

Date prepared: 8/17/14

The University of New Orleans
Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 3302: Philosophy of Aristotle (3 credits)

SECTION 001: LA 194, Thursday, 4:30 p.m – 7:15 p.m.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Surprenant
Office: UNO: LA 387
Office Hours: (office) M: 11-12pm, Th: 1-4pm (and by appointment)
(Skype, csurprenant) Tues: 12-2pm (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: Accessed via Moodle.

Required Text

Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, ed. Crisp (Cambridge, 2000). ISBN: 0521635462
Aristotle: The Politics and Constitution of Athens, ed. Everson (Oxford, 1996). ISBN: 0521484006

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Aristotle's ideas are examined through careful analysis of his main works with emphasis on his criticisms of the basic theories of his teacher, Plato, and Aristotle's influence on subsequent Western Philosophy, literature, and science.

COURSE OVERVIEW: This course is an advanced study of Aristotle's moral and political philosophy. We will examine Aristotle's answers to such questions as: May the state legitimately use the law to impose a certain conception of morality on its citizens? Or must the state aim, rather, to remain neutral when its citizens disagree strongly about the best way of life, protecting its citizens' freedom to choose their own visions of the good life?

A primary focus throughout the entire semester will be on learning how to read, understand, evaluate, and construct philosophical arguments, and then engaging with contemporary scholars about these arguments and ideas. In this way, this course will also serve as an introduction to being a philosopher. Unique to this course is that during the semester we will papers from contemporary scholars. Each of these scholars will then visit our class the following week to engage in a discussion with us about the topics central to their papers.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to understand theories central to social and political philosophy, and how these theories can be applied to contemporary problems
- to work with philosophical concepts and methods
- to construct and evaluate arguments
- to learn how to construct an analytical essay
- to participate in classroom discussion, developing and displaying an ability and readiness to defend one's own point of view while listening openly but carefully to others
- to demonstrate a willingness to entertain criticism, formulate and reply to reasonable objections, and represent opposing views both critically and sympathetically
- to read both primary and secondary texts, and analyze the arguments contained in them correctly

Grading

Requirements

Participation = 20% (20 points)
Short Paper = 20% (20 points)
Final Presentation = 20% (20 points)
Final Paper = 40% (40 points)

Final Grade

A = 100 – 89.5 points
B = 89.4 – 79.5 points
C = 79.4 – 69.5 points
D = 69.4 – 59.5 points
F = 59.4 – 0 points

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: The University of New Orleans has a strict attendance policy. Attendance and intelligent participation at all class meetings is expected. Attendance will be kept via a sign-in sheet at the front of the room. You are allowed to miss one class without penalty. For each class missed beyond the first, your final grade will be reduced by 1/2 of a letter grade.

In addition to thoughtful class participation, each student is required to submit a thoughtful question based on the work of our visiting scholar by 11:59pm on the Sunday before the scholar's visit. These questions will then be given to the scholar in advance of his/her visit. Question requirements, as well as instructions and guidelines for constructing thoughtful questions, will be discussed in class.

Your final grade may be raised by no more than a full letter based on intelligent and thoughtful class participation, including the submission of timely, thoughtful questions for our visiting scholars, throughout the semester and noticeable improvement in the quality of your contributions and work.

Short Paper: An analytical research paper of no longer than 1000 words is due no later than Sunday, October 19. You will select your own paper topic, but all topics must be approved by me in advance. You are also strongly encourage to meet with me as you develop your topic and the argument in your paper. Guidelines for how to construct the paper will be uploaded to Moodle.

Final Paper and Research Presentation: An analytical research paper of no longer than 5000 words is due no later than Sunday, December 14. You will select your own paper topic, but all topics must be approved by me in advance. You are also strongly encourage to meet with me as you develop your topic and the argument in your paper.

All students will present a portion of their final paper in class, either on November 20 (group 1) or December 5 (group 2). Each student will speak for approximately 10 minutes, during which they present the central ideas and argument of their final paper (you should not simply read your paper), and then field questions for approximately 10 minutes about this project.

Course Policies

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is expected at all class meetings. You may miss up to two classes (and not submit the two corresponding response papers) without penalty. For each class missed beyond the second, you'll lose 2% off your final grade. The cap is 10%, or one, full letter grade.

DISABILITY STAMENT: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

ELECTRONICS: Computers and tablets are allowed in class only if they are being used to access the course material. Any other use of electronics is prohibited. Any student found to be in violation of this policy (e.g., texting) will be asked to leave the room.

LATE WORK POLICY: Work is late one minute after the posted deadline. All late work is peanlized 1/3rd of a letter grade for each day (24 hours) it is late.

STUDENT CONDUCT: Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. In this class you should be prepared to have your positions challenged, as well as to challenge the positions of your classmates. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom, but courteous behavior and responses are expected.

Course Schedule

Reading is due for the date listed. It is strongly suggested that you read the texts in the order listed.

- Aug 21 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I, II, III (ch. 1-5), V, VI, and VI
- Aug 28 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X
Aristotle, *Politics*, Books I, II, III, VI, VII, VIII
- Sept 4 R. Long, "Aristotle's Conception of Freedom"
F. Miller, "Aristotle's Concept of Freedom"
- Sept 11 *reread* Miller, "Aristotle's Concept of Freedom"
This class meets with Fred Miller.
Professor Miller is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Arizona.
- Sept 18 Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book IV, ch. 3-4; Book VI, ch. 5, 8-11
Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, ch. 1-2; Book III (entire)
J. Stoner, "Statesmanship and the Constitution in Aristotle's Political Science"
- Sept 25 *reread* Stoner, "Statesmanship and the Constitution in Aristotle's Political Science"
This class meets with James Stoner.
Professor Stoner is a Professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University.
- Oct 2 Supplementary readings TBD
G. Giorgini, "Aristotle on the Best Form of Government"
- Oct 9 *reread* Giorgini, "Aristotle on the Best Form of Government"
This class meets with Giovanni Giorgini.
Professor Giorgini is a Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Bologna.
- Oct 16 *No Class -- Fall Break*
- Oct 23 D. Rasmussen, "Perfectionism," from *The Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics, 2nd Ed.*
D. Den Uyl and D. Rasmussen, "The Perfectionist Turn," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 30.1-2.
D. Rasmussen, "Individualistic Perfectionism: A Neo-Aristotelian Account of an Ethics of Responsibility"
- Oct 30 *reread* Rasmussen, "Individualistic Perfectionism: A Neo-Aristotelian Account of an Ethics of Responsibility"
This class meets with Douglas Rasmussen.
Professor Rasmussen is a Professor of Philosophy at St. John's University.
- Nov 6 Supplementary readings TBD
Stephen Palmquist, "Aristotle and Kant on Altruism and the Love Command"
- Nov 13 *reread* Palmquist, "Aristotle and Kant on Altruism and the Love Command"
This class meets with Stephen Palmquist.
Professor Palmquist is a Professor of Philosophy at Hong Kong Baptist University.
- Nov 20 Student Presentations (Group 1)
- Nov 27 *No Class -- Thanksgiving Break*
- Dec 5 Student Presentations (Group 2)