

ARISTOTLE (GREEK IIB)

(5AANB002/7AAN6014)

SPRING 2025

Instructor:	Dr Zita Toth	Office:	Philosophy building, 709
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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.

Texts. There is a textbook that contains all the readings, and I would very strongly recommend getting a physical copy, if at all you can: J. L. Ackrill (ed.). *A New Aristotle Reader*. Princeton University Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-691-02043-3.

Expectations and Assignments.

Attendance and in-class participation: Conversation is essential to philosophy. Everyone will be expected to come to class having done the assigned mandatory readings, *and* having written down at least two questions concerning those readings. These questions may be clarificatory, or put forward objections, or engage with any part of the reading in an incisive manner.

Formative assessment: An argument reconstruction paper on one of the first few topics of the class. Details will follow.

Summative assessment: Details will follow; see also the Student Handbook.

Electronic devices: According to plenty of research, electronic note-taking and reading on screen adversely affects deep understanding. Thus, students are strongly encouraged to use analog means instead, including a physical copy of the textbook.

Plagiarism: If you use or copy a source without properly citing it, whether this act is intentional or not, you commit plagiarism. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more details.

Generative AI: you are permitted to use spell check and grammar check tools, but you are not permitted to use AI to generate either whole or parts of the essay you are going to turn in. See the Student Handbook for more details.

Lateness: For the department’s policy on late summative assessment, please see the Student Handbook. If you have any concerns regarding the formative assessment, please ask me directly and as soon as possible.

Special Accommodations: Students with special needs requiring accommodations should please get in touch with Student Services Disability Support (disability@kcl.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

Tentative Schedule of Readings. The schedule is tentative, but we will make every reasonable effort to stick to it. A list of abbreviations of Aristotle’s work can be found at the beginning of our textbook. Page numbers refer to the textbook. The secondary readings (marked with ★) are not mandatory for attending the class, but only serve as pointers for further study.

Week	Topic	Mandatory reading
W1	Introduction	Protrepticus ★ Hutchinson & Johnson, “Authenticating the Protrepticus” ★ Frede, “The Study of Ancient Philosophy”
W2	Natural science	Phys. II (93–110); Meta. V.4 (270–71), VI.1 (278–80) ★ Ferejohn, “Empiricism and the First Principles”
W3	Scientific explanation	Anal. post. I–II (39–59) ★ Burnyeat, “Aristotle on Understanding Knowledge”
W4	Ontology	Cat. (5–11); Meta. VII.1–9 (284–98) ★ Frede, “Substance in Aristotle’s <i>Metaphysics</i> ”
W5	The unmoved mover	Meta. XII (339–55) ★ Bordt, “Why Aristotle’s God is Not the Unmoved Mover”
W6	Application: the soul	De an. II.1–7 (165–77) ★ Ackrill, “Aristotle’s Definitions of Psyche”
W7	Thinking	De an. III.3–8 (191–200) ★ Cohoe, “Nous in Aristotle’s <i>De anima</i> ”
W8	Living well and the virtues	EN I.1–3, 7–8, 13; II.1–2, 5–9 (363–387, sel.) ★ Lawrence, “Human Good and Human Function”
W9	Friendship	EN IX (452–59) ★ Biss, “Aristotle on Friendship”
W10	The contemplative life	EN X.6–9 (468–78) ★ Liu, “An All-inclusive Interpretation. . .”

Some general recommended readings on Aristotle.

- J. Ackrill. *Aristotle the Philosopher*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Jonathan Barnes. *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Jonathan Barnes, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Jonathan Lear. *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Not quite comprehensive but very engaging.
- Sir David Ross. *Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984. (It’s old (first published in 1923), but still useful.)
- Christopher Shields. *Aristotle*. London: Routledge, 2014. Highly recommended introduction with excellent introductory bibliography.
- Christopher Shields, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.