

PHILOSOPHY 303 – A01: ARISTOTLE

Spring 2025 (CRN = 22468)

General Course Information; Recommended Supplementary Reading; Schedule

1. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor:	David Scott
Classroom Location:	MAC D283
Class Meeting Times:	Mon., & Thurs., 11:30 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.
Instructor's Office:	CLE B320
Office Hours:	Tues. & Wed. 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. (Zoom, by appointment)
Email:	djfsconfig@uvic.ca
Telephone:	250-721-7517

ABOUT THIS COURSE:

In this course we shall examine some of the main works of Aristotle, whose writings are among the most profound and influential in the history of human thought. We shall focus mainly on the following writings, in the following order: *Categories*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *De Anima*, and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Although we will be looking at these works in the order listed here, because Aristotle is a systematic philosopher whose works interconnect to a significant degree, at the outset of this course I will occasionally be referring ahead to the later works on this list. Therefore, I strongly advise you to start reading these works straight away and as quickly as possible, in order to gain an early appreciation of the systematic nature of Aristotle's thinking.

TEXT AND COURSE MATERIAL:

Aristotle: Selections, trans. Terence Irwin & Gail Fine, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. 1995 (paper ISBN-10: 0-915145-67-7; paper ISBN-13: 978-0-915145-67-6). Depending on the way the class discussion evolves, from time to time I may introduce supplementary material.

This course is highly text-focused, which means that both in instruction and in evaluation (testing) emphasis is put on your ability to understand the assigned readings and class discussions of them. In this course we will not be relying on secondary literature or commentary, though of course you are always welcome to supplement your reading and class lectures/discussions with secondary material.

Because there is such a focus on the text, students are strongly encouraged to make sure they use the specifically assigned textbook for this course. The philosopher studied in this course originally wrote in a language other than English, so the readings are all translations. Because translations can sometimes differ greatly, it will be of great benefit to you if you use the assigned translation (textbook), on which both class discussion and essay questions/topics will be based. Using the assigned textbook will allow you to work from the same page (literally and figuratively) as everyone else in the class.

NOTE: As mentioned, the text used in this course is a translation of Aristotle's writings. Because many students initially find reading Aristotle quite difficult, whether in the original Greek (for students who know Greek) or in translation, they sometimes find it helpful to consult different translations. UVic's library has an electronic version of a different translation from the one used in this course. It is titled *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (2 volumes), and all of the works we will be studying in this course can be found either in Volume I or Volume II. Here is the link:

<http://pm.nlx.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/xtf/view?docId=aristotle/aristotle.00.xml;chunk.id=div.aristotle.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=2;toc.id=div.aristotle.pmpreface.1;hit.rank=0;brand=default>

BREAKDOWN OF PRIMARY COURSE READINGS (subject to slight change):

A. Works of Primary Focus:

Categories, pp. 1-12.

Physics, pp. 83-103; pp. 112-131; pp. 137-144.

Metaphysics, pp. 221-240; pp. 244-250; pp. 270-279; pp. 311-314; pp. 315-344.

De Anima, pp. 169-202.

Nicomachean Ethics, pp. 347-376; 398-410; pp. 429-431; 433-445.

B. Works of Secondary Focus:

De Interpretatione, p. 13.

Posterior Analytics, pp. 66-68.

De Generatione et Corruptione, pp. 146-158; pp. 161-168.

GRADING SCHEME:

(a) in-class test (25%); (b) take-home essay (35%); (c) final exam (40%).

All grading in this course will done by the course instructor (not by teaching assistant).

Letter grades correspond to the following Marks: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49.

MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The criteria I use to evaluate essays are those which common sense would suggest when it comes to assessing philosophical writing. Primarily my concern is with content or substance, i.e., the course material; and in this respect the guiding question concerns the extent to which a student has understood the material.

In indicating the evaluation criteria for this course, I emphasize that philosophy is an arts or humanities subject, which means that assessing the merits of philosophical writing ultimately requires qualitative evaluation or judgment on my part. Therefore, I do not assign precise

numerical values to the following assessment criteria; nor is there a mathematical formula I can employ to judge the quality of your work. However, as a rough guide I employ a list of relative priorities, presented here in ascending order of importance:

- spelling/grammar
- organization & clarity of expression
- accuracy of exposition
- use of examples reflecting understanding of the subject
- breadth of analysis, i.e., number of points covered
- depth of analysis, i.e., how far into the issue analysis is pushed
- resourcefulness, originality and imagination
- tightness, rigor or logical coherence of analysis
- overall quality of philosophical insight and expression

I emphasize that, with the exception of the last criterion—that of overall quality of philosophical insight and expression—in practice the ranking of these criteria is not absolute. Thus, sometimes less important criteria will be given more weight than more important ones. For instance, a student's use and analysis of examples might be so good that I am led to conclude that that student has an excellent understanding of the subject. In such a case the value I attach to the use of examples might increase significantly, and I might lay less emphasis on the fact that the student has failed (for instance) to cover as many points as other students.

When it comes to the evaluation of in-class exams and take-home essays, the minimum expectation is that you deal with *the material covered in class as it has been covered in class*. In all assignments you need to take explicit account of and do justice to the material covered in class as it has been covered there. Material not covered in class but used by students on tests will not be recognized unless, in the first instance, the material covered in class has been addressed.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Under the heading of "Attendance", UVic's Undergraduate Calendar states the following: "Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled." The full policy statement in the calendar is here:

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/ryNResf_E?bc=true&bcCurrent=03%20%20Attendance&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies.

This semester I will be enforcing a *minimum class attendance requirement*: class attendance is required for a minimum of 15 of the 23 classes scheduled for the semester. (This excludes the one scheduled class during which we will be using for an in-class test.) Starting on the first day of classes (Jan. 6), attendance will be taken in every class. For any given class, any student who arrives after half the time has elapsed will be marked absent. Any student who fails to meet the minimum overall attendance requirement of 15 classes for the semester will lose the right to write the last test of the term (worth 40% of the overall grade for the course). For those students

who add the course after Jan. 6, the minimum class attendance requirement will be pro-rated to the date they registered for the course.

Regular class attendance is also required for students wishing to discuss class content during office hours. While students are welcome and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss class content, to do so students must first have attended class or at least have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. The reason for this requirement is that student use of office hours is intended to function primarily as *supplement* to classroom lecture and discussion. Office hours are not intended as replacement or substitute for class attendance.

Finally, class attendance is extremely important in this course when it comes to essays and tests. The reason is that, as noted above, when it comes to these forms of evaluation, the minimum expectation is that you deal with *the material covered in class as it has been covered in class*. Obviously, attending class is the best way to help you do this.

If you happen to miss a class, a recording of the class, along with a brief written summary of the main points covered in the class, will be posted on Brightspace shortly thereafter (usually within 24 hours).

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION:

In general, my classes involve lots of discussion. I encourage and greatly value your in-class contributions, and I can assure you that other students do too. It is a frequently unacknowledged fact of the classroom that if you have a question or comment, it's highly likely that others have the same one too. So, go ahead and ask your question, or make your comment: it helps me, you, and your classmates. If, however, you are more reserved but still have comments or questions, please come see me during office hours, or write me an email.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT & MISCELLANEOUS CLASS POLICIES:

(a) The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Professionalism is expected from all students enrolled in courses in the Faculty of Humanities. As part of professionalism, students, faculty and staff are expected to be familiar with University policies, including the [Tri-Faculty's Standards for Professional Behaviour](#).

Please be advised that by logging into UVic's learning systems and interacting with online resources, and by attending class, you are engaging in a university activity.

All interactions within this environment are subject to the university expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct, may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy.

To report concerns about online student conduct: onlineconduct@uvic.ca

(b) Coming late to class: The classroom is a work environment, and when students arrive late this can be a distraction. So please try to be on time.

(c) Visits to the classroom by non-registered students: As the instructor for this class I am duty-bound to ensure that a work environment is preserved in the course. Both students and I can find it a distraction for strangers to walk into the classroom. It takes some students time before they gain confidence to participate in the class proceedings, and the presence of a stranger can be disruptive in that regard. If, as sometimes happens, you wish to invite a friend to attend my class to check it out, please ask permission ahead of time.

(d) Use of computers in the class: For academic purposes of (e.g.) taking notes, you are of course welcome to use laptops with quiet keyboards in the classroom.

(e) Missed classes: An audio recording of each class will be available on the Brightspace site for this course, usually within 24 hours of class, should you wish to hear any class that you have missed or simply want to listen again to a class.

EMAILING ME:

Because of problems with SPAM and viruses transmitted by email, I request that whenever you email me you make sure to put something in the subject line of your email that identifies you as a student in this course. If you don't do this, and I don't recognize your name, I will delete your email without opening it.

In contacting me, I would greatly appreciate it if you observed the (still) standard courtesy of beginning your emails with a salutation, e.g., "Dear Dr. Scott", "Hello Dr. Scott", etc. (as opposed to, e.g., "Hey Dave" or "Dude", which is too informal). Use of formal salutation is social etiquette rooted in the recognition that people are not simply inanimate objects (like ATM machines), but should be addressed before being spoken to. After all, unlike ATM machines, humans have the option to respond, so it's wise to ask them nicely.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Cheating of any kind, including collusion (working with others too closely) and plagiarism from (i) books and/or articles, (ii) other students' papers, and (iii) papers or other material on the internet, is a serious academic offence. So too is the use of AI-based programs in the production of essays. On this score, please note that if I suspect that a student has used an AI-based program (e.g., Chat GPT) in the production of an essay, I reserve the right to test that student's knowledge of their own essay in a live, oral exam on that essay. If I am not satisfied that the student's essay

has been produced without the use of AI, the matter will be referred to the departmental chair as a potential case of academic dishonesty.

University regulations also prohibit students from submitting the same work for two different courses; in other words, plagiarizing or “recycling” one’s own work is not permitted. If detected, cheating can result in dismissal from this course (with an “F”), and dismissal from the university.

Here is a link to the University’s Academic Integrity policy:

<https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>

EDITING:

The university has a strict view about seeking the help of others for editing: “An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student’s written or non- written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. The instructor should specify the extent of editing that is being authorized. Review by fellow students and tutoring that do not include editing are normally permitted. In addition to consulting with their instructors, students are encouraged to seek review of and feedback on their work that prompts them to evaluate the work and make changes themselves.”

SUBMITTING AND RETURNING GRADED WORK:

a) All essays must be typed (12-font, Times), double-spaced, paginated, and contain the word-count on the front cover. Submission of your essays will be either through Brightspace or as a hard copy (or both), and the method of submission will be indicated on each assignment. In general, I do not accept essays submitted as email attachments. I will not be available to discuss test or essay questions on the day before or on the due date of submission, as I need to avoid being swamped by last-minute enquiries.

b) Your graded work will be returned in class (in person), within two weeks of its having been submitted. Because I do not use graduate students to grade students’ work in any of my courses, it can sometimes take up to two weeks before you receive your work back for this course.

When your graded work is returned to you it will frequently be annotated with comments. If you wish to discuss your graded work with me, please read those comments first. To give you a chance to do this, as a matter of policy I do not discuss work on the same day as it is returned. In cases when I return graded work in class (in person), it is *up to students* to claim their work: I am not responsible for tracking students down to deliver their work to them. Normally I will bring graded papers to class three times in a row, where students have the opportunity to claim it. After that, any unclaimed assignments can be obtained from me in person, by appointment.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS / MISSED TESTS:

Late assignments unaccompanied by a legitimate excuse will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day or portion thereof, to a maximum of 20% (i.e., after four days, no late assignments will be

accepted). Late assignments will be accepted without penalty only when justified by a medical or other academically legitimate reason.

OFFICE HOURS:

Office hours will be conducted by Zoom, and there will be a total of two office hours per week dedicated specifically to this course. If for some reason you cannot meet me in my posted office-hour times, please contact me to arrange an alternative time. Because of demand (especially near test days or essay due-dates), if you wish to see me during office hours you need to make an appointment ahead of time. To meet with me in my office hours, contact me either in class or by email, and I will send you the Zoom link for the appointment.

To get the most out of your appointment, it's best to come prepared with specific questions about the course material. While students are welcomed and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss course related matters (incl. class content, tests, essays, etc.), students wishing to make an appointment to discuss class content in particular need first to have attended class, or at least to have listened to the recordings of the relevant missed class(es) that are posted on Brightspace. This requirement is to prevent this course's office hours being used simply as a way for students to catch up on classes they have missed. Missed classes can be made up by listening to the class recordings posted on Brightspace.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF MATERIAL ON LMS WEBSITE:

Intellectual property of materials on the LMS website: Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the LMS website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity:

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies

Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).

2. RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY READING

A fairly recent, extensive bibliography, covering all aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, can be found in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Philosophy*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [listed below].

A. Ancient Greek Philosophy Generally

Armstrong, A. H. *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1947). [B171 A78 1949]

Guthrie, W. K. C. *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1950). [B171 G8]

Irwin, Terence. *Classical Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). [B171 I77]

B. Aristotle's Philosophy

Ackrill, J. L. *Aristotle the Philosopher* (Oxford: University Press, 1981). [B485 A3]

Ackrill, J.L. Aristotle's Definitions of 'Psyche', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, vol. 73 (1972-1973), pp. 119-133.

Allan, D. J. *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952). [B485 A45 1970]

Barnes, Jonathan. *Aristotle* (London, 1982). [B485 B35]

Barnes, Jonathan, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). [B485 C35]

Catan, J. K., ed. *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981). [B485 O834]

Charlton, William. "Aristotle's Definition of Soul", *Phronesis* 25, no. 2 (1980), pp. 170-186.

Düring, I., & Owen, G.E.L., eds. *Aristotle and Plato in the mid-Fourth Century*, Göteborg, 1960. [B485 D832]

Gerson, Lloyd.

Irwin, T. *Aristotle's First Principles*. [B485 I74]

Jaeger, W. *Aristotle: Fundamentals of His Development*, trans. R. Robinson (Oxford, 1948). [B485 J33 1948]

Lloyd, G. E. R., & Owen, G. E. L., eds. *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses* (Cambridge, 1978). [B491 M5S95 1975]

Marx, Werner. *Introduction to Aristotle's Theory of Being as Being*, trans. Robert S. Schine, 1977. [B491 O5M3413]

Moravcsik, J. M. E., ed. *Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays*. [B485 M6]

Ross, Sir David. *Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1964). [B485 R6 1964]

Taylor, A. E. *Aristotle*. [B485 T27 1955]

3. SCHEDULE FOR COURSE*

WEEK 1 (Classes 1 & 2: Jan. 6 & 9)

1. Mon., Jan. 6: Intro. to Aristotle's system.
2. Thurs., Jan. 9: Intro. to Aristotle's system. *Categories*.

WEEK 2 (Classes 3 & 4: Jan. 13 & 16)

3. Mon., Jan. 13: *Categories*.
4. Thurs., Jan. 16: *Categories*.

Sun., Jan. 19: **Last day to drop course with 100% course fee returned.**

WEEK 3 (Classes 5 & 6: Jan. 20 & 23)

5. Mon., Jan. 20: *Physics*
6. Thurs., Jan. 23: *Physics*

WEEK 4 (Classes 7 & 8: Jan. 27 & 30)

7. Mon., Jan. 27: *Physics*
8. Thurs., Jan. 30: *Physics*. **Preparatory test questions distributed.**

WEEK 5 (Classes 9 & 10: Feb. 3 & 6)

9. Mon., Feb. 3: *Physics*. **Essay topic assigned.**
10. Thurs., Feb. 6: **In-class test.**

Sun. Feb. 9: **Last day to drop course with 50% course fee returned.**

WEEK 6 (Classes 11 & 12: Feb. 10 & 13)

11. Mon., Feb. 10: *Physics & Metaphysics*.
12. Thurs., Feb. 13: *Physics & Metaphysics*.

WEEK 7 (No Classes: Feb. 17 & 20)

- Mon., Feb. 17: **No Class (Reading Break)**
Thurs., Feb. 20: **No Class (Reading Break)**

WEEK 8 (Classes 13 & 14: Feb. 24 & 27)

13. Mon., Feb. 24: *Physics & Metaphysics*.
14. Thurs., Feb. 27: *Physics & Metaphysics*.

Fri., Feb. 28: **Last day to drop course without penalty of failure.**

WEEK 9 (Classes 15 & 16: Mar. 3 & 6)

15. Mon., Mar. 3: *Physics & De Anima.*

16. Thurs., Mar. 6: *Physics & De Anima.*

Fri., Mar. 7: **Essay due.**

WEEK 10 (Classes 17 & 18: Mar. 10 & 13)

17. Mon., Mar. 10: *De Anima*

18. Thurs., Mar. 13: *De Anima*

WEEK 11 (Classes 19 & 20: Mar. 17 & 20)

19. Mon., Mar. 17: *De Anima*

20. Thurs., Mar. 20: *De Anima*

WEEK 12 (Classes 21 & 22: Mar. 24 & 27)

21. Mon., Mar. 24: *Nicomachean Ethics*

22. Thurs., Mar. 27: *Nicomachean Ethics*

WEEK 13 (Classes 23 & 24: Mar. 31 & Apr. 3)

23. Mon., Mar. 31: *Nicomachean Ethics*

24. Thurs., Apr. 3: *Nicomachean Ethics*

Final exams for this term begin on Apr. 7 and end on Apr. 25 (with university closures on Apr. 18 [Good Friday] and Apr. 21 [Easter Monday]).

* This schedule is subject to revision, as sometimes discussion and the flow of ideas in class require us to spend more time on certain subjects, less time on others, than originally planned.