

Presentation and short paper

Your presentation should address a central issue that Aristotle deals with in the reading assigned for the class. The presentation *should not be a summary* of the reading; you can assume that we have all read it. Instead, you may want to give some context (what is the problem? Why should anyone care? Was there any interesting precedent to Aristotle's theory? etc.), present the issue, and lead a discussion on it in the class.

The paper, just like the oral version, should be a focused, critical engagement with the text. You do not have to consult any secondary literature, nor is it on you to find supporting text elsewhere in the corpus. Instead, take a careful look at the text, make sure you understand it, and then communicate that understanding in clear, readable prose. Expound the view using accurate, intelligent paraphrase and direct quotations when precise wording is at issue or the claim is really hard to understand. Whenever you attribute something to Aristotle, it should be crystal clear where you're getting it from (and if you think it's something he's committed to but doesn't say outright, that should also be crystal clear). This should take between half and two-thirds of the paper and deserves the utmost care.

After this, you have two choices:

A: The Exegetical Path

- 1) Raise an objection to your own interpretation of the passage. This means articulating an alternative and offering plausible arguments in its favor and against the reading you offer. What are some reasons to think Aristotle didn't mean what you take him to mean, and what might he have meant instead?
- 2) Respond to those objections, offering counterarguments that defend your own original reading and undermining the plausibility of the alternative developed in the previous step. The result is that you and the reader remain convinced that the reading you offer is the best interpretation.

B: The Dialectical Path

- 1) Raise an objection to the *view* Aristotle offers as you reconstruct it. This means engaging Aristotle as a fellow philosopher, offering arguments meant to compel your assent on issues of philosophical import. Why shouldn't we buy what he says? What argumentative mistakes does he make? What counterexamples might his view be vulnerable to? What's he missing and why does it matter?
- 2) Respond to your objections on behalf of Aristotle (not because he's so great that he has to be right, but because he's dead and can't do it himself). What sort of counterarguments are open to him? Can something in the spirit of his view be preserved against the objection, if not the exact formulation?

Close with a very brief diagnostic conclusion. What questions remain open at the close of the discussion? What further issue does Aristotle's response face? What deeper interpretive issue lurks beneath your defense of your interpretation against the alternative?

Aim for around 1650 words (but it is flexible). **DUE date: on the day of your presentation.**