

Instructor: Dr. John Kress

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Office Hours: M W 2:00 - 3:00 pm or by appointment. If you want to talk about philosophy, feel free to stop by my office and see if I'm around, or catch me around campus.

Course Description: Philosophy begins with the ancient Greeks and quickly attains a level of perfection in the persons of Socrates, his student Plato, and his student Aristotle which have been only rarely equally and never definitively surpassed. In this course, we will examine some of the key works of the two greatest of the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, as well as two of their most important medieval descendants, Boethius (a Christian Platonist) and St. Thomas Aquinas (a Christian Aristotelian). We will attempt to get a sense of the philosophical conception of the world and human life characteristic of the ancients and medievals, and attempt to contrast this with various philosophical assumptions and presuppositions that we moderns tend to make.

Course Objectives:

1. To become familiar with some of the fundamental texts and ideas in ancient and medieval philosophy
2. To get a sense of the distinctive character of ancient philosophical thought.
3. To gain experience in close reading of philosophical texts and analysis of philosophical arguments.
4. To gain experience in composing sound philosophical arguments.

Required Texts: It is important to get the correct translation.

Plato, *Meno*, trans. George Anastaplo & L. Berns, Focus Press, ISBN 0941051714Plato, *Republic*, trans. Joe Sachs, Focus Press, ISBN 9781585102617Aristotle, *Aristotle Selections*, eds. T. Irwin & G. Fine, Hackett, ISBN 0915145677Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. P. Walsh, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0192838830Thomas Aquinas, *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*, Modern Library, ISBN 0075536536David Roochnik, *Retrieving the Ancients*, Wiley-Blackwell, ISBN 1405108622**Course Assignments and Requirements:**

Reading: Most of the texts we will be reading are fairly difficult. Be sure to allow yourself enough time to do your reading. 15 pages of Aristotle is equal to 30 pages of many other writers! By the same token, don't expect to completely understand a difficult philosophical text on a first reading. Take your time, read slowly and carefully, think about (and talk about) the reading, and when you can, re-read.

Position Cards: Every class, you are to turn in a 3 x 5 note card which should have your name, the name of the author and the reading, and a short reflection on the day's reading. This reflection can be an argument, a question or questions, something the reading made you think about, etc. The purpose of this is for you to think a little *in writing* (one side of a note card) about each reading. I recommend you write your position card at the same time you do your reading (as opposed to right before class). I will often use the position cards to take attendance. Please try to write legibly!

Attendance: Regular class attendance is both required and important. Much of our best learning is done in class. Students should attend every class, if possible. Your overall class grade will be adjusted according to the number of *unexcused* absences you have, as follows: 0 = +4, 1 = +2, 2 = +1, 3 = 0, 4 = -2, 5 = -4, 6 = -7, 7 = -11, 8 = -16, etc. *Excused absences* will be given for 1. *medical or family emergencies*, 2. *religious observances*, and 3. *events authorized by the College*. For an absence to be excused, you must provide appropriate documentation, in advance in the cases of 2. and 3. above.

Class Participation: All students are expected to come to class having done the reading carefully and prepared to listen and take part in class discussion of the material. You will find you get a lot more out of class if you have completed the reading. While it is not required that everyone be equally vocal in class, everyone is expected to participate in discussion to some extent. If you feel you have nothing to say, bring up the issue you already discussed on your position card!

Reflection Paper (1): 600 words. A reflection paper is a short paper in which you bring your own thinking to bear on an assigned topic without use of any outside material. I want you to simply and seriously reflect on the question that I ask and to think about your answer to it as carefully as you can.

Exposition/Argument Papers (3): 1200-1500 words (include word count on title page). An exposition/argument paper is a paper in which the primary purpose is to demonstrate your understanding of a philosophical text. You will do this by presenting a critical exposition of the philosopher's views and arguments along with your own critical response. The word "critical" here does not mean a negative or hostile response, but a careful, thoughtful, *examined* response ("critical", from the Greek *krinein*, "to examine", "to distinguish"). As a result of your critical examination, you *may* of course disagree with a philosopher, but you don't *have to*. We will have one

paper on Plato, one on Aristotle, and one on either Boethius or Thomas Aquinas. Note that you are required to do at least one re-write.

Exam (1): We will have one final, comprehensive exam. It will be a combination of multiple answer questions (similar to multiple choice, except that one or more of the answers a-d can be correct, or all, or none) and short essay questions.

Re-writes and Paper Conferences: You *may* re-write any of the exposition/argument papers. ***You must re-write at least one of them.*** Before re-writing, you *must* meet with me to go over the paper (paper conferences usually take around 15-20 minutes). Re-writes are due no later than two weeks after the due date of the original paper. When submitting a re-write, you must submit the original paper with my comments along with the new draft.

Grading and Evaluation:

Scale: Grading will be according to the standard scale of A, B, C, D & F with + and -.

<u>Breakdown</u> :	Position Cards	10%
	Class Participation	10%
	Reflection Paper	10%
	1 st Paper	15%
	2 nd Paper	15%
	3 rd Paper	15%
	Final exam	25%

Late Papers: I will accept late papers, but the paper grade will be reduced by one letter grade per class day the paper is late.

Honor Code: As with all classes at Oxford, the Student Honor Code will be taken very seriously in this class. You can find an online copy of the Code here:

http://www.oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/academics/academic_success/honor_code.dot

Important Dates:

Wed, August 27	first class
Mon, September 1	labor day
Wed, September 3	last day for course add/swap
Mon-Tues, October 13-14	midsemester break
Fri, October 17	last day to drop without an academic penalty
Wed-Fri, November 26-30	Thanksgiving Break
Mon, December 8	last class
Mon, December 15	final exam: 2:00 - 5:00 pm

Reading Schedule: recommended: Roochnik ch. 3 along with Plato, Roochnik ch. 4 along with Aristotle

1	wed, aug 27	first class. Go over syllabus. Handout: Xenophon on Meno.	
2	fri, aug 29	Plato, <i>Meno</i> 70a-79a, Roochnik 1-6	REFLECTION PAPER DUE
3	wed, sept 3	Plato, <i>Meno</i> 79b-86d	
4	fri, sept 5	Plato, <i>Meno</i> 86d-95a	
5	mon, sept 8	Plato, <i>Meno</i> 95a-100c	
6	wed, sept 10	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk I 327a-336a Prologue, Cephalus	
7	fri, sept 12	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk I 336b-347e Polemarchus, Thrasymachus	
8	mon, sept 15	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk I-II 348a-368a Thrasymachus, Glaucon & Adeimantus	
9	wed, sept 17	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk II 368a-383c The City in Speech	
10	fri, sept 19	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk III 394d-403c, 409a-417b Poets 1, Music, The Myth of the Metals	
11	mon, sept 22	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk IV Adeimantus' Objection, Justice	
12	wed, sept 24	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk V Adeimantus' Big Interruption, The Three Waves	
13	fri, sept 26	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk VI Philosophers, Sun Analogy, The Divided Line	FIRST PAPER DUE
14	mon, sept 29	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk VII The Image of the Cave	
15	wed, oct 1	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk VIII The Decline of the City: Bad Regimes & Bad Souls	
16	fri, oct 3	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk IX Tyranny, Pleasures, 729, the Triple Image: Man, Lion, Monster	
17	mon, oct 6	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , Bk X Poets 2, The Head of Glaucus, The Myth of Er	
18	wed, oct 8	Aristotle, to be announced	
19	fri, oct 10	Aristotle, tba	
20	wed, oct 15	Aristotle, tba	
21	fri, oct 17	Aristotle, tba	
22	mon, oct 20	Aristotle, tba	
23	wed, oct 22	Aristotle, tba	
24	fri, oct 24	Aristotle, tba	
25	mon, oct 27	Aristotle, tba	
26	wed, oct 29	Aristotle, tba	
27	fri, oct 31	Aristotle, tba	SECOND PAPER DUE
28	mon, nov 3	Aristotle, tba	
29	wed, nov 5	Aristotle, tba	
30	fri, nov 7	Aristotle, tba	
31	mon, nov 10	Boethius, <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Part 1, Part 2 chs 1-4	
32	wed, nov 12	Boethius, <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Part 2	
33	fri, nov 14	Boethius, <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Part 3	
34	mon, nov 17	Boethius, <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Part 4	
35	wed, nov 19	Boethius, <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Part 5	
36	fri, nov 21	Thomas Aquinas, "The Nature of Sacred Doctrine", pp. 3-19	
37	mon, nov 24	Thomas Aquinas, "The Existence of God", pp. 20-27	THIRD PAPER DUE
38	mon, dec 1	Thomas Aquinas, "The Names of God", pp. 97-109, 122-125	
39	wed, dec 3	Thomas Aquinas, "Habit", pp. 544-559	
40	fri, dec 5	Thomas Aquinas, "Virtue", pp. 560-565, 568-570, 575-577, 586-596	
41	mon, dec 8	Thomas Aquinas, "Law", pp. 609-619, 634-637, 640-642	