

# Philosophy 302: Plato and Aristotle

Gregory Salmieri, Fall 2018

## Course Description

This course surveys the essential content of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and considers more briefly some of the earlier thinkers whose ideas set the context for their works. We will begin with dialogues in which Plato is thought to give a reasonably accurate depiction of his mentor Socrates. We will focus on the ethical theses defended in these works and on the standards for knowledge presupposed by them. We will then observe how these theses and standards, in combination with certain ideas and problems from pre-Socratic thought, led Plato to develop the first philosophical system: an integrated set of ideas about the fundamental nature of reality, man, knowledge, and value. We will then turn to Aristotle's formulation of the principles of logic and the structure of science. Finally, we will study Aristotle's own philosophical system, with a focus on the ways in which it is similar to and different from Plato's.

## Basic course and instructor information

Course:

Phil 302: Plato and Aristotle  
Meeting times: Mondays 5:00–8:00 PM  
Location: Livingston Campus, [Lucy Stone Hall](#), room [B112](#)  
Course Number: 01:730:302, Section 1  
Index Number: 19430  
Credits: 3  
Prerequisites: at least one previous course in philosophy

Instructor:

Name: Gregory Salmieri  
Email: [gsalmieri@gmail.com](mailto:gsalmieri@gmail.com)  
Phone: 412-576-2990  
Office Hours: Mondays 3:30–4:30; location to be announced

## Required Books and other Reading Materials

Most of the readings for the class will be provided electronically in the form of PDFs, but there are two required books:

- Reeve (tr.), *Plato: Republic*, Hackett (ISBN-10: 0872207366, ISBN-13: 978-0872207363). [[Amazon](#)] [[Barnes and Noble](#)]
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Oxford University Press (ISBN-10: 0199674531, ISBN-13: 978-0199674534). [[Amazon](#)] [[Barnes and Noble](#)] [[Kindle e-Book](#)] [[Nook e-Book](#)]

A third book is recommended, but not required:

- Irwin and Fine (tr.), *Aristotle: Selections* (ISBN-10: 0915145677, ISBN-13: 978-0915145676). [[Amazon](#)] [[Barnes and Noble](#)]

There are many translations of the Plato's *Republic*, please buy the translation listed above. I recommend buying it is a print book, rather than e-book, but Adamson's book is equally useful in the e-book editions.

The Adamson book is based on a series of podcasts by the author. When assigning readings from this book, I indicate the podcast episode corresponding to each chapter, and you are welcome to listen to the episode rather than reading the chapter, if you prefer. But please do buy the book since having it to refer to will help when completing the papers and quizzes (on which, see below).

Many of the course readings, will be translations I have prepared myself, either by translating the works myself or (more often) updating earlier translations that are now in the public domain. These readings will be made available as needed on our Sakai site. There are many quality translations available, but I have chosen to prepare these translations myself for three reasons: (1) This material is free to use, so you don't have to spend as much on books. (2) By preparing the translations of these texts myself, I can ensure that certain key terms are translated consistently from one text to the next, and this will make it easier for us to think about how the texts relate to one another. (3) There are many choices that a translator has to make in translating a text, and these have no single right answer; each choice will emphasize some elements of the text at the expense of others; by making or revising translations myself, I can ensure that the texts we are reading emphasize the issues we are going to focus on in the course.

## **Assignments and Grading**

### Reading assignments

There will be a great deal of reading in this class, some of it will be very difficult material, and you will need to read parts of it very closely. So please plan for at least six hours of reading time per week.

A provisional schedule of readings is listed below. The actual reading assignment for each class session will be posted in the course calendar entry for that session. I reserve the right to alter the assignment for any class session until forty-eight hours after the end of the preceding session. So please be sure to consult the calendar after that time when preparing for class.

### Quizzes (20%)

There will be frequent online quizzes, typically due at 3:00pm on days when class meets. You will have three attempts to complete each quiz, with only your highest score being recorded. The average of your quiz grade will count for 20% of your semester grade.

Late quizzes will be accepted up until the beginning of class, but (because of the way the Sakai system works), it will not be possible to re-take quizzes after the 3:00pm due time, so be sure to finish the quiz (including any retakes) by that time. Under no circumstances will late quizzes be accepted after the beginning of class. However, if you have a compelling reason for missing a quiz, let me know and I will drop the quiz from your average, rather than letting the zero stand.

Any material that has been assigned or discussed in class (including in earlier weeks) may appear on a quiz, but the quiz due on the day of a given class will usually focus on the readings assigned for that class.

The quizzes have several, related purposes. (1) They ensure that you are doing the reading. (2) They give both you and me a sense of how much you are getting from the readings, prior to class discussion. (3) They call your attention to points in the readings that will be relevant to class discussion or to the papers and final exam. (4) They help you to develop the skill of finding evidence in a text that proves or refutes specific interpretive claims; this includes the skills of distinguishing between subtly different positions and of recognizing the same position when formulated in different ways.

The quizzes are difficult, and students often fail them on the first attempt, but you may take each quiz three times (before the due-date) to try to improve your grade, and you can take as much time as you like on each attempt.

I recommend reading through the quiz quickly before doing the readings for the week. This will sensitize you to the information to be alert for when you read. Then be sure to do the readings in full before taking the quiz, rather than simply hunting through the readings for the answers. (The questions are designed so that if you just hunt through the readings for the answers, you'll often miss important information and answer incorrectly.) Once you've read the assigned readings, return to the quiz and try to answer the questions first from memory, and then return to the text for anything you can't remember or that you need to get clearer on the details of. (Since you will have many of the texts in PDF format, you can use the search feature to help you find such details.) Then submit the quiz, view your score (including you scores for individual questions) and re-take the quiz, if you are not happy with the results.

## Papers (60%)

There will be two papers due over the course of the term, Each paper should be six to eight double spaced pages and will be worth 30% of your semester grade. The first paper will be due a little more than half-way through the course (once we have completed all of our Plato readings). The second will be due at the end of the course. Prompts will be assigned at least two weeks before the due date. Each paper will involve both interpreting Platonic and/or Aristotelian texts and evaluating one or more of the positions taken in the texts. Further instructions will be provided in the prompts.

Late papers will be accepted with three points deducted from the grade for each day late.

Most of the issues we will discuss in class are controversial, and people who have studied them for years have different opinions. This doesn't mean that certain views aren't right and others wrong, but it does mean that it's not *obvious* which are right, and that intelligent and knowledgeable people can take different positions. When grading your writing on such issues, I will not take into account whether I think the positions you take are correct. Instead I will focus on the extent to which your writing (1) fulfills the assignment, (2) shows an understanding of the issues positions covered in class, (3) is well reasoned, and (4) is clearly written. Good reasoning and clear writing require using words and grammatical constructions with care to articulate precise thoughts. In assessing the quality of your writing, I will be focused on this rather than on considerations such as flair or complexity of grammar or vocabulary. I will say more about the specific standards for papers when they are assigned. If at any point, you find the standards unclear, please ask.

In all aspects of the course, but especially in writing the papers, you are expected to know and comply with Rutgers' [academic integrity](#) policy.

## Exam (20%)

There will be a comprehensive final exam (administered during the assigned period) which will be worth 20% of your semester grade. The questions for the final will be distributed in advance.

## Class attendance and in-class participation

Attendance and classroom participation will not count directly towards your grade; however, you are responsible for knowing what was discussed in class, and so will need to attend regularly to do well on the assignments. Moreover, participating actively in classroom discussion aids one's understanding of the material, and usually puts one in a position to write better papers and forum posts, so I strongly encourage students to participate. I occasionally award extra credit points for extraordinary participation.

## How to Cite Plato and Aristotle's Writings

Plato and Aristotle have been widely studied and discussed over the course of millennia by scholars reading them in the original Greek and in various translations into various modern languages. To facilitate communications among scholars, certain conventions have been adopted that we will adhere to in this course.

All quality modern editions of Plato's dialogues reproduce in one form or another the page and section numbers from a 16<sup>th</sup> Century edition of Plato's complete works published by Henricus Stephanus. These *Stephanus Numbers* consist of a page number, followed by a letter (a–e) denoting a section of the page. In all of our texts, the Stephanus numbers can be found in the right margin. Since the Stephanus edition of Plato's works had several volumes, and the pagination did not continue from one volume to the next, the same Stephanus number (e.g. "11a") can refer to passages in multiple works. All the assignments of readings from Plato will be given in this format, and I will expect you to cite Plato in this same format in your written work.

Quality editions of Aristotle's work include *Bekker Numbers*—that is page numbers from Immanuel Bekker's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Greek edition of Aristotle's complete works. Each page of Bekker's edition contains two columns of text, so a Bekker number consists of a page number followed by the letter "a" or "b" to indicate the relevant column. Since each Bekker column is long (at least as compared to a Stephanus section), scholars typically include a line number when citing a passage, so a Bekker number citation might read "1121b17–21." Since the page numbering is continuous across Bekker's two

volumes, a Bekker number picks out a unique passage in Aristotle, and there isn't need to also specify the work. However, it is typical to cite Aristotle by giving the name of the work, the Book of the work (in cases of works that span over more than one book), and the chapter within the book. Bekker numbers will appear within the margins of our readings, with each increment of five lines marked. Since the line numbers refer to the Greek text (as formatted in Bekker) and we're reading it in English translation, these indications will not appear exactly five lines apart in our margins. However, if you see a reference to "1121b17–21" for example, you'll know to look for a passage that begins a bit below 1121b15 and ends a bit below 1121b20. I will often assign readings via such numbers, and I'll expect you to cite Aristotle in this same way in your papers.

## **Thinking critically about sensitive issues**

The philosophy department has issued the following [statement on the norms of discourse](#):

Productive intellectual inquiry – the basic purpose of colleges and universities – requires respectful, constructive discussion that enables all parties to participate fully. Philosophy has an especially vital role to play in facilitating such inquiry, because philosophers have been developing and honing practices of critical discussion over many centuries: techniques for uncovering, justifying, and assessing assumptions lurking behind any claim, from the most obvious to the most controversial.

Philosophy is thus a valuable tool for self-reflection and for communal debate. This is especially true at a time when so much is being debated, in such heated terms. But like any tool, in order to work, it must be used well. In our community – in our classes, online, and at talks and meetings – we expect all participants to observe basic norms of civility and respect. This means stating your own views directly and substantively: focusing on reasons, assumptions and consequences rather than on who is offering them, or how. And it means engaging other's views in the same terms. No topic or claim is too obvious or controversial to be discussed; but claims and opinions have a place in the discussion only when they are presented in a respectful, collegial, and constructive way.

I would like to add that philosophical ideas influence the way we lead our lives, they form part of our personal identities, and they factor into the way we evaluate ourselves and others. For all these reasons, thinking critically about such ideas often makes us uncomfortable. Some such discomfort is to be expected in any philosophy course. The course should not, however, be distressing; and I will try to ensure that challenges to deeply held ideas are always presented and discussed in a constructive and sensitive manner. Nevertheless, there is always a chance that the conversation will become distressing to some students—especially students whose experiences are very different from my own, and whose contexts I may not understand. So, if you find any aspect of the course environment distressing or unwelcoming (as opposed to merely challenging), or if you fear that it might become so, please let me know, and I will make every effort to accommodate you. Similarly, please feel free to exit the classroom at any time, if you find the conversation taking a distressing turn.

Philosophical discussion can sometimes prompt one to reflect on sensitive, personal issues that are best discussed with someone other than one's professor or classmates. Should you find yourself in this situation, a list of resources provided by the University can be found in the next section of this syllabus.

## **Student-Wellness Services**

Just In Case Web App: <http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Contact information: (848) 932-7884; 7 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; [rhscaps.rutgers.edu](http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu).

### Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA):

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Contact information: (848) 932-1181; 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; [vpva.rutgers.edu](http://vpva.rutgers.edu).

### Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services works with students with a documented disability to determine the eligibility of reasonable accommodations, facilitates and coordinates those accommodations when applicable, and lastly engages with the Rutgers community at large to provide and connect students to appropriate resources.

Contact information: (848) 445-6800; Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854; [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu).

### Scarlet Listeners

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

Contact information: (732) 247-5555; [www.scarletlisteners.com](http://www.scarletlisteners.com).

## **Provisional Schedule**

This provisional schedule lists topics and readings for each class section, and approximate due dates for papers assignments. We are unlikely to keep to this schedule exactly, so always consult the class calendar for up-to-date reading assignments.

### 9/10 | Session 1

Topic 1: Orientation to the course and to Plato's Corpus

- Course syllabus
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 15 (or Episode 18)

Topic 2: What is distinctive about Socrates?

- Plato, *Apology*
- Plato, *Protagoras*, 309a–320c
- Salmieri, "Budget Tour of Greek Philosophy Before Socrates," Sections A–C
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*
  - Chapter 1 (or Episode 1)
  - Chapter 12 (or Episode 14)

### 9/17 | Session 2: Socratic Questions and Methods

- Plato, *Euthyphro*
- Plato, *Laches* 184d–192b
- Plato, *Meno* 70a–77b
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 14 (or Episode 16)

### 9/24 | Session 3

Topic 1: Virtue and Knowledge in Socratic Ethics

- Plato, *Meno*, 77b–79e

- Plato, Protagoras
  - 329b–330b
  - 349b–362a
- Plato, *Euthydemus*, 278e–282d
- Plato, *Gorgias*
  - 466b–472c
  - 474b–475e
  - 507a–e
  - 508c–509a
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 17 (or Episode 20)

Topic 2: The “Meno Problem” and the theory of Recollection

- Plato, *Meno* 80a–86c
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*
  - Chapter 4 (or Episode 4)
  - Chapter 18, pp. 121–125 (or Episode 21)
- Salmieri, “A Budget Tour of Greek Philosophy Before Socrates,” D

## 10/1 | Session 4

Topic 1: The *Meno*’s Concluding Account(s) of Virtue

- Plato, *Meno* 86c–100c
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 18, pp. 125–127 (or Episode 21)

Topic 2: The Problem of Change

- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*
  - Chapter 5 (or Episode 5)
  - Chapter 6 or Episode 7)
  - Chapter 9 (or Episode 10)
- Salmieri, “A Budget Tour of Greek Philosophy Before Socrates,” E–G
- Plato, *Cratylus*, 439a–440a
- Plato, *Republic*, V, 475c–480a
- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.6 987a30–b14

## 10/8 | Session 5: The Other-Worldly Philosophy of Plato’s *Phaedo*

- Plato, *Phaedo*
  - 57a–91c
  - 115b–118a
  - 95b–107b
  - 115b–118a
- Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245c–246a
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*,
  - Chapter 20 (or Episode 24)

## 10/15 | Session 6: The Moral Philosophy of Plato’s *Republic*

- Reeve, summaries of *Republic* I–X
- *Republic*
  - II, 357a–376c
  - III, 412b–417b
  - IV, 419a–445e
  - IX, 580d–592b
- Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a–249d
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, chapter 21 (or Episode 25)

10/22 | Session 7: The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Plato's *Republic*

- Plato, *Republic*
  - VI, 504e–511e
  - VII
- Plato, *Symposium*, 201d–212a
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 21 (or Episode 26)

10/29 | Session 8

Topic 1: Orientation to Aristotle

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, A.1
- Leroi, Aristotle's Lagoon (video)
- Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium* I.5
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 29 (or Episode 35)

Topic 2: Aristotle's This-Worldly Metaphysics

- Aristotle, *Categories* 1-5
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 32 (or Episode 38)

Topic 3: Aristotle's Theory of Deduction

- Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* I.1 (to 4b30), 4
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 30 (or Episode 36)

11/1 | Paper 1 due.

11/5 | Session 9

Topic 1: Aristotle on *Epistēmē* and Demonstration

- Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*
  - I.1–2
  - II.19
- Aristotle, *Topics*
  - I.1–2
  - I.10
  - I.12
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
  - VI.3
  - VI.5–7
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 31 (or Episode 37)
- Gotthelf, "Aristotle as Scientist, a Proper Verdict"

Topic 2: Aristotle on the Principle of Non-Contradiction

- Aristotle *Metaphysics* Γ.3–4.

11/12 | Session 10

Topic 1: Aristotle on the Search for Principles

- Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*
  - I.11
  - II.1–2
  - II.7–10

Topic 2: Aristotle on Nature and the Principles of Change

- Aristotle, *Physics*
  - I.7

- II.1
- Aristotle, *Generation and Corruption* I.4

### 11/19 | Session 11

#### Topic 1: Aristotle's Four Causes

- Aristotle, *Physics* II.3
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 33 (or Episode 39)

#### Topic 2: Aristotle's Theory of Soul

- Aristotle, *De Anima* II.1-3
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 35 (or Episode 42)

### 11/26 | Session 12: Aristotle's Natural Teleology

- Aristotle, *Physics* II.8-9
- Salmieri, "Budget Tour," Section G
- Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* I.1, 640b6-642b4
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*
  - Chapter 10 (or Episode 11)
  - Chapter 34 (or Episode 40)
  - Chapter 39 (or Episode 47)

### 12/3 | Session 13: Aristotle on the Good and Virtue

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*,
  - I.1-4, 7, 13
  - II
  - IV.3, 5
- Plato, *Philebus*
  - 11b-d
  - 20b-23a
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*
  - Chapter 37 (or Episode 44)
  - Chapter 38 (or Episode 45)

### 12/10 | Session 14: Aristotle on The Role of Reason in Life

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
  - VI.1-2, 4-5, 8, 12
  - VII.1-3
  - X.6-8
- Adamson, *Classical Philosophy*, Chapter 39 (or Episode 47)

12/15 | Paper 2 due.

12/20 | Final Exam at 4:00–7:00pm