritus) and information (the ordering Idea or Anaximander's apeiron).

Initially, physics was all-encompassing and culminated in an all-encompassing physicalism. Natural philosophy, however, soon differentiated into specialized sub-physics:

- *Geography and Ethnography:* Hecataeus and Herodotus established historiography by analysing human actions within the cosmic cycle (kuklos) of guilt (aitia), transgression (hubris) and retribution (tisis).

- *Political Historiography:* Thucydides secularized the course of history by attributing it to the immanent psychological and social "human nature" (physis anthropine).

- *Medical Physics:* Alcmaeon and Hippocrates (Corpus Hippocraticum) defined the human being as an organic system of bodily and psychic forces.

This specialization and demythologization brought about the Greek Enlightenment. The early Sophists (Protagoras, Gorgias, Callicles) and the tragedian Euripides set the fundamental opposition between physis (the unwritten, universal law of nature) and nomos (human, conventional and often arbitrary law). This led to prescepticism, relativism and the emergence of the human sciences.

5: Normative Philosophy – Henology, Ethics and Politics

Normative (deontic) philosophy regulates human conduct on the basis of the observed order of nature. Ethics did not originate only with Socrates, but already with the political theology of the Seven Sages and Pythagorean henology and arithmology.

Pythagoreanism formulated the One (hen) and the pair of opposites (sustoichia) as the ontological basis of all order. Moral and political order is a direct reflection of cosmic harmony:

- *Hierozooism and Astral Vitalism*: conduct is cultivated through musical henology (music and choreia as purifying therapy for the soul).

- *Eudaimonia* and Agogics: human happiness (eudaimonia) is attained by aligning the inner conscience with the divine guardian spirit (daimon).

- *Social and political dimension:* through their closed communities (hetaireiai), the Pythagoreans (such as Archytas and Hippodamus) developed cosmopolitan and mathematical models of the state that anticipated isonomia (equality before the law) and fundamental human rights.

Ultimately, Socrates transformed this traditional ethics by introducing inductive dialogue (maieutics) and conceptualism: the universal concept became the foundation of individual morality and social conduct. Plato and Aristotle developed this Socratic legacy into comprehensive systems of politics and ethics, in which the four dimensions of the philosophical tradition were definitively united.