

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts  
 Duquesne University

**ARISTOTLE**  
 PHIL 323-01/423-01  
 TTH 12:15–1:30, College Hall 553  
 Spring 2010

Teacher	Texts
Dr. Miller.....College 332	<i>Aristotle: Selections</i> , trs. Irwin and Fine (I&F)
Office Hours.....TTH 2:30–3:30	<i>Aristotle</i> , Shields
Email Address..... <a href="mailto:millerp2212@duq.edu">millerp2212@duq.edu</a>	<i>Thinking from A to Z</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed., Warburton
Website..... <a href="http://www.unc.edu/~plmiller">www.unc.edu/~plmiller</a>	<i>A Rulebook for Arguments</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> ed., Weston

  

Evaluation	Important Dates
Greek Alphabet Quiz.....3%	Greek Alphabet Quiz.....01.14
Reading Quizzes.....10%	Logic Assignment.....01.28
Logic Assignment.....12%	Midterm Exam.....02.11
Midterm Exam.....20%	Paper.....04.08
Paper.....25%	Final Exam.....05.03
Final Exam.....30%	

*Course Description*

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.

### *Course Requirements*

As with any college course, every hour in class requires at least two hours of preparation beforehand. Sometimes you will be able to race through the reading for one of our meetings in less than half an hour, but if you find yourself doing less than two hours' work you should become suspicious that you are missing something. When formal assignments are due, needless to say, still more time will be needed. Precise expectations for these assignments will be made clearer when they are imminent. In the meantime, recognize that the course demands steady work throughout the semester. Keep up with the reading, attend class, participate in discussions. Seek help when you meet concepts you do not understand or skills you have trouble mastering. In general, cultivate an *active* approach to the material: think of the teacher as a guide rather than a general. Freedom will be granted to you; responsibility will be expected of you; excuses will not be tolerated from you.

*Blackboard* will be an important resource for this course, and you should consult it fairly often. There you will find some important announcements and all important course documents. These documents will range from this syllabus to prompts for papers and study guides for exams. Both exams will be comprehensive, so you must ensure that by the time the study guides are distributed (often a week before the exam) you have done all the reading, have a reliable set of notes, and have clarified to your own satisfaction any major points that had remained obscure. As for papers, throughout the semester you should be reading and internalizing Weston's *A Rulebook for Arguments*. This is an indispensable guide to constructing philosophical arguments and expressing them clearly. You may ask questions about this book at any point during the semester. Without such questions, however, it will rarely be discussed. In any case, it will be assumed that you have mastered it, and your writing will be graded accordingly.

### *Some Course Policies*

Attendance is expected at all lectures, and occasionally the teacher will call roll. In light of this expectation, necessary absences should be explained, preferably with documentation. Any absence of more than one week requires the student to contact an advisor. There is no intrinsic penalty for missing class, but because of the steady workload required by this course, and because of its unannounced reading quizzes, students who miss more than a class or two will suffer poor grades, often to the point of failing.

In order to receive full consideration, formal assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Once class has begun, submitted work will be penalized by a 'minus' for each 24 hours that it is late. Thus, when a paper is due on a Tuesday, for example, if a certain paper is of good quality and is submitted at the beginning of class on Tuesday, it will receive a B. Submitted after the beginning of class on Tuesday, however, the same paper will receive a B-. Submitted 24 hours later, it will receive a C+, and so on until the graded papers are returned to the rest of the class, after which time it will receive no consideration.

Exams missed for any reason beyond those excused by the university's administration (travel for a university sponsored activity, death in the family, serious illness or accident, etc.) will not be administered again. In order to receive a make-up exam, a student will need to supply the teacher with advance notice of the absence (when possible). Both the College of Liberal Arts and the teacher must receive documentation of the excuse (in all cases).

Graded work will receive numerical scores. Since the allotment to each assignment has been made explicit above, the teacher will not calculate interim grades for students; you can easily do so for yourselves. If you are accustomed to the grade inflation prevalent at Duquesne, you may be surprised to learn that the meanings of these numerical scores are nothing but the ones officially prescribed by the McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts:

93–100.....	A.....	superior
90–92.....	A-.....	excellent
88–89.....	B+.....	very good
83–87.....	B.....	good
80–82.....	B-.....	above average
78–79.....	C+.....	satisfactory
70–77.....	C.....	average
60–69.....	D.....	poor
0–59.....	F.....	failure

About grades, two general points should be remembered. First, grades are *earned* by the student, not *given* by the teacher. Second, the meanings above are taken quite literally, so that grades in the A range will be very rare, a B grade (or higher) will be something of which to be proud, and the grade of C will very likely be the class average at the end of the semester. Students who receive D grades or lower should consult with the teacher immediately in order to diagnose and remedy the problem(s). I am always eager to promote students who earn A's in my courses, but I cannot write a letter of recommendation otherwise.

Like all forms of lying, plagiarism and cheating are grave offences. This is especially true in a university, whose goal is the pursuit of truth. Since these offences threaten the very foundation of collegiate life, they will be prosecuted to the full extent afforded by this university's policies. The maximum penalty is expulsion. Any doubts about the natures of these offences or the punishments they will incur can be dispelled by consulting the following website: <http://www.studentlife.duq.edu/handbooksec5.html>

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations, if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retrospectively

*“Learning Outcomes”*

There is a movement afoot in universities, as in primary and secondary schools, to categorize “learning outcomes,” quantify pedagogical results, and thus make education amenable to bureaucratic control (or at least the illusion thereof). However applicable this model may be to lower levels, or even to other subjects at the college level, its application to the philosophical classroom is at best absurd, and at worst pernicious. One desirable outcome of all my courses, therefore, is that students come to see “learning outcomes” in this light. This is less evident in a course on Aristotle, who of all philosophers might appear to recommend such categorization. The first Aristotelian treatise we shall read this semester, after all, is the *Categories*. But Aristotle informs us elsewhere (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b24–25) that “the educated person seeks exactness in each area to the extent that the nature of the subject allows,” and the educated person has seen enough of education to know that any exact forecast of learning outcomes is bound to be superficial or deceptive or both. But let us imagine Aristotle adapting his own classroom to our educational fads. Here, perhaps, would be the learning outcomes at the Lyceum:

(Level 4) *SEPARATE* oneself from all bodily impediments;

(Level 5) *MERGE* oneself with the first cause of the cosmos by an act of pure reason;

(Level 6) *ENVISION* oneself thereby as God.

*Syllabus*

<p>01.05.10</p>	<p>01.07.10</p> <p><b>Introduction to Aristotle</b></p> <p><b>Warburton Terms:</b> assertion argument premise conclusion validity deduction sound argument</p> <p>Weston xi–xiv</p> <p>(Shields 8–35)</p> <p>15 pages</p>
<p>01.12.10</p> <p><i>Categories</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 1–12</p> <p>conditional statements antecedent consequent necessary and sufficient conditions iff</p> <p>Weston 1–7</p> <p>(Shields 146–81)</p> <p>22 pages</p>	<p>01.14.10</p> <p><i>De Interpretatione</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 13–28</p> <p>affirming the antecedent denying the consequent denying the antecedent affirming the consequent formal fallacy <i>non sequitur</i></p> <p>(Shields 181–95)</p> <p>19 pages</p> <p><b>Greek Alphabet Quiz</b></p>

<p>01.19.10</p> <p><i>Prior Analytics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 29–36</p> <p>consistency contraries contradictories <i>reductio ad absurdum</i> absurd consequences move</p> <p>Weston 37–49</p> <p>(Shields 118–25)</p> <p>19 pages</p>	<p>01.21.10</p> <p><i>Posterior Analytics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 37–68</p> <p>empirical anecdotal evidence induction genetic fallacy correlation=cause confusion <i>post hoc ergo propter hoc</i> some/all confusion alternative explanations equivocation begging the question circular argument</p> <p>(Shields 98–117)</p> <p>27 pages</p>
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<p>01.26.10</p> <p><i>Topics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 69–82</p> <p>hypothesis dictionary definition truth by adage counterexample rash generalization <i>ad hoc</i> clauses humptydumptying stipulative definitions black-and-white thinking false dichotomy Socratic fallacy family resemblance term</p> <p>(Shields 126–45)</p> <p>18 pages</p>	<p>01.28.10</p> <p><i>Physics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 83–95</p> <p>(Shields 36–52)</p> <p>12 pages</p> <p><b>Logic Assignment Due</b></p>
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02.04.10 <i>Physics</i> I&F 95–119 Weston 19–22 (Shields 53–97) 24 pages	02.04.10 <i>Physics</i> I&F 120–33 Weston 9–17 (Shields 196–220) 21 pages
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02.09.10 <i>Physics</i> I&F 133–36 Weston 31–36 (Shields 220–31) 8 pages	02.11.10  <b>Midterm Exam</b>
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02.16.10 <i>De Anima</i> I&F 169–98 (Shields 270–93) 29 pages	02.18.10 <i>De Anima</i> I&F 198–202 Weston 49–65 (Shields 293–305) 19 pages
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02.23.10 <i>De Anima</i> <i>De Partibus Animalium</i> <i>De Motu Animalium</i> I&F 202–20 18 pages	02.25.10 <i>Metaphysics</i> I&F 221–44, 558–63 (Shields 232–46) 28 pages
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SPRING BREAK

<p>03.09.10</p> <p><i>Metaphysics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 244–69</p> <p>(Shields 246–54)</p> <p>30 pages</p>	<p>03.11.10</p> <p><i>Metaphysics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 270–94</p> <p>(Shields 255–67)</p> <p>24 pages</p>
<p>03.16.10</p> <p><i>Metaphysics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 294–332</p> <p>(Shields 267–69)</p> <p>38 pages</p>	<p>03.18.10</p> <p><i>Metaphysics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 332–46</p> <p>14 pages</p>
<p>03.23.10</p> <p><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 347–91</p> <p>(Shields 306–23)</p> <p>44 pages</p>	<p>03.25.10</p> <p><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 391–422</p> <p>(Shields 323–33)</p> <p>29 pages</p>
<p>03.30.10</p> <p><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 423–45</p> <p>(Shields 334–49)</p> <p>22 pages</p>	<p>04.01.10</p> <p>EASTER BREAK</p>

<p>04.06.10</p> <p>MONDAY SCHEDULE</p>	<p>04.08.10</p> <p><i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>Politics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 445–65</p> <p>20 pages</p> <p>(Shields 350–63)</p> <p><b>Paper Due</b></p>
<p>04.13.10</p> <p><i>Politics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 465–85</p> <p>(Shields 363 –74)</p> <p>20 pages</p>	<p>04.15.10</p> <p><i>Politics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 485–516</p> <p>31 pages</p>
<p>04.20.10</p> <p><i>Rhetoric</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 517–42</p> <p>(Shields 375–85)</p> <p>25 pages</p>	<p>04.22.10</p> <p><i>Poetics</i></p> <p>I&amp;F 543–57</p> <p>(Shields 385–97)</p> <p>14 pages</p>
<p>04.27.10</p> <p>Aristotle’s Legacy</p> <p>(Shields 398–404)</p>	

**Comprehensive Final Exam:** Friday, 05.03.10, 1:30–3:30pm