

# Aristotle

## Philosophy 101 – Winter 2018

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**Instructor:** Blythe Greene

**Contact info:** bagreene@ucsd.edu

**Office hours:** Tuesdays, 1-3, at Perks (next to the bookstore)

**Final Exam Date:** Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 3-6pm

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### **Introduction:**

Aristotle of Stagira (384 - 322 BCE) is perhaps the most influential philosopher in all of Western history; his influence can be felt in every area of philosophy, even today. In this course we will be looking at aspects of Aristotle's theoretical ethics, politics theory, logic, philosophy of language, and physics. There will be three main texts for our course: *The Nicomachean Ethics*, *The Politics*, and *The Physics*. We will read large selections of these texts as well as short sections of other texts. You will also have the option of doing independent research on one of the many other topics covered in the Aristotelian canon.

This course will involve active discussion and participation by all the students. I will not be lecturing all class; instead, every class we will have presentations by students, class discussions, and active reading of the texts together, in addition to some more traditional lecturing. This makes it important that everyone do the assigned reading ahead of time. Notetaking is encouraged, as are questions about the texts.

**Course text:** The Basic Works of Aristotle, Modern Library Edition, ed. R McKeon  
ISBN-10:0375757996

### **Assessment:**

Attendance: 10%

Discussion: 10%

Short Responses: 15%

First Paper: 15%

Second Paper OR Presentation: 15%

Final Exam or Research Paper: 35%

### **Course Goals:**

- Learn how to read Aristotle as an author
- Learn how to extract philosophical arguments from a prose source
- Gain familiarity with core topics in ancient philosophy and Aristotle's responses
- Practice presenting and discussing philosophical arguments
- Gain facility in analyzing and critiquing philosophical arguments

**Attendance and discussion:** Because of the format of the course, attendance and discussion are both crucial to success, and their high weighting reflects this. You may miss one class without any penalty. This course will be focused around class discussions, and I expect everyone to participate regularly. If you anticipate that this will be a problem for you, please speak to me at the beginning of the quarter.

**Short Responses:** You are responsible for writing six short responses of 1-2 pages engaging with the reading material. You can explicate a complex argument, present a counterargument or problem, or even point out a difficult part of the text and reflect on what you don't understand about it. These responses must be handed in in class for the day that reading is assigned. They will each be graded pass/no pass (P/NP) and your grade will depend on how many passing grades you earn (out of 6). You will have the option to make up NP responses by doing another response.

You will not receive written commentary on your responses unless they are NP, but I strongly encourage students to come talk to me about their short responses and receive in-person feedback on their writing during office hours.

**First Paper:** There will be one mandatory essay for the class. Prompts will be disseminated later in the quarter. You may email me short questions about the prompts, but long questions or requests for me to read portions of your draft must be done during office hours. If you wish to write on a different prompt, you may present it to me for approval.

**Second Paper:** You are required to do either a class presentation on the readings or a second paper. Prompts will be available starting Week 7. You must decide by the second week of class whether you want to do a presentation or write a second paper. Once decided, you cannot change unless you have an extenuating circumstance and my approval.

**Presentations:** You are required to do either a class presentation on the readings or a second paper. The presentation will involve approximately five minutes of you presenting the material to the class and five minutes of you leading discussion about your presentation, including prepared discussion questions. The discussion questions will be evaluated as part of your presentation. Some visual component – e.g. handouts, powerpoints, use of the chalk board – is required. You may use an appropriate outside source so long as it is properly credited in your presentation and you get a copy to me ahead of time. You must discuss your presentation topic with me before class, either in office hours or by email, *no later* than 9pm the night before. Not contacting me, or contacting me late, will result in lost points.

**Research paper:** There is an OPTIONAL third paper which may be done in place of the final exam. This paper will involve doing independent research into an area of Aristotle's philosophy not covered in the class and looking into secondary work about this subject. If you choose this option you will need to submit a research topic suggestion by February 9 and a full proposal by February 26.

**Late Policy:** I will deduct three percentage points (approximately one-third of a grade) for every day an assignment is late. For the research paper topic and proposals, late entries will forfeit your chance to complete the project unless you speak to me ahead of time and get special clearance.

**Email policy:** Please put the course number (Phil 101) in your subject line when you email me about the class. You may email me at any time, but please give me at least 24-hours to respond. If I don't respond within 24-hours, you may send your email again. If I decide a question will be too time consuming to answer via email, I may ask you to speak to me in person instead.

### Week 1

M 1/8: Introduction to Aristotle

*Metaphysics* I.1 (in class)

W 1/10: An Introduction to Aristotelian Ethics

Read *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1-6

F 1/12: What is the Good for a Human Being?

Read *NE* I.7-13

### Week 2:

**M 1/15: MLK DAY – NO CLASS**

W 1/17: The Happy Life

Read *NE* X.6-9

F 1/19: What is Virtue?

Read *NE* II

### Week 3:

M 1/22: Moral Responsibility

Read *NE* III.1-5

W 1/24: A Survey of Virtues – **No presentations**

Skim *NE* III.6-12, *NE* IV

F 1/26: The Nature of Justice

Read *NE* V.1-5

Week 4:

M 1/29: More on Justice

Read *NE* V.6-11

W 1/31: Friendship

Read *NE* VIII

F 2/2: Friendship (Continued)

Read *NE* IX

**First Paper Prompts Released**

Week 5:

M 2/5: Political Associations

Read *Politics* I

W 2/7: Citizens and States

Read *Politics* III.1-10

F 2/9: Proper and Defective States

Read *Politics* III.11-18

**Research Paper Topic Due**

Week 6

M 2/12: The Ideal State

Read *Politics* VII.1-10

W 2/14: Civic Planning and Education

Read *Politics* VII.11-17; VIII.1-3

F 2/16: Review: Ethics and Politics (no reading)

**First Paper Due**

Week 7

**M 2/19: PRESIDENTS' DAY – NO CLASS**

W 2/21: The Instruments of Philosophy – Language

Read *De Interpretatione* 1-9

F 2/23: The Instruments of Philosophy – Logic

Read *Posterior Analytics* I.1-3, II.11 and II.19**Second Paper Prompts Released**Week 8

M 2/26: What is Nature?

Read *Physics* II.1-2**Research Paper proposal due**

W 2/28: Cause and Chance

Read *Physics* II.3-7

F 3/2: Nature and Necessity

Read *Physics* II.8-9Week 9

M 3/5: Bodies in Motion

Read *Physics* III.1-3

W 3/7: Time

Read *Physics* IV.10-14

F 3/9: Review: Logic and Physics (no reading)

**Second Paper Due**Week 10:M 3/12: *TBD (student's choice)*W 3/14: *TBD (student's choice)*

F 3/16: Class Review