

Practical Session 3

Ancient Greek Philosophy

A discussion-based seminar: from Myth to Logos, from the polis to the therapy of the soul

Blocks

- I The Pre-Socratics
- II The Sophists and Socrates
- III Plato and Aristotle
- IV Hellenism

Seminar focus

- Explain why rational philosophy emerged in the Greek polis.
- Compare rival answers to change, truth, justice, and happiness.
- Apply Aristotle's Four Causes to a modern example.
- Complete the concept-connection exercise using key terms accurately.

SESSION ROUTE

From arche to ethics: the logic of today's practical work

Use the pathway as an organizer for discussion and examples.



Guiding movement
of the course

Myth → Rational explanation → Human measure → Objective forms and causes → Practical ethics of serenity

BLOCK I

The Pre-Socratics — Genesis and abstraction

The first move is from mythological stories to rational explanation.

1 Why did the transition from Myth to Logos become possible in the Greek polis rather than in Eastern despotisms?

Use three factors: public debate in the polis, trade/colonization, and the absence of a rigid priestly caste.

2 How did the phonetic alphabet strengthen abstraction and theoretical thinking?

Move from visible “elements” to the non-sensory Apeiron: letters detach thought from images.

Discussion frame

Ask not “Which god caused it?” but “What law, substance, or principle explains it?”

Useful terms: polis, agora, logos, arche, abstraction, Apeiron

BLOCK I

The Pre-Socratics — Flux, being, and atomistic synthesis

The key tension: is reality changeable or fundamentally unchanging?

3 Compare Heraclitus and Parmenides: if the world is a river, why does Parmenides call motion logically impossible?

Contrast becoming, conflict, and Logos with the claim that non-being cannot be thought or exist.

4 How does Democritus use atoms and the Void to reconcile permanence with change?

Atoms preserve Eleatic being; the Void makes movement, plurality, and observable change possible.

HERACLITUS

everything flows

PARMENIDES

being is one

DEMOCRITUS

atoms + void

BLOCK II

The Sophists and Socrates — The anthropological turn

Philosophy shifts from the cosmos to the human being, truth, and civic life.

SOPHISTS**Relativism**

Truth depends on the subject, context, and persuasive force.

5. Explain Protagoras' thesis "Man is the measure of all things." Does it mean total permissiveness in cognition?

SOCRATES**Maieutics**

Dialogue uncovers universal concepts through questioning.

6. Contrast Sophistic rhetoric with Socratic maieutics as methods of approaching truth.

7. "Evil arises only from ignorance." Argue for or against Socratic ethical intellectualism using modern psychology.

BLOCK III

Plato and Aristotle — The classical models of reality

Move from transcendence to immanence: from Ideas to form in things.

PLATO

8. Using the Allegory of the Cave, explain the difference between Eidos and a material thing. What does the Sun symbolize?

Key contrast: eternal intelligible form ↔ changing sensible copy

From shadows to essence

ARISTOTLE

9. Why does Aristotle criticize Plato for “doubling the world”? Use the example of a statue to explain matter and form.

Key contrast: form outside things ↔ form immanent in things

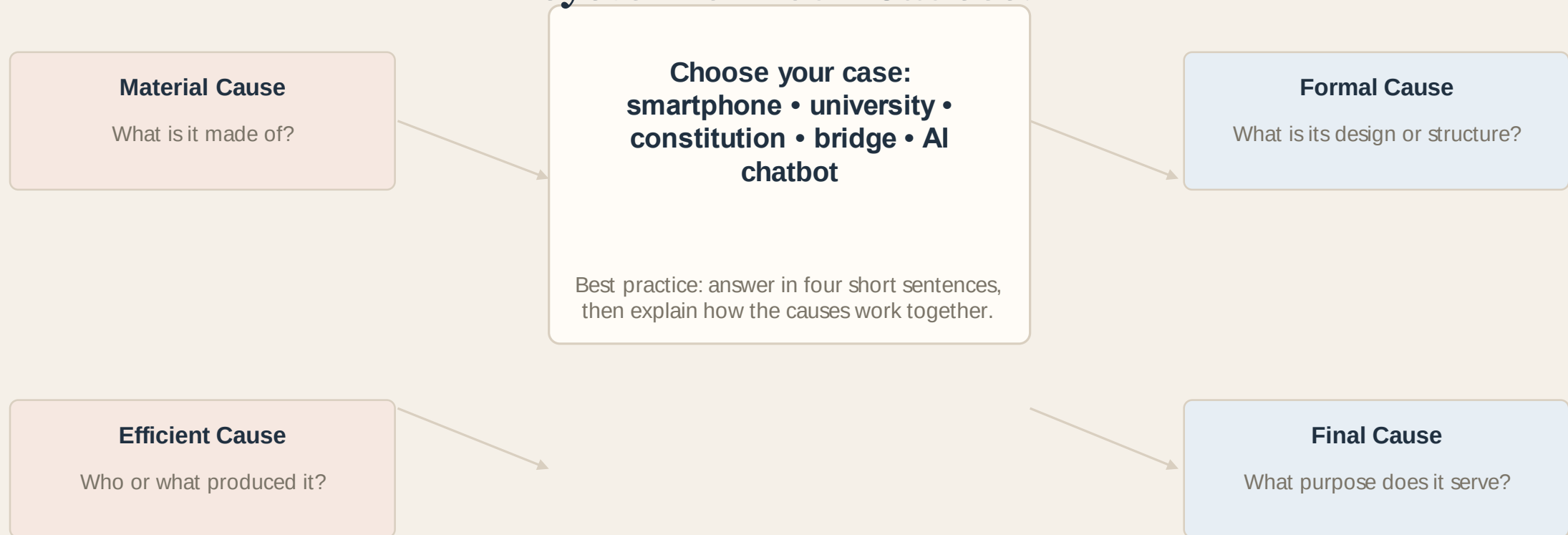
From ideal world to embodied form

BLOCK III

Application task — Aristotle's Four Causes

Test the theory on a modern object or institution: smartphone, university, or AI tool.

10. Analyze one modern phenomenon through Aristotle's system of Four Causes.



This is the main applied task of the seminar.

BLOCK IV

Hellenism — Philosophy as therapy of the soul

The question changes: how can a person remain free in an unstable world?

STOICISM

Heroic endurance
Accept fate, govern your
attitude, live by duty and
reason.

EPICUREANISM

Intelligent pleasure
Seek aponia and ataraxia
through moderation,
friendship, and freedom
from fear.

SKEPTICISM

Epoché
Suspend judgment when
certainty is impossible;
inner calm grows from
non-attachment.

11

Compare Stoic and Epicurean paths to peace of mind. Who chooses endurance, and who chooses intelligent pleasure?

Focus on attitude to fate, pleasure, duty, pain, and fear.

12

How can suspending judgment (epoché) help a person find inner freedom in an age of change?

Connect doubt with reduced anxiety, tolerance, and freedom from dogmatic conflict.

EXERCISE

Concept connection — Part I

Fill each blank with the concept that best completes the statement.

1. The transition from mythological chaos to the Milesian Arche marked the birth of _____, replacing the will of the gods.

2. The debate between Heraclitus and Parmenides established the conflict between _____ and _____.

3. The Pythagoreans shifted the search from “raw material” to _____, claiming that the world is _____.

Work individually first, then compare answers in pairs.

EXERCISE

Concept connection — Part II

Use the exact philosophical term whenever possible.

4. The anthropological turn of the Sophists proclaimed the priority of _____ and rhetoric over objective truth.

5. Plato's objective idealism built a hierarchy between the world of _____ and the world of _____.

6. Aristotle's _____ reconciled Plato's idealism with reality by placing essence within the thing itself.

If two answers seem possible, explain why you prefer one term over another.

SELF-CHECK

Key answers and vocabulary bank

Use the key to verify accuracy, then reuse the terms in your oral responses.

Self-check key

- 1 Logos
2. Becoming (Panta Rhei) / Being
3. Form / Cosmos
4. Relativism (or Doxa)
5. Eidos (Ideas) / Shadows (Things)
6. Hylomorphism

Vocabulary to activate

- polis
- maieutics
- agora
- Eidos
- arche
- matter
- Apeiron
- form
- Logos
- ataraxia
- relativism
- epoché

Challenge: use at least three of these terms in your final answer.

WRAP-UP

Exit discussion

Use one philosopher to answer one modern question.

Choose one of the following and answer in 3–4 sentences:

- Which ancient thinker best explains the information chaos of today?
- Is Socrates still right that knowledge is the basis of virtue?
- Which route to ataraxia seems most realistic for a modern student?
- Can Aristotle's Four Causes still improve the way we analyze technology?

Answer model

1. State the thesis
2. Name the philosopher or school
3. Use one key concept
4. Give one modern example