

Ancient Philosophy Seminar

PhD programme, UAH.

Trinidad Silva

Wednesdays 10:30-13:00

**Theme of the seminar:** “Epistemological and Moral Progress in Ancient Thought”

**Description:** as part of a research project on wisdom in ancient philosophy, this seminar seeks to examine and problematise the question of epistemological and moral progress in three of the most salient and developed theories in ancient thought: Plato’s, Aristotle’s and the Stoics’. One of the key issues of the seminar is to understand whether the theory ensures the conditions for moral and epistemological progress to happen and, if this so, to examine how this phenomenon is described and explained. Part of the strategy will be to observe the contrast between the different theories. In Plato a visual model of progress allowing degrees is at stake moving from *doxa* to *episteme*; in Aristotle epistemological (and not moral) progress proceeds from the most to the less evident via demonstration and culminates in the knowledge of first causes and principles, which as purely theoretical activity conforms the highest display of human rationality; in the Stoics, at least in principle, there is no place for epistemological progress (being one and the same with moral progress), since there is no intermediate state between ignorance (or *doxa*) and wisdom. Some of the related problems and topics the seminar will address are the following: metaphysics of movement, the difference between propositional, object-dependant and dispositional knowledge, the possibility of error, the intermediate position between ignorance and wisdom, part-based and unitarian psychology, the problem of infinite progress (or regress) and the relationship between moral and epistemological development.

**Units:**

I. Plato: text selection from the *Meno*, *Euthydemus* and *Republic V*.

II. Aristotle: text selection from *Posterior Analytics*, *De Anima* and *Metaphysics*.

II. Stoics: text selection from relevant fragments.

**Objectives:**

-To critically read and assess the arguments laid down from the primary and secondary bibliography (in their English translations).

- To analyse and compare the different theories at play.
- To raise problematic questions during the sessions.
- To develop a thesis within the scope of the subject discussed.

**Methodology:**

One key text accompanied by secondary bibliography will be fixed for each session. Students are expected to share their views and raise a discussion by using the relevant material.

**Evaluations:**

Midterm evaluation: assessment on a problematic passage or question raised in primary sources.

Final evaluation: final essay on a subject relevant to the seminar.

**Bibliography:**

**Primary sources:**

-Barnes, J. *Posterior Analytics*, Second Edition, Translated with a commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

-Cooper, J.M. and Hutchinson, D.S. (Eds.). *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.

-Long, A. A. & Sedley, D. N. *The Hellenistic philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

-Ross, W. D. *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.

-Shields, C. *De Anima*, Translated with an introduction and commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

**Secondary sources:**

Complementary bibliography (papers, chapters and others) will be sent to the students to be read for each session.