

California State University, Sacramento
Department of Economics

Economics 101-03: History of Economic Thought

Spring 2015

Prof. Dowell

A General Note on Readings

For each week you will be given a set of readings and questions. On the readings list, required readings will be marked with an asterisk (*). Additional readings are listed last without the asterisk and may be useful for better understanding the primary material or for writing your short papers. I will attempt to list multiple references for the various topics we are discussing. Many, though not necessarily all, of the additional references will be posted on the course web page. Any that are not posted will have to be acquired through the library or from other sources.

As indicated in the syllabus, the reading load for this class is heavy at 75-100 or more pages per week. You should nonetheless do your very best to keep up with all of the required readings and sample some of the additional material as well. Remember that even though you will write papers in response to only three questions, you will still be responsible for all of the questions when you take the final exam. One thing you can usually do to save a significant amount of time is to skip the footnotes in the original source documents. These almost always deal with the editorial process that has taken place before re-publication of these works. While they provide critical information for the professional historian of thought, they provide little information that will be important to you. You will also find that some of these readings overlap. Given the nature of the sources, this is sometimes unavoidable. Clearly though you can save time by very quickly skimming through material that is repetitive. Do be careful though to make sure it isn't expressing an alternative view. I will give some additional guidance on reading during the first week of the semester.

Week 1: Introduction and Early Anticipations: The Greeks

Readings

*Newman, Philip C., Arthur D. Gayer and Milton H. Spencer, Editors. (1954). *Source Readings in Economic Thought*. "Plato." Pp. 2-5

*Newman, Philip C., Arthur D. Gayer and Milton H. Spencer. (1954). *Source Readings in Economic Thought*. "Aristotle." Pp. 6-14

*Spiegel, William, H. (1999). Selections from *The Growth of Economic Thought* 3rd Ed. (Focus on the material on Plato and Aristotle for this week.)

Heilbroner, Robert. (1986). *The Worldly Philosophers*, chapters 1 and 2

Discussion Questions¹

- a. What is the basic interest of the Greek philosophers? Are they interested in explaining how the entire economic system works? Explain. What views are expressed by Plato and Aristotle and how do they differ? Explain.
- b. Why are there no 'systematizers' in the period under study this week? (answered in lecture)

¹ Question indicated by a letter rather than a number are intended to help you focus your reading. After a careful reading of the material, you should be able to answer them. No one is assigned to write papers in response to lettered questions, although the likely will appear on the final exam in some form.