



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
PHIL 401: Aristotle
Winter Term 2013

Course Outline

Lectures: MWF 10:00-10:50, SS 541

Course Description

This course will present Aristotle as a systematic philosopher whose views on logic, metaphysics, epistemology, science, nature, and the mind structure and reinforce his views on ethics, friendship, politics, and works of literature. Reading assignments, lectures, and written assignments will focus primarily on Aristotle's texts, though we will also use a recent book by Christopher Shields to illuminate these texts and to highlight important interpretive and critical issues.

Required Texts

1. Aristotle, *Aristotle: Selections*, Terrence Irwin and Gail Fine, editors (Hackett, 1995).
2. Christopher Shields, *Aristotle* (Routledge, 2007).

Evaluation

1. 13 weekly homework assignments: 50% of the final grade.
 - a. Homework assignments will consist of reconstructing and/or evaluating arguments or passages from the assigned text for the class on which they are due. Most assignments will require about one page of writing.
 - b. Assignments must be typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font, printed out, and ready to submit at the beginning of the class on which they are due.
 - c. During lecture you may correct by hand any errors you have made in your typed assignment for that day, and I will award you partial credit of up to 50% for your in-class corrections. So, for example, if your typed homework assignment would have received a score of 6 out of 10 points, and if you correct your homework's mistakes by hand by the end of the class on the day on which it is due, then you will receive a score of 8 out of 10 points.
 - d. One purpose of these assignments and the grading policy described in (1c) is to have you engage with the lecture in a more sophisticated way and participate in class. To this end, you must submit your assignments in person. Emailed assignments and assignments submitted by a classmate will not be accepted.
 - e. Since these assignments will be of varying length and difficulty, some will be worth more than others towards your final grade. Each assignment will be worth between 3% and 8% of your final grade.
2. One closed-book in-class midterm examination, on Monday, March 4th: 20% of the final grade.
3. One open-book take-home final examination, due via Blackboard by Friday, April 19th: 20% of the final grade.
4. Class Participation: 10% of the final grade.
 - a. Class participation includes participating in classroom discussions, visiting office hours, and corresponding with me via email about the material of the course.
5. A passing grade on each of the two main components of the course—homework assignments and exams—is essential if the student is to pass the course as a whole.

Policy on Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted except in the event of a personal emergency.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Introduction. Explanation and Nature, Part 1.

Wednesday, January 9th: Introduction.

- (1) Recommended: Shields, Chapter 1, "Aristotle: Life and Works," pp. 8-35.
- (2) Recommended: Shields, Chapter 11, "Aristotle's Legacy," pp. 398-404.

Friday, January 11th: The Four Causes.

- (1) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 2, Chapter 3, pp. 102-105.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 2, "Explaining Nature and the Nature of Explanation," pp. 36-49.
- (3) Recommended: Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 1, Chapter 3-4, pp. 227-233. [Aristotle's critical discussion of earlier philosophers' restricted focus on only one or two causes.]

Week 2: Explanation and Nature, Part 2.

Monday, January 14th: Hylomorphism, the Material Cause, and the Formal Cause.

- (1) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 1, Chapters 1, 5-9 (especially 7-9), pp. 83-95.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 2, "Explaining Nature and the Nature of Explanation," pp. 49-64.

Wednesday, January 16th: The Efficient Cause and the Final Cause, Part 1.

- (1) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 2, Chapters 7-9, pp. 112-119.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 2, "Explaining Nature and the Nature of Explanation," pp. 64-78.

Friday, January 18th: The Final Cause, Part 2, and Relations Among the Causes.

- (1) Recommended: Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalum*, Book I, Chapter 1, pp. 206-216
- (2) Shields, Chapter 2, "Explaining Nature and the Nature of Explanation," pp. 78-96.

Week 3: Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

Monday, January 21st: Definition, Essence and Accident.

- (1) Aristotle, *Topics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-5, pp. 69-75.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 3, "Thinking," pp. 98-105.

Wednesday, January 23rd: Scientific Knowledge, Knowledge of First Principles.

- (1) Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book I, Chapters 1-3, pp. 37-45;
- (2) Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book II, Chapter 19, pp. 66-68;
- (3) Shields, Chapter 3, "Thinking," pp. 106-118.

Friday, January 25th: Logic and Dialectic.

- (1) Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, Book 1, Chapters 1 and 4, pp. 29-34.
- (2) Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, Chapters 1-4 and 7, pp. 13-17.
- (3) Shields, Chapter 3, "Thinking," pp. 118-133.

Week 4: Aristotle's *Categories*

Monday, January 28th: The Pre-Categories

- (1) Aristotle, *Categories*, Chapter 1-3, pp. 1-3.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 4, "Aristotle's Early Ontology," pp. 146-157.

Wednesday, January 30th: The Categories

- (1) Aristotle, *Categories*, Chapter 4, pp. 3-4.
- (2) Aristotle, *Topics*, Book 1, Chapter 9, pp. 75-76.
- (3) Shields, Chapter 4, "Aristotle's Early Ontology," pp. 157-172.
- (4) Recommended: Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, Book 1, Chapter 22, pp. 56-61.

Friday, February 1st: Substance in the Categories

- (1) Aristotle, *Categories*, Chapter 5, pp. 4-10.

(2) Shields, Chapter 4, "Aristotle's Early Ontology," pp. 172-181.

Week 5: Puzzles of Nature

Monday, February 4th: Change.

- (1) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 3, Chapters 1-3, pp. 145-151.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 5, "Puzzles of Nature," pp. 196-203.

Wednesday, February 6th: The Unmoved Mover.

- (1) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book 8, Chapters 1, 4-6, pp. 137-144.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 5, "Puzzles of Nature," pp. 220-230.

Friday, February 8th: Introduction to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

- (1) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 4, Chapters 1-2, pp. 244-250.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 6, "Substance and the Science of Being Qua Being," pp. 232-246.

Week 6: Metaphysics

Monday, February 11th: The Principle of Non-Contradiction

- (1) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 4, Chapters 3-4, pp. 250-262.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 6, "Substance and the Science of Being Qua Being," pp. 246-255.

Wednesday, February 13th: Primary Substance

- (1) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 7, Chapters 1-3, pp. 272-277.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 6, "Substance and the Science of Being Qua Being," pp. 255-261.

Friday, February 15th: Primary Substance

- (1) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 7, Chapter 17, pp. 312-314.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 6, "Substance and the Science of Being Qua Being," pp. 261-268.

Week 7: Life and Mind

Monday, February 25th: Body and Soul

- (1) Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 1, Chapter 1, pp. 169-173.
- (2) Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2, Chapter 1, pp. 176-179.
- (3) Shields, Chapter 7, "Living Beings," pp. 270-289.

Wednesday, February 27th: Parts of the Soul

- (1) Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2, Chapters 2-4, pp. 179-188.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 7, "Living Beings," pp. 290-293.

Friday, March 1st: Perception and Thought

- (1) Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 2, Chapters 5-6, 11-12, pp. 176-193.
- (2) Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book 3, Chapters 4-5, pp. 198-202.
- (3) Shields, Chapter 7, "Living Beings," pp. 293-305.

Week 9: The Good Life

Monday, March 4th: ****Midterm Exam****

Wednesday, March 6th: The Human Good

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-7, pp. 347-358.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 8, "Living Well," pp. 306-323.

Friday, March 8th: The Human Good and Luck

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapters 8-12, pp. 358-363.

Week 10: Virtue and Vice

Monday, March 11th: Ethical Virtue in General

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, Chapter 13, and Book 2, pp. 363-376.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 8, "Living Well," pp. 323-329.

Wednesday, March 13th: Ethical Virtue in Particular

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapters 6-7, pp. 388-391.
- (2) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapters 9-12, available online at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.3.iii.html>
- (3) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 4, available online at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.4.iv.html>

Friday, March 15th: Justice

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 5, Chapters 1-2, 7, 10, pp. 391-398.

Week 11: Practical Reason

Monday, March 18th: Willing, Choosing, Wishing, and Character

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 3, Chapters 1-5, pp. 376-388.

Wednesday, March 20th: Intellectual Virtue

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 6, Chapters 1-3, 5-6, 8, 12-13, pp. 398-410.

Friday, March 22nd: *Akrasia*

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 7, Chapters 1-3, pp. 411-417.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 8, "Living Well," pp. 329-333.

Week 12: Pleasure and Happiness (Again)

Monday, March 25th: Friendship

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 8 and 9 (selections), pp. 417-432
- (2) Shields, Chapter 8, "Living Well," pp. 334-340.

Wednesday, March 27th: Happiness Reconsidered

- (1) Aristotle, Book 10, Chapters 6-8, pp. 438-445.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 8, "Living Well," pp. 340-348.

Friday, March 29th: ****No Class****

Week 13: Politics

Monday, April 1st: The Priority of the Polis

- (1) Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 10, Chapter 9, pp. 445-449.
- (2) Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2, pp. 450-454.
- (3) Shields, Chapter 9, "Political Association," pp. 350-363.

Wednesday, April 3rd: The Best Constitution

- (1) Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 3, Chapters 6-12 471-485.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 9, "Political Association," pp. 363-368.

Friday, April 5th: Slavery

- (1) Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Chapters 3-6, pp. 454-460.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 9, "Political Association," pp. 368-373.

Week 14: Rhetoric and Poetics

Monday, April 8th: Rhetoric

- (1) Shields, Chapter 10, "Rhetoric and the Arts," pp. 375-381.

- (2) Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 1, Chapters 1-2, pp. 517-525.
- (3) Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 2, Chapters 1, 4, pp. 534-539.

Wednesday, April 10th: Tragedy and *Katharsis*

- (1) Shields, Chapter 10, "Rhetoric and the Arts," pp. 381-391.
- (2) Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chapters 4, 6-7, 9, 10, 11, 13-14, pp. 543-555

Friday, April 12th: Imitation (*Mimêsis*)

- (1) Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chapter 15, pp. 555-557.
- (2) Shields, Chapter 10, "Rhetoric and the Arts," pp. 391-397.