Course Description

This course offers a broad survey of the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322 BC). Beginning with an overview of his logic, scientific method, and cognitive science, we will proceed to examine the principles of his natural philosophy, including, cosmology, biology, physiology, and psychology, as well as examples of his explanations of such phenomena as meteorological halos, dreaming, and animal motion. We will also examine major issues of his “philosophy of human nature”, including the principles of political science and ethics, and consider his theories of the virtues and kinds of government, with special attention to his moral-psychological accounts of anger, education, and poetic creativity.

Required Text


Objectives

- Learn to cite, interpret, and criticize the primary works of Aristotle in English translation both in discussion and in writing.
- Survey major topics and problems in the philosophy of Aristotle, including his logic, physics, and ethics.
- Devise and execute an original research project on Aristotle using both primary and secondary sources.
- Participate in active professional research in the field of Aristotel Studies.
- Appreciate the seminal influence of Aristotle on the subsequent development of Western philosophy and science and learn to relate Aristotle to current or perennial problems in the field of philosophy.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on a 1000 point scale (A>900; B>800; C>700; D>600; F<600) of points earned in the following activities:

1. **attendance and participation** in discussion either in-class or online (100 points);
2. **the scribe assignment**, consisting of two written reports with an oral presentation before the class done in conjunction with another student (200 points) <see instructions>;
3. **the scholar assignment**, an annotated bibliography (100 points) <see instructions>;
4. **the research assignment** in several drafts (400 points) <see instructions>;
5. **critical-editorial comments** on a rough draft of a peer’s research paper (100 points);
6. **a brief presentation** before the class of your research, along with a written abstract and handout (100 points).
Aristotle’s Life, Works, and Division of Philosophy
Required Reading: Handouts: Biographical Timeline; How to Cite the Aristotle Corpus (for which see the abbreviations used on this page); Ancient Lists of Aristotle’s Writings; Basic Aristotle Bibliography
Recommended Reading: Basic Works, pp.v-xxi, Metaph. 6.1

Language, Cognition, Categories, and Entities
Required Reading: Cat. 4-5, Int. 1-9
Close Reading: “Words, Thoughts, and Things” (Int. 1, 16a3-8)
Recommended Reading: Cat. 1-3, 6-15, Int. 10-15, Metaph. 5.1-30

Experience, Art, and Science
Required Reading: APo. 2.19; Metaph. 1.1-2; Phys. 1.1
Close Reading: “The Train of Cognition” (Metaph. 1.1, 980a1-981a4)
Recommended Reading: EN 6.1-13

Logic and Dialectic
Required Reading: APr. 1.1, 1.4, 1.30; Top. 1.1,
Close Reading: “Demonstrative and Dialectical Syllogisms” (APr. 1.1, 24a28-b22)
Recommended Reading: SE 1, 34
*Due: hard copy of Scholar Assignment!

Scientific Explanation
Required Reading: APo. 1.1-3, 2.11
Close Reading: “Conditions of Scientific Knowledge” (APo. 2.2, 71b16-24)
Recommended Reading: APo. 1.4-8, 2.1-10, 2.12-18

Natural Science
Required Reading: Phys. 1.1, 2.1, Cael. 1.1, GC 1.1, Meteor. 1.1
Close Reading: “A Syllabus of Natural Science” (Meteor. 1.1, 338a20-339a10)
*Due: (1) electronic copy of scholar assignment; (2) research Paper Proposal!

An Explanation of the Rainbow
Required Reading: APo. 1.9-13, Phys. 2.2, Meteor. 3.1-5
Recommended Reading: Metaph. 13.3
ii 3  Causality
Required Reading: Phys. 2.3-9
Close Reading: “A Difficulty about Nature” (Phys. 2.8, 198b17-33)
Recommended Reading: Metaph. 12.1-10

ii 5  Principles of Biology
Required Reading: PA 1.1-5
Close Reading: “Exhortation to Biology” (PA 1.5, 644b23-645a36)
Recommended Reading: HA 1.1, PA 2.1, GA 1.1, 5.1
*Due: Rough Draft of Research Paper!

ii 10  Principles of Physiology and Psychology
Required Reading: de An. 1.1, 2.1-4, HA 8.1
Close Reading: “Psychic Capacities” (de An. 2.3, 414a28-b20)
Recommended Reading: de An. 2.5-3.13
*Due: Comments on peer’s rough draft!

ii 12  An Explanation of Dreaming
Required Reading: Somn.; Div. Somn.
Close Reading: “A Scientific View of the Nature of Dreams” (Somn. 2, 459a23-33)
Recommended Reading: Sens.

ii 17  President’s Holiday (no class)

ii 19  An Explanation of Animal Motion
Required Reading: MA 1-11
Close Reading: “An Automatic Theory of Action” (MA 7)
Recommended Reading: de An. 3.6-11
Recommended Re-Reading: APo. 2.11, Mech. 1

ii 24  Principles of Political Science
Required Reading: EN 1.1-2, Pol. 1.1-2, 3.6, 4.1
Close Reading: “Humans as Political Animals in the State of Nature” (Pol. 1.2, 1252b27-1253a38)
Recommended Reading: Pol. 1.3-3.5, 3.7-18
Recommended Re-Reading: Metaph. 1.2
*Due: Second Draft of Research Paper

ii 26  A Theory of Excellence
Required Reading: EN 1.13-3.5
Close Reading: “A Definition of Moral Excellence” (EN 2.6, 1106b36-1107a8)
Recommended Reading: EN 3.6-5.11
Recommended Re-Reading: EN 6.1-13
iii 3  A Theory of Political Constitutions
Required Reading: EN 10.9, Pol. 3.7-13, 4.2-5
Close Reading: “The Kinds of Government” (Pol. 3.7, 1279a25-39)
Recommended Reading: Pol. 5.1-6.8

iii 5  A Theory of Civic Discourse
Required Reading: Rhet. 1.1-3
Close Reading: “A Definition of Rhetoric” (Rhet. 1.2, 1355b26-36)
Recommended Reading: Rhet. 1.4-15
Recommended Re-Reading: APr. 1.1, Top. 1.1

iii 10  Moral Psychology of Anger
Required Reading: EN 4.5, Rhet. 2.1-3
Close Reading: “The Definition of Anger” (Rhet. 2.3)
Recommended Reading: Rhet. 2.4-12
Recommended Re-Reading: de An. 1.1

iii 12  Education and Creativity
Required Reading: Pol. 7.13-15, Poet. 1-14
Close Reading: “Leisure as the End of the Individual and the State” (Pol. 7.15, 1334a12-39)
Recommended Reading: Pol. 7.1-12, 8.1-7; Poet. 15-26
*Due: Final Draft of Paper!

iii 19 (Wednesday) 7:00p-9:59p Final Exam
Each student will give a 4-6 minute presentation on their research.
*Due: Presentation Handout!