

OXFORD COLLEGE
HISTORY OF WESTERN THOUGHT I

Philosophy 250
Fall 2006
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This course will examine the Ancient and Medieval traditions in Western thought with an emphasis on the issues of the True and the Good. How, we will consider, can one know the true or the real, how can one lead a good life, and what is the relation between the true and the good? We begin with the “natural philosophy” of the pre-Socratics and then study how the two great systems of ancient philosophy, Plato’s idealism and Aristotle’s realism, result from this intellectual ground and how these systems form the foundation of Western thought. We will briefly consider the contributions of the great Islamic philosophers, Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and Averroës (Ibn Rushd), who kept the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle alive during Europe’s “Dark Ages.” Finally, with Augustine and Aquinas, we consider how the introduction of the Christian God into the West altered our understanding of the human relation to the world.

Texts:

Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy, 3rd edition
Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*
Aquinas, *Treatise on Law*

Requirements:

- 1) Reading. Do all assigned readings. There will be at least seven short quizzes on readings. Quizzes will be announced one class in advance. Missed quizzes are made up only at the discretion of the professor. Quizzes count 25% of final grade.
- 2) Examinations. There will be three examinations of equal value. Examinations count 75% of final grade.
Exam dates: 10/4 – First Exam
11/10 – Second Exam
12/19 – Final, 9am-noon
- 3) Class. Active participation in class is encouraged and will be taken into account in the final grade (though passive participation will not be penalized). Attendance is mandatory. More than three absences **will** negatively affect your grade (see reverse).

The **honor code** is in effect at all times and must be adhered to for each assignment. The code and its application to particular assignments will be discussed in class. This course will be using the +/- grading system.