

ARISTOTLE

PHIL 323-01/423-01

TTH 12:15–1:30

Dr. Miller

This course will introduce students to Aristotle’s philosophy. This philosophy is difficult, and at times technical, but understanding it, with its aspiration to encompass everything known, is one of the great intellectual adventures of all time.

Our scope will be broad, since Aristotle’s system ranges over many of the subjects now considered part of philosophy—thanks largely to Aristotle himself—and even some that have been appropriated by other disciplines. We shall first discuss theoretical subjects: language and logic, universals and particulars, the sciences and their structure, possibility and necessity, luck and chance, fate and freedom, truth and falsehood, knowledge and its acquisition, causation and explanation, potentiality and actuality, form and matter, finitude and infinity, motion and rest, change and time, the elements and the heavens, animals and the gods. We shall then examine Aristotle’s attitude to his philosophical predecessors, and to philosophy itself—thereby contemplating being, essence and existence, form and matter, parts and wholes, appearance and reality, skepticism and certainty, the nature of the supreme God. Next will be psychological topics: the body and the soul, sensation and reason, imagination and desire; then ethical ones: human nature, happiness, the best life, virtue, courage, wisdom, justice, neurosis, friendship, pleasure, and divine contemplation. We shall conclude with politics, rhetoric, and poetic drama, investigating the following subjects: the origins of political community, the purpose of political life, the proper relations between men and women, natural slavery, private property, democracy, class warfare, quietism, political persuasion and the emotions, the composition of persuasive prose and of tragedy.

Our readings will be excerpted from the following Aristotelian works: *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, *Physics*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *De Anima*, *De Partibus Animalium*, *De Motu Animalium*, *Metaphysics*, *On Ideas*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*. Occasionally we shall consider the relevance of Aristotle’s thought to subsequent philosophers.

Evaluation:

Reading Quizzes.....	10%
First Logic Assignment.....	10%
Second Logic Assignment.....	5%
Midterm Exam.....	20%
Paper.....	25%
Final Exam.....	30%

Texts:

<i>Aristotle: Selections</i> , trs. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine
<i>Aristotle</i> , Christopher Shields
<i>Thinking from A to Z</i> , 3 rd ed., Nigel Warburton
<i>A Rulebook for Arguments</i> , 4 th edition, Anthony Weston