

Call For Applications

International Summer School “Definition, Essence, and Explanation in Ancient Greek Philosophy”

We are delighted to advertise the opportunity to participate in the Fribourg Philosophy Summer School. This year’s topic will delve into the topic of “Definition, Essence, and Explanation in Greek Philosophy”, taught by Professor Katja Maria Vogt (Columbia University) and Professor Pieter Sjoerd Hasper (Hamburg University).

Key Details

- Dates: June 10 to 15, 2024
- Location: University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- Instructors:
 - Prof. Katja Maria Vogt (Columbia University)
 - Prof. Pieter Sjoerd Hasper (Hamburg University)

Topic overview

Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle were deeply preoccupied with the concept of definition. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates dedicated considerable time and energy to unraveling the answer to the famous *ti esti* question: "What is X?" Meanwhile, Aristotle, recognizing the significance of this quest for definitions, critically engaged with his old master's ideas. He, too, devoted substantial portions of his own work to exploring the nature of definitions, often challenging Plato's perspectives. In contrast to Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics were not convinced that definitions played such a pivotal role, but conceived of definitions more as one heuristic tool, among others.

This summer school invites participants to delve into the world of definitions within Ancient Greek Philosophy, and in the thought of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics in particular. We will explore questions such as:

- * What makes a definition a good definition?
- * What role do definitions play in an inquiry?
- * What is it that a definition aims to capture? The what-it-is of something, or the preconception we have of it, or something else?
- * Is the search for definitions motivated by certain metaphysical or epistemological presuppositions, or is it the other way round?
- * How do definitions relate to reality?

- * How is the search for the causes of a certain thing related to the search for the definition of that thing?

Throughout the week, our program will include:

Lectures, where you will delve into the historical context, foundational concepts, and key ideas that underpin the topic of definition in Antiquity

Discussion sessions, where you will participate in lively exchanges with fellow students

Reading sessions, to delve into primary texts and engage with the ideas firsthand.

Small group discussions, fostering collaborative exploration.

For those interested, there will be an opportunity to present their work and earn ECTS credits. The students attending the Summer School will receive a certificate acknowledging their participation.

Application process

We very much welcome participants from universities in Switzerland and abroad. Our summer school will be conducted in English. It is primarily designed for Master's students with an interest in the field of Ancient Philosophy. If you are interested in joining the summer school but are not currently enrolled in a Master's programme, we recommend contacting the organisers before applying.

To apply for participation, please send an application email to: definition-summerschool@unifr.ch

The application should include a short CV and a cover letter indicating your interest in the topic of the Summer School and how the course would benefit your work (max. 1 page per document).

We provide travel and accommodation funding for participants from Switzerland, as well as a select group of international students.

The deadline for applications is Tuesday, 2 April 2024.