

PHIL 31: Ancient Philosophy
Fall 2005; David O. Brink
Paper #1

Write a paper approximately 2-3 pages long on one of the following two topics. The paper is due in class on Wednesday, October 12. If necessary and with suitable explanation, you can get an extension on the paper. But the extension must be arranged in advance of the due date. Otherwise, late papers will be penalized as described on the Course Description. Before starting, consult the Writing Guidelines handout on the course website. Students are welcome to discuss their topics and drafts with their TA or me.

1. Heraclitus thinks that the world is in constant flux, -- so much so that "it is not possible to step into the same river twice". What is flux? What is he claiming about the river, and why is this claim significant? Assess his reasoning.
2. Parmenides thinks that change is illusory, denies that natural philosophy should try to explain it, and embraces a form of monism. Melissus and Zeno are disciples who try to defend Parmenidean monism by their own arguments. Focusing on one of these three figures, explain why he defends monism and rejects the possibility of change. Assess that line of reasoning.