This seminar will give a way into discussions of unity and plurality, divisibility and
indivisibility, infinity, continuity and motion in Greek philosophy. We will concentrate on
Aristotle's *Physics*, Books V-VIII, but will start by looking at some texts from the Eleatics
(Parmenides and Zeno) and Plato which Aristotle will be taking up; we will also look at
Diodorus Cronus, and other Greek philosophers if time permits. Zeno gave both arguments
against plurality and arguments against motion, which helped to stimulate the further
development of Greek philosophy. Aristotle, on the basis of his theory of motion and of the
continuum, gives a solution to Zeno's arguments against motion in *Physics* VI,9, not only
responding to Zeno but also competing with other philosophers' solutions; but he also uses
reflection on Zeno's arguments against motion and plurality to develop his own positive theory
of motion, the continuum, and indivisibles, throughout *Physics* VI. Indivisibles or unextended
things include not only God and the soul but also points and moments in time; the notion of
incorporeal realities seems to enter Greek philosophy through Zeno's notion of indivisibility.
Aristotle wants not only to distinguish indivisible or incorporeal things, which cannot be moved,
from continuous bodies, which can be moved; he also wants to show what role indivisible things
play in motion, whether as the moments at the beginning or end of a motion, the boundaries of
the moved bodies, or also as indivisible efficient causes of motion, since Aristotle thinks that
indivisibles cannot be moved but can nonetheless move other things. *Physics* VI, on motion and
its relation to continua and indivisibles, functions to support the argument of *Physics* VIII, which
argues that there is an eternal indivisible unmoved cause of an eternal continuous motion and
tries to refute Plato's view that the principle of motion is an eternally self-moved soul. We will
try, in addition to discussing the general conceptual issues and the historical setting in Greek
philosophy, to work out the main central arguments of both books (and connected parts of
*Physics* V, VII, and perhaps other books), to see how *Physics* VI supports *Physics* VIII, and also
to understand any tensions there may be between or within these books.

The seminar will be divided into three main units, of roughly four weeks each (the third a bit
longer, the first a bit shorter): U1 on the Eleatic and Platonic background, U2 centering on
*Physics* VI, U3 centering on *Physics* VIII.

The prerequisite is a course discussing Aristotle not limited to his practical philosophy, or
instructor's permission. A good high school math background is recommended; this will not be a
chiefly mathematical course, and will not involve any difficult mathematics, but is not for people
with math anxiety. No knowledge of Greek is required beyond the alphabet, but you will have to
listen to discussions of the meanings of Greek words; any further knowledge of Greek or of
Greek philosophy or science would of course be an advantage.

The *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. McKeon-Reeve, will be available at the Word Bookstore on
Milton Street. Students who read Greek are encouraged to do as much of the reading in Greek as
they can.