

ARISTOTLE (PHIL-3120)

FALL 2019

Instructor:	Dr. Zita Toth	Office:	Cocke Hall, 207
Time:	TR, 8:00–9:15	Office hrs:	MW, 3:30–5 & by appt.
Place:	New Cabell Hall, 383	Office ext.:	4-6919
E-mail:	zvt5f@virginia.edu	Cell:	917-544-3364

Required Texts. There is one required book for this course:

- J. L. Ackrill (ed.). *A New Aristotle Reader*. Princeton University Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-691-02043-3.

Course Description. In this course, we will do a close study of one of the most preeminent philosophers, Aristotle. We will try to understand Aristotle's sometimes puzzling writings, consider his substantial philosophical views, as well as the reasons he proposed to endorse those views.

Expectations and Assignments. Here is a breakdown of your final grade in this course.

Attendance and in-class participation, 15%: Conversation is essential to Philosophy. Everyone, even if they are bored or shy or anxious is expected to participate in class. Make sure you answer to your peers' suggestion according to the best interpretation you can give them, and that your criticism is directed towards the idea instead of the person. Be willing to change your mind if the evidence so dictates. **To prepare for class participation:** readings in philosophy tend to be difficult, and the Early Modern period is no exception. When you do the assigned readings, make notes about: (1) the main thesis or idea of the reading; (2) the main argument (if any); (3) the main examples the reading uses to illustrate the point; and any questions or remarks you have about the reading.

Notecards, 15%: The notecards require that you show that you put effort into the readings and are prepared to participate well. After completing the readings for each class, write down *either* a short summary of the reading *or* at least two or three major questions that the authors of the texts are attempting to answer or problems that you see in the readings. You will hand these to me on a 3 × 5 notecard that you will put on my desk before the beginning of class. Strive to be clear and to ask challenging, puzzling questions. Notecards are graded on a × (D), ✓- (C), ✓ (B), ✓+ (A) scale. A ✓+ is reserved for incisive, well-articulated summaries and questions. Because notecards are part of the preparatory work for class discussions, notecards cannot be turned in late. If you have an excused absence, that day will simply not count toward your average.

Presentation and short paper, 25%: A presentation of one of the assigned readings from the first half of the semester, with a written version turned in. Details will follow.

Final paper, 35%: A research paper on a topic of your choice. Detailed prompt will follow.

Final exam, 10%: In class test.

Course Policies.

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory, and every unexcused absence will affect your notecards grade as explained above. You also must come on time; I will not accept notecards from habitually tardy people.

Analog classroom: Electronic devices are not allowed in class. They can be very distracting, and new research shows that even when computers are used solely for taking notes, learning is impaired, because the keyboard encourages taking verbatim notes while the pen requires you to process as you take notes. Everyone is expected to leave their devices (phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) at home or keep them turned off and out of sight during class time. If you need special accommodation, or have any special concerns about this policy, please ask me directly.

E-mail: There may be some official communication via e-mail, and everyone is expected to check their e-mail accounts regularly and read their e-mails carefully. You can expect me to read and answer my e-mails within 24 hours; please do not send me e-mails at midnight expecting a response before the morning.

Outside resources: With the exception of the final paper, you will not have to do outside research beyond the assigned books. If you feel you must read more than what is assigned, please do not rely on wikipedia (which tends to be rather unreliable in philosophy). Instead, I recommend the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: plato.stanford.edu. An up-to-date, reliable catalogue of philosophy papers can be found at philpapers.org (but please note that they do not store the papers; you will still have to find them in the library). A comprehensive, clear introduction to Aristotle's thought is Christopher Shields, *Aristotle* (Routledge, 2007). You can also check out *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Plagiarism: If you use or copy a source without properly citing it, whether this act is intentional or not, you commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It is very easy to detect, and will result in your automatic failure of the course.

Lateness: Late assignments will not be considered unless for very serious reasons. If you have such reasons, please let me know as soon as you can. I will not accept excuses related to technology ("my e-mail address wasn't working," "it remained in my Draft folder," etc.) unless it is a major technical issue that affects the campus. Assignments for other courses due at the same time also do not count as very serious reasons.

Special Accommodations: Students with special needs requiring accommodations should please (the sooner the better!) coordinate with the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC: 243-5180/5181) and follow up with me.

Tentative Schedule of Readings. The schedule is tentative, which means it might change at any point during the semester. I will post any changes and will call your attention to it in advance. A list of abbreviations of Aristotle's work can be found at the beginning of our textbook. Page numbers refer to the textbook.

Science and logic		
Aug 27	Introduction	Protrepticus (Collab.)
29	Background	Parmenides, Plato (Collab.)
Sep 3	Aristotle: Life and works	Diogenes Laertius (Collab.)
5	Natural science	Meta. V.4 (270–271), VI.1 (278–280); Phys. I (81–93)
10	Explaining change	Phys. II (93–111)
12	Place and time	Phys. IV (120–127)
17	Thinking about science	Anal. post. I (39–49)
19	Scientific explanation	Anal. post. II (50–59)
24	Further characteristics	Topics I (60–78)
26	Logic and its limits	De int. (12–23)
Metaphysics and its applications		
Oct 1	Early ontology	Cat. (5–11)
3	Back to physics: Zeno's racecourse	Phys. VI.9 (Collab.)
10	Back to physics 2: unmoved mover	Phys. VIII (127–131)
15	Form and substance	Meta. VII.1–9 (284–298)
17	Definition and substance	Meta. VII.10–17 (298–313)
22	Action and passion	Meta. IX (321–335)
24	Back to the unmoved mover	Meta. XII (339–355)
29	Application: the soul	De an. I-II.4 (161–174)
31	Perception	De an. II.5–12 (174–187)
Nov 5	Thinking	De an. III (187–205)
7	Memory	De mem. (206–213)
The good life		
12	Living well	EN I (363–376)
14	Virtues	EN II (376–387)
19	Akrasia	EN VII (431–452)
21	Friendship	EN IX (452–459)
26	The contemplative life	EN X.6–9 (468–478)
Dec 3	Peer review day	Due: Final paper
5	Review	Shields (Collab.)