

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:

Plato's concept of Being centers on the Theory of Forms, positing a fundamental distinction between the world of appearances – the sensible, changing realm we perceive – and the world of Forms – a realm of perfect, eternal, and unchanging archetypes. These Forms are not merely mental constructs, but genuinely existing entities, more real than the objects of our sensory experience. The sensible objects participate in the Forms, deriving their intelligibility and limited degree of reality from them. For example, individual instances of 'beauty' are beautiful because they partake in the Form of Beauty itself.

The World of Ideas, synonymous with the realm of Forms, is hierarchically structured. At its apex resides the Form of the Good, the ultimate source of being, truth, and intelligibility. The Good illuminates all other Forms, making them knowable and providing them with their value. Below the Good are the Forms themselves, organized according to different categories like mathematical Forms (equality, unity) and ethical Forms (justice, courage).

Knowledge, for Plato, isn't the acquisition of information about the sensible world, which is inherently unreliable due to its constant flux. True knowledge is recollection (anamnesis) – the recovery of innate knowledge of the Forms that the soul possessed before its embodiment. Philosophical inquiry, particularly dialectic, serves as the method for ascending from the world of appearances to the contemplation of the Forms, culminating in the apprehension of the Good. This ascent is not simply intellectual, but also involves moral and spiritual purification.

The relationship between the World of Ideas and the sensible world is explained through Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus*. The sensible world is created by the Demiurge, a divine craftsman who models it after the eternal Forms. However, the material used – pre-existing, chaotic matter – introduces imperfection and change, resulting in the flawed and transient nature of the sensible realm. Thus, the sensible world is a pale imitation of the perfect reality of the Forms, forever striving to emulate them but never fully achieving their perfection. This dualistic ontology profoundly influences Plato's epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy, shaping his understanding of reality, knowledge, virtue, and the ideal state.

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 Sophists represent a pivotal, and often misunderstood, moment in the transition from pre-Socratic natural philosophy to the systematic investigations of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Arising in 5th-century BCE Greece, particularly during a period of political and social upheaval, they were itinerant teachers offering instruction primarily in rhetoric and the art of persuasive argumentation for a fee. This practice immediately set them apart from earlier philosophers who largely pursued knowledge for its own sake. The causes of the Sophists' emergence are intrinsically linked to the evolving political landscape of the Greek city-states. The rise of democracy, especially in Athens, placed a premium on the ability to speak effectively in public assemblies, enabling citizens to influence political decisions. Consequently, there was a growing demand for skilled orators and those capable of crafting compelling arguments, irrespective of their inherent truth.

The Sophists' merit lies in their groundbreaking focus on *anthropos* – humanity – as the measure of all things, most famously articulated by Protagoras. This marked a shift away from cosmological speculation towards an investigation of human values, beliefs, and conventions. They questioned traditional morality and religious certainties, emphasizing relativism and the subjective nature of truth. Their attention to language, analyzing its structure and power to persuade, laid the foundation for the development of logic and linguistics. Gorgias, for instance, demonstrated the paradoxical nature of non-being through skillful rhetorical devices, challenging the very possibility of objective knowledge.

However, the Sophists were heavily criticized, notably by Plato and Socrates, for prioritizing persuasive effectiveness over truth. They were accused of manipulating audiences, exploiting rhetoric for personal gain, and undermining established moral standards. Critics argued that their relativistic stance led to moral nihilism, eroding the foundations of social order. The charge of accepting payment for teaching, considered a form of mercenary intellectualism, further contributed to their negative reputation.

Despite the criticisms, the Sophists' contribution to philosophical inquiry is undeniable. Their emphasis on language, argumentation, and the complexities of human perception paved the way for the development of critical thinking and philosophical methodology. Figures like Trasímaco, with his cynical view of justice as the interest of the stronger, forced a re-evaluation of political and ethical concepts. Ultimately, the Sophists, while controversial, played a crucial role in the intellectual ferment that characterized classical Greece and prepared the ground for the philosophical advancements of subsequent generations.