A. General Character of Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy

1. Hellenistic philosophy was therapeutic in character // involved a distinctive lack of emphasis on metaphysical speculation.
   a. Focus: How does an individual attain eudaimonia [happiness?] in this troubled world we live in?
      i. Therapeuo = to remedy => Hellenistic philosophies offered a remedy to the problem of human existence—they proposed a path to happiness in an existence that had been robbed of happiness.
         (A) Note: return to philosophy as existential philosophy understands the role of philosophy (Socrates); not as speculative philosophy sees the role of philosophy (Plato).
         (1) Question of foremost importance: How should one live?
         (2) Not the question of foremost importance: What is ultimate reality and what is its nature?
      ii. Distinctive answers:
         (A) Stoicism: eudaimonia through freedom from passion – apatheia
         (B) Epicureanism: eudaimonia through freedom from fear of gods
         (C) Skepticism: eudaimonia through freedom from doubt
         (D) Cynicism: eudaimonia through freedom from cultural inhibitions

2. Emerging themes that resulted from the breakdown of traditions and a breakdown of reliance on tradition (with the demise of the Greek city-state)
   a. Cosmopolitanism
   b. Individualism
   c. Eclecticism

3. General characteristics of Hellenistic philosophy
   a. Religious caste to Hellenistic philosophy
   b. More popular appeal (philosophy becomes part of general education), not merely a pursuit of the elite few
   c. Greater specialization in science and knowledge
   d. Less original speculation; increased commentary on older philosophers
B. Cynicism

1. Name comes from the Greek word for dog (*Kune*); cynics advocated a back-to-nature philosophy, return to living like the dogs live.

2. Noteworthy Cynics
   a. Antisthenes, 434–366 BC
   b. Diogenes of Sinope (nickname: the Dog, *Kuon*) 300s BC

3. Distinctive doctrines
   a. Independence and self-sufficiency
      i. from human culture and institutions
      ii. from earthly possessions, renunciation of earthly goods
   b. Self-control, self-mastery
      i. *Apatheia*
      ii. Independence from desires
   c. Back-to-nature philosophy
   d. Contempt for
      i. Popular opinion
      ii. Values of majority
      iii. Traditional state, institutions, religion, law
      iv. Scientific learning
      v. Art

4. Flavor
   a. Popular to masses (unlike Stoicism that appealed to disenchanted aristocrats)
   b. Wore distinctive clothing: philosopher’s robe, knapsack, staff
   c. Outrageous deeds as didactic strategy

C. Stoicism

1. Name comes from *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porches).

2. Founder of Stoicism
   a. Zeno of Citium, 336 BC–265 BC (not to be confused with Zeno of Elea)
      i. Started school in Athens in 300 BC

3. Distinctive doctrines:
   a. Determinism
      i. *Logical determinism*
   b. Eternal recurrence
      i. *Cosmology from Heraclitus*
         (A) ONE=fire=Reason (Logos)=God= a “material” substance
(B) Recurring cycle of cosmos: from God (Primal Fire) to the cosmos as we know it and then back to Primal Fire (Universal Conflagration)

1. ETERNAL RECURRANCE: Each world is EXACTLY like the last one.

(C) Two principles of reality:
   1. Active principle = God (Logos)
      a. Contains the logoi spermatikoi
      b. God = FATE = providence
   2. Passive principle = matter

(D) No such thing as human freedom

1. Yes, freedom to do what one wants / and freedom to inwardly accept or resist what must be
2. No freedom to do otherwise

C. Virtue = living in accord with nature / logos
D. Apatheia = primary virtue

4. Other interesting doctrines:
   a. Epistemology
      i. No universals, only particulars (nominalism)
      ii. All knowledge derived from sense perception
      iii. Soul is a tabula rasa
      iv. Knowledge based on a “memory” remaining in soul after perception
         (A) Cf., Hume’s “impressions,” Descartes’ “ideas”

5. Flavor
   a. Religious, pious devotion to the ONE
      i. Polytheistic worship justified as in Hinduism
   b. Believed in and practiced divination and oracles

D. Epicureanism

1. Name comes from its founder Epicurus (b. 342 BC).
   a. Founded school in Athens, 306 BC
   b. Most famous disciple: Lucretius

2. Distinctive doctrines:
   a. The gods have no interest in us (no need to fear them).
   b. Pleasure is the ultimate good (hedonism).
      i. Moderate, rational hedonism
   c. Cosmology of the Atomists

3. Other interesting doctrines:
   a. Epistemology
      i. All knowledge and reason is based on sense experience.
ii. Three sources of knowledge: perceptions, concepts (memory images of perceptions), feelings

   (A) Pleasure indicates what we should choose; pain what we should avoid.

**E. Skepticism (Pyrrhoism)—Pyrrho of Elis (360-270 BC)**

1. Name comes from distinctive doctrine: skepticism with respect to the possibility of knowing truth.

2. Distinctive doctrines:
   a. We can only know how things appear to us; this does not give us a knowledge of the way things ARE.
      i. Our knowledge cannot be known to truly be KNOWLEDGE.
         (A) ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION
         (B) Argument from differences for different observers
   b. Wisdom =
      i. Ataraxia = withholding judgment
      ii. Indifference toward all external things; aim at tranquility of soul
      iii. Act in accord with probability, custom, law

**F. Neo-Pythagoreanism**

1. Got name from reverence for Pythagoras.

2. Distinctive doctrines:
   a. Everything is derived from the monad (point).
   b. Introduced the notion of emanation.
   c. Proposed that there were intermediary beings between corporeal world and supreme God.
   d. Believed in the utter transcendence of God (beyond all categories).
   e. Platonic Forms = ideas in the mind of God
   f. Advocated the division of God in to two, three gods, etc.; each level of “god” successively lesser.
   g. Soul entering body seen as a fall.
      i. Both rational and irrational soul

**G. Eclecticism**

1. Tendency of philosophy, as it went on, was to borrow from other traditions and concoct one’s own idiosyncratic synthesis.