Philosophy 303 – A01: Aristotle

Fall 2021 (CRN = 12544)

General Course Information, Recommended Supplementary Reading

1. General Course Information

Class Time:	Mon. & Thurs. 8:30 – 9:50
Instructor:	David Scott
Office:	CLE B320
Office Hours:	TBA (Zoom, by appointment)
Email:	djfscott@uvic.ca

ABOUT THIS COURSE:

In this course we shall examine some of the main works of Aristotle, whose writings are among the most profound and influential in the history of human thought. We shall focus mainly on the following writings, in the following order: Categories, Physics, Metaphysics, De Anima, and Nicomachean Ethics. Although we will be looking at these works in the order listed here, because Aristotle is a systematic philosopher whose works interconnect to a significant degree, at the outset of the course I will occasionally be referring ahead to the later works on this list. Therefore, I strongly advise you to start reading these works straight away and as quickly as possible, in order to gain an early appreciation of the systematic nature of Aristotle's thinking.

TEXT AND COURSE MATERIAL:

Aristotle: Selections, trans. Terence Irwin & Gail Fine, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. 1995 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-915145-67-6). Depending on the way the course discussion evolves, from time to time I may introduce supplementary material.

This course is highly text-focused, which means that both in instruction and in evaluation (testing) emphasis is put on your ability to understand the assigned readings and class discussions of them. In this course we will not be relying on secondary literature or commentary, though of course you are always welcome to supplement your reading and class lectures/discussions with secondary material.

Because there is such a focus on the text, students are strongly encouraged to make sure they use the specifically assigned textbook for this course. The philosopher studied in this course originally wrote in a language other than English, so the readings in this course are all translations. Because translations can sometimes differ greatly, it will be of great benefit to you if you use the assigned translation (textbook), on which both class discussion and essay questions/topics will be based. Using the assigned textbook will allow you to work from the same page (literally and figuratively) as everyone else in the class.

NOTE: As noted, the text used in this course is a translation of Aristotle's writings. Because many students initially find reading Aristotle quite difficult, whether in the original Greek (for students who know Greek) or in translation, they sometimes find it helpful to consult different translations. UVic's library has an electronic version of a different translation from the one used in this course. It is titled The Complete Works of Aristotle (2 volumes), and all of the works we will be studying in this course can be found either in Volume I or Volume II. Here is the link:

http://pm.nlx.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/xtf/view?docId=aristotle/aristotle.00.xml;chunk.id=div.aristotle.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.aristotle.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default

MARKING SCHEME:

(a) in-class test (25%); (b) take-home essay (35%); (c) final exam (40%).

All grading in this course will done by the course instructor (not by teaching assistant).

Letter grades correspond to the following marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The criteria I use to evaluate essays are, I believe, criteria which common sense would suggest in the assessment of philosophical writing. Primarily my concern is with content or substance, i.e., the course material; and in this respect the guiding question is the extent to which a student has understood the material. Of course, this does not mean that form or style count for nothing (and indeed it may not ultimately be possible to divorce form from content).

In indicating the evaluation criteria for this course, I emphasize that philosophy is an arts or humanities subject, which means that assessing the merits of philosophical writing ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of your work. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative priorities, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e., number of points covered
- depth of analysis, i.e., how far into the issue analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination

- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overal quality of philosophical insight and expression

I emphasize that, with the exception of the last criterion—that of overall quality of philosophical insight and expression—in practice the ranking of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes less important criteria will be given more weight than more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might lay less emphasis on the fact that the student has failed (for instance) to cover as many points as other students.

CLASS ATTENDANCE, IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION:

In this course you can assume that all essay topics are intended to test you on the material covered in class. You are of course permitted and encouraged to supplement class lectures and discussion of the subject with outside material, but the minimum expectation is that you deal with the material covered in class, and that you address the points raised there about that material. This does not mean that for essays you are expected merely to repeat the in-class proceedings. Rather, it means that you are expected to take explicit account of the texts and passages covered in class and to do justice to the in-class discussions of them. Needless to say, the best way to ensure that you take account of the texts and passages covered in class, is to attend class.

otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies

Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

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Düring, I., & Owen, G.E.L., eds. Aristotle and Plato in the mid-Fourth Century. Göteborg, 1960. [B485 D832]
Irwin, T. Aristotle's First Principles. [B485 I74]
Jaeger, W. Aristotle: Fundamentals of His Development, 2nd ed. trans. R. Robinson, Oxford, 1948. [B485 J33 1948]
Lloyd, G.E.R., & Owen, G.E.L., eds. Aristotle on Mind and the Senses, Cambridge, 1978. [B478 M5S95 1975]
Marx, Werner. Introduction to Aristotle's Theory of Being as Being, trans. Robert S. Schine, 1977. [B491 O5M3413]
Moravcsik, J.M.E., ed. Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays. [B485 M6]
Ross, Sir David. Aristotle, London: Methuen, 1964. [B485 R6 1964]
Taylor, A. E. Aristotle. [B485 T27 1955]

3. Class Schedule & Important Dates

WEEK 1 (Sept. 9)

Class #1. Thurs. Sept. 9 - Introduction to Aristotle

WEEK 2 (Sept. 13 & 16)

Class #2. Mon. Sept. 13 - Categories

Class #3. Thurs. Sept. 16 - Categories

WEEK 3 (Sept. 20 & 23)

Class #4. Mon. Sept. 20 - Physics

Tues Sept. 21: - Last day to drop course with 100% fee reduction

Class #5. Thurs. Sept. 23 - Physics

Fri. Sept. 24: - Last day to add course.

WEEK 4 (Sept. 27 & 30)

Class #6. Mon. Sept. 27 - Physics

Class #7. Thurs. Sept. 30 - Physics

WEEK 5 (Oct. 4 & 7)

Class #8. Mon. Oct. 4 - Physics

Class #9. Thurs. Oct. 7 - In-class exam.

WEEK 6 (Oct. 11 & 14)

Mon. Oct. 11 - Thanksgiving Day Holiday: no classes

Tues. Oct. 12 - Last day to drop course with 50% fee reduction.

Tues. Oct. 12 - Take-home essay assigned.

Class #10. Thurs. Oct. 14 - De Anima

WEEK 7 (Oct. 18 & 21)

Class #11. Mon. Oct. 18 - De Anima

Class #12. Thurs. Oct. 21 - De Anima

WEEK 8 (Oct. 25 & 28)

Class #13. Mon. Oct. 25 - De Anima

Class #14. Thurs. Oct. 28 - De Anima

Sun. Oct. 31: - Last day to drop course without late penalty

WEEK 9 (Nov. 1 & 4)

Class #15. Mon. Nov. 1 - De Anima & Metaphysics.

Class #16. Thurs. Nov. 4 - De Anima & Metaphysics.

WEEK 10 (Nov. 8 & 11)

Class# 17 Mon. Nov. 8 - De Anima & Metaphysics.

Wed. Nov. 10 - Take-home essay due @ 5:00 p.m.

Thurs. Nov. 11 - Reading Break: no classes

WEEK 11 (Nov. 15& 18)

Class #18. Mon. Nov. 15 - Nicomachean Ethics.

Class #19. Thurs. Nov. 18 - Nicomachean Ethics.

WEEK 12 (Nov. 22& 25)

Class #20. Mon. Nov. 22 - Nicomachean Ethics.

Class #21. Thurs. Nov. 25 - Nicomachean Ethics.

WEEK 13 (Nov. 29, Dec. 2)

Class #22. Mon. Nov. 29 - Nicomachean Ethics.

Class #23. Thurs. Dec. 2 - Last class of this course. Nicomachean Ethics & Review.

FINAL EXAM PERIOD (Dec. 6 -