**Aristotle:** **Moral Character**

1. Aristotle
   1. Plato’s most talented student
   2. Nicomachean ethics
      1. First systematic treatment of ethics in western civilization
      2. Stresses supremacy of rational nature and purposive nature of the universe
      3. Forms that make objects understandable cannot exist apart from particular objects
      4. Basic moral principle is immanent in activities of daily life.
      5. Ultimate end must be self-sufficient, final and attainable
      6. Happiness depends on the actualization and full realization of rationality
      7. Virtue is excellence in relation to function
2. Teleological Basis
   1. Aims at some end or good
   2. Though there are many different kinds of ends: activities, products, etc.
3. Politics’ end is the good of man
   1. Chief good which we desire for its own sake.
   2. Politics ordains what should be studied and by whom, and also what to abstain from.
   3. Study of politics deals with a human variable, and may not be very precise
      1. May exist out of convention rather than by nature
      2. A man should judge based on his own knowledge
4. Ultimate good is happiness
   1. We always choose it for itself and never for something else
   2. Activity of the soul (of reason)
   3. In accordance with virtue (quality of performance)
   4. Activity peculiar to man is rationality
      1. Control a man’s irrational propensities
      2. Exercise reason for its own sake
5. Virtue
   1. Intellectual, from teaching
   2. Moral, from habit
6. Human personality
   1. Passions, Faculties, States of character
   2. Virtue as state of character that makes good and what it does well.
   3. Act according to a golden mean which is relative to us.
   4. Not all actions have means, some are intrinsically bad.
7. Specific moral virtues
8. Intellectual virtues
   1. Give knowledge of invariable and fixed principles
   2. Provide a rational guide for action
   3. Sensation, reason and desire.
   4. Sensation originates no moral action
   5. Both reason and desire must be good
   6. Good action cannot exist without a combination of intellect and character
   7. Virtue as rules or rational principles
9. We should not choose based on pleasantness, but on goodness.
   1. Pleasantness is a function of goodness, not vice versa.
   2. Pleasantness intensifies activities
   3. Some activities are hindered by pleasantness from other sources
   4. Pleasures are more proper than desires since they are hard to distinguish from the activity itself
10. Contemplation comes closest to meeting the conditions for happiness
    1. Happiness should be in accordance with the highest virtue
    2. Reason is the best thing in us, and objects of reason are the best knowable objects
    3. It is the most continuous activity
    4. Philosophic wisdom is the most pleasant, pure, and enduring
    5. Happiness is thought to depend on leisure
       1. Military or political actions are unleisurely
    6. Life according to reason is divine rather than human