

Historia de la Filosofía Antigua I

Idioma: EN

EXAM STATEMENT:

The exam consists of two sections. Both must be answered: 1) One question to be chosen and answered from the following three syllabus topics. 2) An open topic, chosen from the course content, for which the student must take into account the guidelines provided by the teaching team on the ÁGORA platform. Each section is worth 1 to 5 points, totaling 10 points. However, to pass the exam, both parts must be answered in a balanced manner. **IMPORTANT:** The self-formulated question and the development topic chosen from the three proposed by the teaching team cannot belong to the same content block of the syllabus.

Question 1:

- A) Philosophy in Magna Greece: Pythagoras.
- B) Plato's concept of Being and The World of Ideas.
- C) Aristotle: Politics.

Question 2: An open topic, chosen from the course content, for which the student must take into account the guidelines provided by the teaching team on the ÁGORA platform.

Question 1

Plato's concept of Being and The World of Ideas.

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Answer to Question 1, Option B: Plato's concept of Being and The World of Ideas

Plato's theory of Being and the World of Ideas constitutes the foundation of his metaphysical system, distinguishing between two fundamental realms: the intelligible world (the realm of Ideas) and the sensible world (the realm of appearances). This dualism arises from his critique of the Heraclitean flux and the Eleatic denial of change, seeking to reconcile permanence and multiplicity.

The World of Ideas (or Forms) is the true reality, eternal, unchanging, and perfect. Ideas are the essences of things, existing independently of the sensible world. They are not mere mental constructs but objective realities, accessible only through reason. The highest Idea is the Form of the Good, which illuminates all other Ideas and serves as the ultimate principle of reality and knowledge, analogous to the sun in the allegory of the cave (*Republic* VI-VII).

The sensible world, by contrast, is a shadowy imitation of the Ideas. It is characterized by constant change, imperfection, and multiplicity. Sensible objects participate in the Ideas but never fully embody them. For example, a beautiful object in the sensible world is beautiful only insofar as it participates in the Idea of Beauty. This participation explains the unity underlying the diversity of appearances.

Plato's epistemology is closely tied to his ontology. True knowledge (*epistēmē*) pertains to the Ideas and is attained through dialectic, the method of philosophical inquiry that ascends from hypotheses to the first principles. Opinion (*doxa*), on the other hand, concerns the sensible world and is inherently unstable. The divided line (*Republic* VI) illustrates this hierarchy, with the intelligible realm divided into mathematical reasoning and dialectic, and the sensible realm into belief and illusion.

The relationship between Being and non-being is further explored in the *Sophist*, where Plato revises Parmenides' monism by introducing the concept of "otherness" (*thateron*). Here, non-being is not absolute nothingness but the negation of a particular Idea, allowing for the coexistence of Being and difference. This move enables Plato to account for falsehood, error, and the multiplicity of Ideas without contradicting the principle of Being.

In the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge crafts the sensible world by imitating the eternal Ideas, using them as models. This cosmological account reinforces the ontological priority of the Ideas while explaining the order and intelligibility of the physical universe. The soul, too, is immortal and belongs to the intelligible realm, striving to recollect the Ideas it once contemplated (*Phaedo*, *Meno*).

Plato's theory thus establishes a hierarchical metaphysics where the World of Ideas represents the ultimate reality, while the sensible world is a derivative and imperfect reflection. This framework not only grounds his ethics and politics (e.g.,

the philosopher-king's rule in *Republic*) but also shapes Western philosophy's subsequent engagement with questions of reality, knowledge, and transcendence.

Question 2

An open topic, chosen from the course content, for which the student must take into account the guidelines provided by the teaching team on the ÁGORA platform.

STUDENT RESPONSE:

The relationship between language and reality in the thought of the Presocratics and the Sophists: a comparative analysis.

The Presocratic philosophers and the Sophists represent two fundamental stages in the development of ancient Greek thought, each offering distinct perspectives on the relationship between language and reality. While the Presocratics sought to uncover the underlying principles of the natural world through rational inquiry, the Sophists shifted focus toward human discourse, rhetoric, and the social dimensions of language. This contrast reveals a deeper philosophical tension regarding whether language reflects an objective reality or constructs subjective meanings.

The Presocratics approached language as a tool for describing the *arché* (first principle) and the structure of the cosmos. For thinkers like Heraclitus and Parmenides, language was not merely a conventional system but a means to express metaphysical truths. Heraclitus, for instance, used paradoxical and poetic language to convey the dynamic unity of opposites, suggesting that reality is in constant flux and that words must capture this instability. Parmenides, in contrast, employed a more rigid and logical style to argue that being is unchanging and that language must correspond to this immutable reality. His famous dictum "being is, non-being is not" reflects an attempt to align language with a static ontology. Similarly, the Atomists, such as Democritus, used language to describe the material composition of the universe, treating words as representations of physical entities. In all these cases, language was seen as subordinate to reality, a medium through which the true nature of things could be communicated.

The Sophists, however, challenged this correspondence theory of language. Figures like Protagoras and Gorgias argued that language was not a neutral reflection of reality but a powerful instrument for persuasion and social influence. Protagoras' relativism, encapsulated in his statement "man is the measure of all things," implied that truth was not absolute but dependent on individual or cultural perspectives. This shift placed language at the center of human experience, as it became the primary means through which reality was interpreted and negotiated. Gorgias, in his work *On Non-Being*, took this further by questioning the very possibility of language accurately representing reality. He argued that even if something existed, it could not be known, and even if it were known, it could not be communicated. This radical skepticism undermined the Presocratic assumption that language could reliably convey metaphysical truths.

Despite these differences, both traditions shared a preoccupation with the limits and possibilities of language. The Presocratics sought to refine language to better describe the natural world, while the Sophists explored its rhetorical and pragmatic dimensions. This duality laid the groundwork for later philosophical debates, particularly in Plato and Aristotle, who grappled with the tension between language as a tool for truth and language as a vehicle for persuasion. Ultimately, the Presocratics and Sophists represent two complementary

approaches: the former prioritizing ontology and the latter emphasizing epistemology and human agency in the construction of meaning. Their contrasting views on language and reality remain central to understanding the evolution of Western philosophy.