**FWS: Aristotle’s Science: The Method and its Criticism**

(PHIL 1112 SEM 103 course #: 17733)

**Instructor Information**:

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Office Hour: Wednesday 3-4pm or by appointment

Office Location: 235 Goldwin Smith Hall

**Course Description**:

Aristotle is often considered as the father of psychology and biology: his philosophical theories about both sciences received severe criticism from philosophers in the modern period. In this class we are going to look at some of Aristotle’s works on psychology and biology, as well as some classic criticisms of Aristotle raised by the modern figures such as Descartes, Boyle, and Locke. Special emphasis will be given to Aristotle’s scientific method and the conceptual tools that he uses to shed light on scientific questions. Writings for this class will include both short expository essays on the texts and longer paper on designated topics. Students with prior background in psychology or biology can choose to write their own research paper for the last assignment.

**Learning Outcomes**:

This course aims at helping its participants building necessary skills for academic writing. Special emphasis will be given to close reading of the texts and rigorous engagement with arguments. The learning outcomes include: (i) knowing how to find and evaluate philosophical arguments in historical texts (ii) knowing how to raise and respond to objections (iii) familiarity with a regular writing process that involves notes taking, outlining, drafting, and revision.

**Required Texts**:

All works of Aristotle can be found online through the Cornell library link (<http://pm.nlx.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/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>)

Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Longman. (You may get cheaper older editions on Amazon.)

The rest of the reading will be posted on Blackboard.

**Required Work and Evaluation**:

* Reading response: 10%

Questions on the assigned reading (see schedule for details) will be posted on blackboard before every class under the heading of “Discussion”. **Post your response by noon every Monday and Wednesday**. (You may either choose to respond to the reading questions or questions raised by others.) The purpose of the assignment is to facilitate the class discussion on that day. No late submission will be accepted.

* Essays: 75%

There will be five writing assignments in total: two short expository pieces, two longer papers, and one final version of a longer paper. Late submission will be marked down by 1/3 of the grade per day unless extension is granted by the instructor beforehand.

* Attendance and in-class discussion: 15%

All students are expected to attend all classes and participate in all class activities. If you have to miss any class for any reason, notice the instructor beforehand and get her permission. Otherwise, each absence will cost 0.5 point of your final grade (out of 100).

* Meetings:

**Every student is expected to meet with the instructor at least twice** during the semester to discuss their writings. The final paper will not be graded until the meeting requirement is met.

**Policies:**

1. Academic Integrity:

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work.

By taking this course, students agree that all papers may be subject to submission to

Turnitin.com for textual similarity review for the detection of plagiarism. Submitted papers will

be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of

detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy

posted on the Turnitin.com site.

To acquaint yourself with the university policy on plagiarism, **take the following test by this Friday (1/26)**:

<https://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/exercises.cfm>

For more information, consult the following pamphlet (you should also have received a hard copy in your welcome package):

<http://ccengagement.cornell.edu/new-student-programs/academic-initiatives>

2. Attendance and late submission:

I stick to the policy of penalty above for absence and late submission strictly. However, I am also aware that all of us are mortals who get sick and encounter unexpected situations from time to time. Just give me a heads-up whenever that happens! I will try my best to help.

3. Class participation:

This is a small class that heavily relies on the participation of its members. Participation in all class activities (including peer review, writing exercise, and group work) are mandatory for doing well in this class. You are strongly encouraged to speak up in class and share your thoughts/puzzles/confusions with other people any time in class. Consistent and constructive contribution to class may make a difference in one’s grade in borderline cases. (For example, I will give someone with excellent contribution to class discussion a B when his/her final grade is a borderline case between B and B-.)

4. Note for students with disabilities:

If you have need for academic adjustments or physical accommodations for this class, please let

me know in the first week of class.

**Useful Resources**:

1. The Knight Institute Writing Walk-In Service:

The WWIS provides support for individuals at any stage of the writing process. Tutors serve as

responsive listeners and readers who can address questions about the writing process or about

particular pieces of writing. The WWIS is open Sunday through Thursday from 3:30 – 5:30pm

and from 7:00 – 10:00pm. Writers can schedule appointments or drop in at a convenient time.

For more information or to schedule an appointment: <http://www.arts.cornell.edu/writing>.

2. Philosophy reference:

No outside research is necessary for this class. If you do need to consult some secondary literature for your writing, the following encyclopedia is a good starting point:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/>

For those of you who are new to philosophy, the following link contains some good advice on writing philosophy paper. I strongly recommend reading this piece when you start thinking about the final paper.

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

**Schedule**:

\*\*Note that the following schedule is tentative. I may change reading assignment and due day of assignment based on the actual progress of our class.

Week 1:

Jan 24: No reading. Take the plagiarism test and email me the result.

Week 2:

Jan 29: *Categories* chapter 5; *Topics* Book I, chapter 4-5; *Posterior Analytics* Book I, chapter 2, 4-6; Book 2, chapter 1

Jan 31: *Physics* Book II chapter 1-9; *Style*: Lesson 1; first paper is assigned in class

Week 3:

Feb 5: *Physics* Book II chapter 1-9 (re-read); first paper is due by the end of the day

Feb 7: Broadie, “Nature and Craft in Aristotelian Teleology”; *Style*, lesson 2; second paper is assigned; time to set up the first meeting with the instructor

Week 4

Feb 12: Balme, “The Place of Biology in Aristotle’s Philosophy”, *Parts of Animals*, Book I

Feb 14: Lloyd, “Empirical Research in Aristotle’s Biology”, *Parts of Animals*, Book I (re-read), *Style*, Lesson 3; second paper is due by the end of the day

Week 5

Feb 19: February Break

Feb 21: Gotthelf, “First Principles in Aristotle’s Parts of Animals”, *Parts of Animals*, Book II; *Style*, lesson 4; third paper is assigned

Week 6

Feb 26: Cooper, John, “Hypothetical Necessity and Natural Teleology”, *Parts of Animals*, Book II (re-read)

Feb 28: *Generation of Animals*, Book I, chapter 1, 21-22; *Style*, Lesson 5; third paper draft is due

Week 7

Mar 5: *On the Soul*, Book I

Mar 7: Burnyeat, “Is An Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind Still Credible?”, *On the Soul*, Book I (re-read), Style, Lesson 6, third paper final draft is due by the end of the day

Week 8:

Mar 12: *On the Soul*, Book II

Mar 14: Matthews, “De Anima 2.2-4 and the Meaning of Life”, *On the Soul*, Book III (re-read); *Style* Lesson 7; fourth paper is assigned

Week 9:

Mar 19: *On the Soul*, Book III, chapter 1-3

Mar 21: Schofield, “Aristotle on the Imagination”, *On the Soul*, Book III, chapter 1-3 (re-read); *Style*, Lesson 8; the first draft of the fourth paper is due

Week 10:

Mar 26: Galileo, The Assayer, “Corpuscularianism”, Boyle, “Of the Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy”

Mar 28: Descartes, selections from the *Meditations* and the *Principles, Style* Lesson 9; the second draft of the fourth paper is due

Week 11:

Spring Break

Week 12:

Apr 9: Leibniz, “From the Letters to de Volder”; *Style*, Lesson 10; the final draft of the fourth paper is due

Apr 11: Locke, selections from the *Essay*; the topic of the final paper is assigned

Week 13:

Apr 16: Locke, selections from the *Essay*; time to set up the second meeting with the instructor

Apr 18: Locke, selections from the *Essay*; summary of the secondary literature is due by the end of the day

Week 14:

Apr 23: secondary literature for the final paper; first draft of the fifth paper is due

Apr 25: secondary literature for the final paper

Week 15:

Apr 30: secondary literature for the final paper

May 2: secondary literature for the final paper; second draft of the fifth paper is due

Week 16:

May 7: secondary literature for the final paper

May 9: secondary literature for the final paper; final draft of the fifth paper is due