

PHP 5015: ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY 2

3.0 credits • Fall 2025

I. Basic Information

Meeting Time and Place

Thursdays 3-6 pm (Periods 8-10) in Griffin-Floyd Hall 200.

Instructor

Jan Maximilian ROBITZSCH

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Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall 307

Phone: 352-273-1831

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course is dedicated to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who lived from 384 to 322 BCE. Aristotle developed his own unique philosophical ideas through the empirical study of the world around him, as well as in response to the theories of his teacher Plato and other early Greek philosophers. Aristotle's extensive body of work covers all areas of philosophy and had a significant impact, especially during the medieval period when he was simply known as "the philosopher." This course will provide an overview of Aristotle's most important ideas, focusing on both his theoretical and practical writings. Readings will include selections from key works such as the *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *De anima (On the Soul)*, and *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Course Objectives

By offering a survey of Aristotle's ideas, the course provides students with an overview of the philosophy of one of the most important philosophers in the Western tradition. Since Aristotelian positions continue to be influential today, (1) the course provides students with foundational knowledge in the history of philosophy and the discipline of philosophy. (2) The course also prepares students to teach courses or units on Aristotle on their own, which are part of the curriculum at many universities. Finally, (3) because an emphasis of the course lies on engaging with research, the course helps prepare students to do independent research in the history of philosophy.

Course Materials

Please purchase the following book:

McKeon, Richard, ed. 2001. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. New York: Modern Library. ISBN: 978-0375757990

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas.

Precise bibliographical information for the materials used on this class can be found in section "V. Course Schedule."

Materials Fee

N/A

II. Grade Determination and Policies

Grade Determination

The course grade is determined by the following factors:

Reading Posts	50 points	5%
Participation	100 points	10%
Reports on Secondary Literature (2x)	100 points	10%
Final Exam	250 points	25%
Final Paper	500 points	50%

Grading Policies

See <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/> for information on how UF assigns grade points.

In this class, we will use the following grade scale:

Grade Scale	Grade Value
93-100=A	A=4.0
90-92=A-	A-=3.67
87-89=B+	B+=3.33
83-86=B	B=3.00
80-82=B-	B-=2.67
77-79=C+	C+=2.33
73-76=C	C=2.00
70-72=C-	C-=1.67
67-69=D+	D+=1.33
63-66=D	D=1.00
60-62=D-	D-=0.67
0-59=E	E=0.00

NB that non-whole numbers will be rounded down: for instance, a 92.9 is counted as a 92 (= A-), not a 93 (= A).

III. Assignments and Expectations

General expectations

Students in this class are expected to

- be familiar with all policies and requirements as set out in the course syllabus;
- attend and participate in all class sessions (unless excused for a legitimate reason);
- be aware of all deadlines throughout the semester;
- stay informed by keeping up with all announcements made in class and via Canvas;

- keep up with reading assignments and hand in work on time;
- maintain academic integrity in all of their work—or risk failing the entire course;
- be respectful of their classmates, even when engaged in lively critical dialogue with them;
- inform the instructor promptly of any emergencies or problems that will affect the student's ability to do what is needed in the course, ask questions, and seek help when needed.
- refrain from eating during class (discuss exceptions with the instructor).

Assignments

Reading Posts

Each week, every student is required to post a short reflection on the readings to be discussed in class. These reflections have the following function:

- (1) They help students engage with the philosophical texts to be examined in lecture and break-out sessions.
- (2) They give students an opportunity to practice writing in a low-pressure environment.
- (3) They give the instructor feedback on what students thought was interesting about a particular reading.
- (4) They allow the instructor to give students individual feedback on their philosophical ideas and questions.

These posts can be short (around 100 words), but should nevertheless substantially engage with the philosophical ideas of the assigned readings. They could:

- ask for clarification in regard to certain ideas, arguments, or concepts in the reading,
- comment on ideas, arguments, or concepts in the reading,
- raise an objection against an idea or argument in the reading,
- draw comparisons between ideas in the reading and ideas in other readings (from class or that students encountered in a different context),
- draw connections between the reading and some contemporary phenomenon, etc.

Posts for any given week have to be submitted by Wednesday at midnight via Canvas, starting August 20. Late reading posts submitted after Thursday 3:00 pm of the same week will receive partial credit. Reading posts submitted after Friday at midnight will not receive credit. Exception: if the student's absence from class is excused, their late work will be accepted without penalty. (See also the section "Attendance and Make-Up Policies" below.)

Posts will be graded for content and completion, with emphasis on the latter. Students are not expected to master a reading, but to show that they substantially engaged with it before coming to class. However, **mere summaries of the reading in a reading post will not receive credit, nor will posts that are very short or do not engage substantially or obviously with the week's reading.**

Sample reading posts can be found on Canvas.

Participation

Every student's participation and engagement in class will be evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. See also the participation rubric below. Students will be informed how they are doing in the course of the semester.

Reports on Secondary Literature

Students should complete two reports on secondary readings per semester. Each report should concisely sum up the most important claims and arguments of a reading in not more than three to four pages. It can also contain questions for discussion as well as criticisms, although the focus should be on the reconstruction of the main ideas of a paper. One of these reports should be presented orally to the class as a whole. Topics will be assigned at the beginning of the semester.

Final Exam

The final exam will comprehensively cover the content of the course. It will take place on **Friday, December 9, 3-5 pm, in Griffin-Floyd Hall 200**. At the end of the semester, the instructor will provide more detailed information on the exact format and topics that will be covered on the exam.

Final paper

The final paper of about 5000 words (15 pages) should be on a topic approved by the instructor, and it should substantially engage with the secondary literature. A proposal is due October 27 at midnight. Students will present their paper idea to the class on November 13 and 20. The paper is due December 9 at midnight.

IV. Class Policies

Attendance and Make-Up Policies

Attendance is expected at every class session. Taking an active role in class is crucial to success and a student cannot take an active role when the student is absent. **If a student misses a class for a good reason, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor as soon as is feasible.**

UF policy provides a list of kinds of absences that must be counted as excused: "illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)." Other kinds of absences may be excused at the instructor's discretion. **Each unexcused absence will incur a ten (30) point grade penalty.**

If a student arrives after class has started, the student will be considered late to class. A student who is frequently late to class (= more than three times over the course of the semester), will incur a ten (10) point penalty for every additional time they arrive late (beyond the first three classes to which the student arrived late).

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the catalog here:

<https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/>

Electronic Devices

Please be responsible users of technology in the classroom.

Canvas E-Learning Environment

This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." If students encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, they should contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code." On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If a student has any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor. Students are responsible for knowing that these behaviors are prohibited.

Collaboration. Collaboration with others (including people not in this class) is prohibited unless explicitly allowed in the directions for a particular assignment.

Use of artificial intelligence. The use of ChatGPT or other large language models to complete any course assignment is prohibited.

Consequences of academic dishonesty. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution committee (see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/>). **Students who are found responsible of academic dishonesty via SCCR process, no matter how minor the incident, may immediately receive a failing grade in the course from the instructor in addition to the possible sanctions that SCCR imposes (which may include the expulsion from the university).**

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: (1) The email they receive from GatorEvals; (2) their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals; or (3) the central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com/>. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See "Get Started With the DRC" Disability Resource Center webpage (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

V. Course Schedule

The schedule below provides information on topics, readings, and due dates for assignments. It is possible the schedule may need to be adjusted to accommodate disruptions or student needs; any such changes will be announced both in class and on Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments
1	R 8/21	Introduction to Aristotle and his Philosophy/ Course Logistics/ Research in the History of Philosophy with Dr. Megan Daly (at Library West)	
2	R 8/28	Logic and Metaphysics I: The <i>Categories</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Categories</i> (all) • Frede, Michael. 1987. "Individuals in Aristotle." In <i>Essays in Ancient Philosophy</i>, edited by Michael Frede, 49-71. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (read pp. 49-63)
3	R 9/4	Metaphysics II: Content of the <i>Metaphysics</i> and the Unmoved Mover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Metaphysics</i> I.1-2, IV.1-2, VI.1, VII.1, and XII.6-9 • Frede, Michael. 1987. "The Unity of General and Special Metaphysics: Aristotle's Conception of Metaphysics." In <i>Essays in Ancient Philosophy</i>, edited by Michael Frede, 81-95. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. • Kahn, Charles. 1985. "The Place of the Prime Mover in Aristotle's Teleology." In <i>Aristotle on Nature and Living Things</i>, edited by Alan Gotthelf, 183-205. Pittsburgh: Mathesis.
4	R 9/11	Metaphysics III: Substance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Metaphysics</i> VII • Frede, Michael. 1987. "Individuals in Aristotle." In <i>Essays in Ancient Philosophy</i>, edited by Michael Frede, 49-71. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (read pp. 63-71)
5	R 9/18	Physics: Nature, Causation, and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physics</i> I.7-8, II, and III.1-3 • Kress, Emily. 2019. "How Things Happen For the Sake of Something." <i>Phronesis</i> 64, no. 3: 321-347. • Coope, Ursula. 2009. "Change and Its Relation to Actuality and Potentiality." In <i>A Companion to Aristotle</i>, edited by G. Anagnostopoulos, 277-291. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
6	R 9/25	Principles of Science and Biology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>History of Animals</i> V.1, VIII.1, IX.1; <i>Parts of Animals</i> I.1-5, II.1; <i>On the Generation of Animals</i> I.1, 17-18, and 20-23 • Grene, Majorie, and David Depew. "Aristotle and After." In <i>The Philosophy of Biology: An Episodic History</i>, 1-34.

			Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. • Killas, Harry. Dir. <i>Aristotle's Lagoon</i> . BBC Four, 2010.
7	R 10/2	Psychology	• <i>On the Soul</i> (all) • Caston, Victor. 2009. "Aristotle's Psychology." In <i>A Companion to Ancient Philosophy</i> , edited by M. L. Gill and P. Pellegrin, 316–346. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
8	R 10/9	Ethics I: Flourishing	• <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I and X.6-9 • Irvine, Terry. 2012. "Conceptions of Happiness in the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ." In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle</i> , edited by Christopher Shields, 495-528. Oxford: Oxford University Press. • Whiting, Jennifer. 1988. "Aristotle's Function Argument: A Defense." <i>Ancient Philosophy</i> 8 (1988): 33-48.
9	R 10/16	Ethics II: Moral and Intellectual Virtues	• <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> II, III.6-12, IV, and VI • Curzer, Howard. 1996. "A Defense of Aristotle's Doctrine that Virtue Is a Mean." <i>Ancient Philosophy</i> 16: 129-148.
10	R 10/23	Ethics III: Weakness of Will and Friendship	• <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VII.1-10, VIII-IX • Destrée, Pierre. 2007. "Aristotle on the Causes of <i>Akrasia</i> ." <i>Akrasia in Greek Philosophy</i> , edited by Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destrée, 139-165. Leiden and Boston: Brill. • Nehamas, Alexander. 2010. "Aristotelian <i>philia</i> , Modern Friendship?" <i>Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy</i> 39: 213-247.
	T 10/28		Paper Proposal due at midnight
11	R 10/30	Politics: The Emergence of the City-State, Its Parts, and the Best Political Order	• <i>Politics</i> I and III • Keyt, David. 1987. "Three Fundamental Theorems in Aristotle's 'Politics.'" <i>Phronesis</i> 32, no. 1: 54-79. • Heath, Malcolm. 2008. "Aristotle on Natural Slavery." <i>Phronesis</i> 53: 243-270.
12	R 11/6	Fragmentary Works	• Fragments from the <i>Protrepticus</i> and <i>On Philosophy</i>
13	R 11/13	Review/Catch-up/Conference I	
14	R 11/20	Conference II	
15	T 12/4		Final paper due at midnight
16	T 12/9		Final Exam at 3-5 pm in Griffin Floyd 200

VI. Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575), or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call [352-392-1575](tel:352-392-1575) for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call [352-392-1161](tel:352-392-1161) for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call [352-392-1111](tel:352-392-1111) (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call [352-733-0111](tel:352-733-0111) or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call [352-273-4450](tel:352-273-4450).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).

Appendix I: Writing Assessment Rubric

Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
Introduction and Thesis	Engaging introduction with the necessary context, sharply focused, insightful thesis well-aligned with goal of the assignment.	Clear introduction, relevant thesis but may lack nuance or originality.	Functional introduction, basic context, thesis somewhat generic or loosely connected.	Unclear or ineffective introduction; thesis vague, poorly developed, or marginally related.	Introduction and thesis missing, irrelevant, fail to address the prompt.
Organization and Structure	Exemplary organization, logical, clear structure enhancing readability and coherent idea development.	Well-organized with a clear structure; minor issues do not hinder the flow or coherence.	Organization evident but flawed; disjointed sections or lack of transitions.	Poor organization, difficult to follow sections, lacking logical progression, impacting clarity.	Structure chaotic or non-existent, severely obstructing readability and understanding.
Clarity of the Argument	Logical argument promoting easy comprehension and engagement throughout the essay.	Generally clear argument, minor ambiguities not significantly affecting the overall point.	Periodically unclear or confusing argument, weakening understanding of main points.	Argument lacks clear direction and clarity, often confusing or obscuring main points.	Argument incoherent or poorly articulated, fails to convey a meaningful point.
Analysis and Strength of Argument	Deep, insightful analysis, logically sound, and compelling, clearly strengthening overall argument.	Solid analysis; persuasive but might lack depth, support, or rigorous logic in parts.	Superficial/generic analysis; mostly logical argument not very persuasive, lacking depth or support.	Minimal/ flawed analysis; weak, poorly formulated or largely unpersuasive argument with little support.	No meaningful analysis; unfounded, illogical, or absent argument.
References	High-quality, relevant references effectively integrated, substantially strengthening the claims.	Adequate references from relevant sources; integration may be clumsy, additional references might enhance claims.	References present but insufficiently integrated or occasionally irrelevant; needs more/high-quality references.	Provides weak/minimal references for claims, few or dubious references fail to substantiate claims.	Lacks appropriate references, irrelevant, improperly integrated, failing to support claims.
Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation	Free from grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, meticulous attention to detail and proofreading.	Minor errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation not distracting from readability.	Noticeable errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, affecting readability/ professionalism.	Frequent errors disrupting readability, lack of proofreading evident.	Severe, pervasive grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, impairing comprehension.

Appendix II: Participation Rubric

In determining participation engagement (quantity) and quality are taken into account. Each factor is rated as either good, adequate, or inadequate.

Criteria	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Engagement	Highly engaged in lectures and breakout sessions, actively participating in small group tasks.	Clearly present in lectures and breakout sessions.	Not clearly present in lectures and breakout sessions.
Organization and Structure	Contributions reflect substantial and mostly accurate understanding of material.	Contributions reflect substantial if not always accurate understanding of material.	Contributions do not reflect any substantial understanding of material.

The participation grade is then determined as follows:

A = Good quality and good engagement

B = Good quality and adequate engagement or good engagement and adequate quality

C = Adequately quality and adequate engagement

D = Adequate quality or adequate engagement

E = Neither adequate quality nor adequate engagement