

### Aristotle on *logos*. Reading the so-called *Organon*

This course is devoted to a close reading of Aristotle's work in fields of philosophical inquiry we would now call logic and epistemology. Said work is to be found in the series of works—*Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *On Sophistical Refutations*—traditionally collected under the name "organon," or "instrument." These works, individually and collectively, make clear Aristotle's conviction that there is a deep intimacy between language and being, a conviction of crucial importance for his "major" works in ethics, physics and metaphysics. Our goal here will be to read a great deal of the central parts of these works—and at least something from nearly all of them—in order to see why Aristotle carried this conviction, and how it influenced his "method." That Aristotle himself never referred to these works as presenting an instrument or method, and might very well have collected them differently, will be both a starting point for our discussion of these works, and a cause for reflection once we have read them together.

#### *Class schedule*<sup>1</sup>

Session	Date	Reading	Assignment
1	10.1	<i>Cat.</i> , 1-3 (1a1-1b24) <i>De Int.</i> , 1-7 (16a1-18a8)	
2	12.1	<i>Cat.</i> , 4-5 (1b25-4b19)	
3	17.1	<i>Cat.</i> , 6-7 (4b20-8b24)	
4	19.1	<i>Cat.</i> , 8-9 (8b25-11b14)	Short essay 1
5	24.1	<i>Cat.</i> , 10-15 (11b17-15b30)	
6	26.1	<i>APr.</i> , 1-4 (24a1-26b33)	
7	31.1	<i>APr.</i> , 4-7 (26b34-29b28)	
8	2.2	<i>APr.</i> , 23-26 (40b16-43a19)	Short essay 2
<b>STATE OF THE WORLD WEEK</b>			
9	14.2	<i>APr.</i> , 32, 40-46 (47a1-b14, 49b10-52b30)	
10	16.2	<i>APst.</i> , A.1-4 (71a1-74a4)	Winter Excursion
11	21.2	<i>APst.</i> , A.5-8 (74a5-75b36)	
12	23.2	<i>APst.</i> , A.9-11 (75b37-77a35)	
13	28.2	<i>APst.</i> , A.19-23 (81b10-84b13)	
14	2.3	<i>APst.</i> , A.24-27 (84b14-87a39)	Short essay 3
15	7.3	<i>APst.</i> , B.1-6 (89b23-92a33)	
16	9.3	<i>APst.</i> , B.7-10 (92a34-94a19)	
17	14.3	<i>APst.</i> , B.11-13 (94a20-97b39)	
18	16.3	<i>APst.</i> , B.19 (99b15-100b17)	
<b>Final Essay Due Sat., 19.3, 11:59 PM; Tutorials by appointment, 22-24.3</b>			

<sup>1</sup> Guide to abbreviations: *Cat.* = *Categories*; *De Int.* = *On Interpretation*; *APr.* = ; *APst.* = *Posterior Analytics*. Arabic numerals = chapters; parenthetical numbers refer to "Bekker pages."

### *Preparation for Class*

Regular attendance is essential to the success of this course. And so is class preparation. **More than just reading through the assigned pages, preparing for class means reading thoughtfully and trying to engage with the text.** An example of such an engagement would be to think through the argument in a particular section of the text, and try to figure out its rationale, or imagine an alternative. Why is such a claim placed here, and not earlier (or later) in the chapter, or in an earlier (or later) chapter? What place does this local argument in the overall development of the account? If you find yourself unconvinced by a given argument, consider how you might compose an alternative argument, or an alternative principle from which to argue, or an alternative conclusion for which to argue. On the whole, in reading, ask yourself: how would you explain and justify your view of the assigned reading to others in conversation around the seminar table?

**Please make sure to attend every class, and to be on time for each session.** According to college regulations, over 15% unexcused absences will result in academic probation. (See the Student Handbook section V for a description of college absence policies.)

### *Writing Assignments*

You will write three short essays (of about 1000 words in length) over the course of the semester, each of which responding to a thematic question about a particular textual selection, and representing a culmination of your thinking about the issues at stake in the section of the reading. Each of these will be preceded by the submission of a short précis (of maybe 300 words) detailing your chosen text, your intended thesis and your argument as best you can imagine it. The aim of the précis, which will be graded simply "received, plus, or minus," is to deepen your thinking about a particular piece of text, and to practice expressing yourself in formal writing. The final paper, due in week 11, should draw on one of the three essays you will have written by that point, and will constitute your most sustained reflection on the course material. As such, it is expected to be of somewhat greater length (about 1800 words), and constitute a somewhat larger portion of your grade.

All of the assignments will be described in greater detail over the course of the semester. Please do contact me early on if there is anything unclear about them.

### *Grading*

Précis for shorter essays (x3): 10% total

Regular papers (x3): 15% each; 45% total

Final paper: 20%

Class Participation: 25%