

PHIL 261/4 A
Aristotle and After
Winter 2007

General Information

Location: ER 511-1
Days: MW
Hours: 10:15-11:30

Instructor: Andrea Falcon
Office Hours: MW 11:30-12:30 or by appointment
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Course Description

Ancient philosophy takes many forms and consists of diverse traditions. We find questions discussed in a diversity of styles and from a variety of perspectives. We will focus on Aristotle and the main lines of thought in Hellenistic philosophy, with a strong concentration on ancient discussions on happiness and virtue, human action and the role of emotions, the study of nature, and the question of knowledge.

Course Materials

- Aristotle, *Introductory Readings*. Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary, by Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Hackett Publishing Company, 1996).
- Hellenistic Philosophy, *Introductory Readings*. Second Edition. Translated by Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson (Hackett Publishing Company, 1998).

Schedule

First Day of Class (January 3): *Introduction*

Weeks 2, 3, 4: According to ancient ethical reflection, an ethical life is a rational life, that is, a life centered on some final good. According to Aristotle, Epicurus as well as the Stoics, we should conceive of our life as a whole, and the final good is what gives unity to our life. The final end is generally taken to be happiness – in Greek *eudaimonia*

Week 2: *Aristotle on Happiness*

READING:

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics I (Irwin-Fine, pp. 196-213)

Week 3: *Epicurus on Happiness*

READING:

Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (Inwood-Gerson, pp. 28-31)
Cicero, *On Goals*, I 29-33, 37-38, 55-57 (Inwood-Gerson, pp. 57-60)
Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V 93-96 (Inwood-Gerson, pp. 60-61)

W4: The Stoics on Happiness

READING:

Diogenes Laertius VII 84-131 (Inwood-Gerson, pp. 190-203)
Cicero, *On Goals*, III 16-34, 62-71 (Inwood-Gerson, pp. 236-242)

Weeks 5, 6: In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle gives an important role to the emotions. For him a virtue is a settled state of character not only to act rightly but to have the right motivation. Becoming virtuous requires a training of the emotions. Clearly he thinks of them as educable and trainable. Contrary to Aristotle, the Stoics claim that emotions should be eliminated, not controlled and trained.

Week 5 Aristotle on Emotions

READING:

Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* II (Irwin-Fine, pp. 216-228)

Week 6 The Stoics on Emotions

READING:

Galen *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (Inwood-Gerson pp. 257-260).

Weeks 7 and 8 Aristotle is not merely concerned with solving a list of problems or discussing a certain number of topics. He is engaged in an ambitious project of investigation of the natural world. This project consists of an attempt to establish the right sort of connections – *explanatory connections* – between the things of the world. If this investigation is successful, it not only provides us with knowledge but it gives us *understanding*.

Week 7: Aristotle on Nature

READING:

Meteor. I 1 (*)
Phys II 1-9 (Irwin-Fine 42-62)
PA I 5 (Irwin-Fine 104)

February 19-23: *Mid-Term Break (no classes)*

Week 8: Aristotle on Nature continued

READING:

Phys II 1-9 (Irwin-Fine, pp. 42-62)

Weeks 9, 10: Up until the third century CE, Stoic theory of fate formed the background to much of the debate over fate and determinism. It was often at the centre of the discussion, and was criticized by virtually every sect or school. Many later theories of

fate and freedom started as modification of the Stoic position. Stoic philosophers wrote on fate over a period of approximately 400 years, from Chrysippus up to the Stoics with whom Alexander of Aphrodisias seems to have engaged in discussion. At any rate, Chrysippus always remained the authority on Stoic fate.

Week 9: *The Stoics on Fate and Freedom*

READING:

Diogenes Laertius VII 132-160 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 132-139).
Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, II 98-153 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 141-161)
Aulus Gellius VII 2 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 184-184)
Cicero, *On Fate*, 39-44 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 186-188)

Week 10: *The Evolution of the Will*

READING:

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Fate*, 180.3—186.13 (*)

Weeks 11, 12, 13: In ancient philosophy we do not find a single issue that is regarded as the problem of knowledge but rather a whole cluster of issues and concerns with knowledge. We will discuss the idea that to have knowledge amounts to having knowledge of an entire field and being able to establish the relevant explanatory connections. We will also study the origins and development of the ancient skeptical tradition.

Week 11: *Aristotle on Understanding*

READING

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.1 (Irwin-Fine, pp 188-192)
Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, I.1-4 and II.19 (Irwin-Fine pp. 16-24 and pp. 28-30)

Week 12: *Academic Skepticism*

READING:

Diogenes Laertius, IV 28-44, 62-66, 66-67 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 261-262, 263-264, 266)
Numenius (Inwood-Gerson, 262-264 and 264-266)
Cicero, *Academica*, II 28, 40-42, 59-60, 60-67, 76-78, 95-98 (Inwood-Gerson 267-271)

Week 13: *Pyrronian Skepticism*

READING:

Diogenes Laertius, IX 61-108 (Inwood-Gerson pp. 285-297)
Aristocles (Inwood-Gerson 299-300)
Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, I 1-34, (Inwood-Gerson pp. 302-308)

Last Day of Class (Monday, April 11): *Review*

Last but not least:

Friday, March 16: James Lennox, History and Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, will give the following talk: “As if we were investigating what snubness is: Aristotle’s

argument for a single science of nature." Attendance to this talk is highly recommended as Professor Lennox will discuss some of the materials relevant to the final exam.

Assignments and Grading

The final grade for the course is determined by 2 short papers (3 pages) and a final exam, each counting 1/3 of the final grade.

Each short paper will be an exercise in *close* textual reading. You will be asked to identify the main topic of a given passage and explain in your own words any claims expressed in the passage as clear as possible. The aim is for you to show that you have understood the material discussed in class and that you are able to think critically about it.

The final exam will be in-class and comprehensive. It will be designed to test the extent to which you have absorbed the basic points of the readings that we discuss in class. All three of these assignments must be completed in order to pass the class. *Participation can raise the grade.*

First Short Paper: due in class on Wednesday, January 31

Second Short Paper: due in class on Wednesday, March 7

Final Exam: to be scheduled by the University

NB1: Please note that extensions on assignments are not permitted, except in case of illness or due to serious extenuating circumstance. In the event of illness or serious extenuating circumstance, you must inform the instructor before the due date, and documentary evidence of the illness or serious extenuating circumstance must be provided to the instructor. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Please do not ask for one.

NB2: Please note that the term ends on the final day of the exam period NOT on the last day of classes. Students are advised not to make arrangements to travel on a date prior to the date of the final exam as scheduled by the Registrar. The instructor will not hold early exams for the purpose of accommodating travel requests.

Course policies

Regular attendance is required.

Papers must be handed in on time. Late papers will be downgraded in proportion to their lateness.

Be careful to cite all sources used. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity, and will result in a failing grade in the course.

Participation is expected and your final grade will benefit from the extent to which this expectation is fulfilled.

Your rights

You have the right to hear and to understand all of the material. If there is anything unclear, you have the right to ask about it. If you do not want to ask during class, you have the right to visit your instructor during office hours. If you cannot make office hours, you have the

right to schedule an appointment. You have the right to have your papers returned promptly.

Your obligations

If you make an appointment and cannot meet it, you should notify the instructor. You are obligated to attend all the lectures. You are obligated to allow others to hear and understand the lectures. You should, therefore, refrain from chatting, reading newspapers or in any way disturbing others during lecture.