



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 303 Lec 01 – The Medieval and Renaissance Period

Winter Term 2015

Course Outline

Lectures: MW 15:30 - 16:45, SA 247

Instructor: J. J. MacIntosh
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Three Notes about Email:

- 1) Students wishing to get in touch with me via email should ensure that “Philosophy 303” or some other clearly identifying term occurs in the subject line. Otherwise there is a strong possibility that your message will be deleted unread as spam.
- 2) **If you email me to make an appointment please indicate the times when you are available.**
- 3) Please make sure your first and last name is clearly included in the body of any email message.

Office Hours: In the period January 12 - April 16, omitting Feb. 16 - 20, office hours are:
Thursdays 10:00 - 12:00, except Feb. 12 moved to Feb 11, 10:00 - 12:00.

OR BY APPOINTMENT

Note that this means what it says. You are not limited to the times listed, but you may need to make an appointment. If you email to ask for an appointment please be sure to state clearly the times you are available.

Course Description: A survey of some central philosophical views of the leading philosophers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Among the philosophers discussed will be Augustine, Boethius, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Anselm, Abailard, Ibn Rushd (Averroës), Maimonides, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and Montaigne. Though we will not be able to look in depth at the views of these philosophers, attention will be paid to the discussion by Christian, Islamic, and Jewish philosophers of central issues in what would now be thought of as philosophy of religion, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics, and to the revival of classical scepticism during the sixteenth century. What follows is a somewhat idealized outline of the topics to be treated, their order and the time we shall spend on them. It is open to change as a function of the difficulty of the topics and the desires of the class and the instructor. With the exception of weeks 1 and 13, relevant topics mentioned for each date refer to the topics in Bosley and Tweedale (see under "Texts," below). Readings will be assigned for each topic and are the *minimum* you should have read before that date. It is neither illegal nor immoral to read widely both in and out of your assigned texts.

Week 1.1, 1.2, January 12, 14, Historical, conceptual, and philosophical background

Week 2.1, 2.2, January 19, 21, Necessity and Contingency

Week 3.1, January 26, Causality

Week 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, January 28, February 2, 4, An infinitely perfect being, and the properties of such a being

Week 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, February 9, 11, 23, Time and infinity: could the world be infinite in past time? The notion of infinity; the introduction in the west of "arabic" numerals; the difficulty of accepting negative numbers; the problem with $a/-b$ and $-a/b$ (though of as ratios), and similarly the problem: how can $-a \times -b = ab$.

Week 6.2, Feb. 25, Test 1

Week 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, March 2, 4, 9, Free Will and divine foreknowledge

Week 8.2, 9.1, 9.2, March 11, 16, 18, Knowledge and Scepticism

Week 10.1, 10.2, 11.1, March 23, 25, 30, Body and Soul

Week 11.2, 12.1, 12.2, April 1, 6, 8, Morality

Week 13, Renaissance thinkers: Cardano and mathematics; Telesio, Campanella and early atomism; Erasmus, Montaigne and the return of scepticism

Texts: John Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981)

Richard N. Bosley and Martin Tweedale, eds., *Basic Issues in Medieval Philosophy* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2nd ed., 2006)

Aristotle was the dominant philosophical influence on medieval philosophy. Ackrill's *Aristotle the Philosopher* is an extremely clear and helpful short introduction to Aristotle. Students should read it as soon as possible. Students are encouraged to read original articles and books, and to consult the *Philosophers Index* (online, along with a number of other data bases via the University Library). Students consulting material on the net are reminded that refereed sources are more likely to contain rigorous, scholarly material than unrefereed sources (there's a lot of rubbish on the net). All major philosophical journals are refereed, and most are available on-line via our library. Also available on-line is the (recommended) Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/>).

At some point toward the end of term 15-20 minutes at the beginning of class will be used for the student surveys.

Evaluation

- Marks will be based on two tests and eight assignments.
- Tests: The first test is an in-class test worth 42% of the final mark. Students may bring to the in-class test a single sheet of standard sized paper (approx. 21.5 x 28 cm). You may put on the paper anything you like. No other notes or books may be consulted. On your test please write as legibly as time allows; if possible use a pen not a pencil. After the first test students may submit an optional term paper (deadline, firm: two weeks after return in class of the test; maximum length 3,000 words). For the optional term paper you may choose any of the questions from the in class test, or another topic relevant to the work covered to date chosen in consultation with JJM. For the optional term paper, if chosen, emailed submissions are strongly preferred. Please use Microsoft word and attach your paper to an ordinary email. The term paper mark will, if higher, replace the mark of the corresponding test for the purpose of calculating the final mark, unless the test mark was an F, in which case that mark will stand. The second test is a take home test worth 50% of the final mark. For each test you will be given a choice of questions, and asked to answer two questions. The first test will be on February 25. The second test will be posted April 2, and will be due by 23:59 April 16. Electronic submissions are preferred for this second test—simply email your test as an email attachment, preferably as a Microsoft word document. If MSWord is unavailable please use a pdf format. Please ensure that your name is on your test. Length of this second test: total length of your two answers should have a maximum of (approximately) 3,000 words. There will be no Registrar-scheduled final examination.

Assignments: The eight assignments are designed to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading, and are intended to test awareness of our texts. Each assignment will require a short, one paragraph (two to four sentences), answer to a straightforward question about a text with which we are currently working or are about to work. Each assignment will be on a pass fail basis. A pass on a given assignment will be worth 1% of the final mark. If your first attempt is a fail, you may have **one** second attempt, due two days

after email notification of the fail mark. No third attempts. Electronic submissions, as part of, or as an attachment to, an ordinary email, are strongly preferred. If you are attaching the assignment please ensure that your name is on your assignment title, not merely on the email. Preferred subject line format for your emailed assignment to ensure that your assignment is not deleted as spam: 303 *An yourname*, (where 'n' is the assignment number). **Passing a minimum of six of these assignments is required for a pass in the course as a whole.** The assignments, posted one week before the due date, are due by 11.59 p.m. of the due dates. These are: A1, January 15; A2, January 22; A3, February 6; A4, March 6; A5, March 13; A6, March 20; A7, March 27; A8, April 10. Assignment topics and suggested readings will be available on D2L.

- We are asked by the University to "Indicate when writing and the grading thereof is a factor in the evaluation of the student's work. (See [E.2 Writing Across the Curriculum](#) statement.)" Writing and the grading thereof is indeed a factor in the evaluation of your work. Your writing should be clear, coherent, and to the point. Your arguments should be plainly set out. Notice that footnotes of the incomplete and unhelpful sort offered in "E.2 Writing Across the Curriculum" (at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>) will be clear evidence of insufficient scholarly acumen, ability, or interest. You may wish to consult the short notes on writing a philosophy paper on D2L for a more helpful way of giving references. These notes also mention the relation between writing and philosophical evaluation.

Grading Method

Your tests will be graded on the standard university scale which ranges from A+ to F. Your mark may sometimes have a slash (/) in it, thus: B/B+. In such cases the first mark is the official mark, the second shows which end of the mark you are closer to. An A-/B+ is an A- at the lower end; an A-/A is an A- at the upper end. Letter grade marks will be averaged by using GPA numerical equivalents. The assignment marks, worth 8% of the final mark, will be assigned a cumulative letter grade based on the following table: 8: A+, 7: A, 0 - 6: F. Failure to submit an assignment by the due date produces an automatic F for that assignment. Notice that an F as the total assignment grade will produce an F in the course.

Spelling and grammar: In the optional term paper for the first test, if chosen, and in the take home test, more than five grammatical or spelling mistakes on any one page will lead to it being returned for corrections before a mark is assigned. Corrections are due within two days of the return. Two examples of the same mistake count as two mistakes. Standard U. S. spellings (e.g., 'neighbor' for 'neighbour,' 'defense' for 'defence,' 'theater' for 'theatre,' etc.) are acceptable. Common mistakes in philosophy papers include: (1) misspellings of 'existence,' 'conceive,' 'argument,' and 'separate'; (2) the misuse of 'i.e.' for 'e.g.'; (3) the misuse of 'phenomena' and 'criteria' as singulars. They are plurals. The singulars are 'phenomenon' and 'criterion.' Finally there is (4) the increasingly common use of the contraction 'it's' as a possessive. Perhaps this now common error will become standard, but it has not become so yet, and just as we do not speak of "he's book," or "she's pen" so we should not refer to "it's colour." The use of 'it's' as a possessive was common in the 16th century, and this is a course which includes renaissance philosophy. Therefore, exceptionally, in this course you may use 'it's' as a possessive, provided of course that you also conform to 16th century conventions in other matters such as spelling, punctuation, pronoun use, word meaning, grammar, etc.

Of course you should avoid sexist language. In particular, remember that 'man' and 'he' are not gender neutral, and that 'girl' is not an appropriate term for adult women. (No doubt these remarks will have little practical relevance for *this* class; I put them in mainly to ensure that they remain unnecessary.) To answer a FAQ in advance: when quoting a (translated) medieval or renaissance author, should I keep the sexist language? — Answer: Yes. Quote accurately. You might notice, however, that although our authors were undoubtedly sexist, Latin does not impose the sexist language that translators into English often choose.

Policy on Late Assignments

As mentioned above, electronic submissions are preferred for assignments, term papers, and the take home test. If a hard copy submission is easier for you, there will be a drop box available in the philosophy

department (in the hall on the left side as you enter the department, 12th floor, Social Sciences Building). Notice that this drop box will only be available until 4:30 on the day your assignment, etc. is due. The deadlines for assignments, term papers, and take home tests are firm: no late submissions accepted.

Academic Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a permanent disability or temporary impairment who may require academic accommodation, you must first register with the Student Accessibility Resource Office located in MacEwan Student Centre 452; phone 403-220-8237; email access@ucalgary.ca. Students who have not registered with the Student Accessibility Office are not eligible for academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course. Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/> for further information.

D2L Help

Desire2Learn is the University of Calgary's learning management system which has now replaced BlackBoard. Go to <http://www.elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/> for help in using Desire2Learn.

Student Advising and Information Resources

- General Academic Concerns and Program Planning— Have a question but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in the Faculty of Arts. Drop in at SS110, call 403-220-3580, or email artsads@ucalgary.ca. Advisors in the ASC can also provide assistance and advice in planning your program through to graduation. You can visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/> for more information on common academic concerns.
- **Advice on Philosophy Courses** - You may find answers to your more specific questions about a philosophy degree on the Department of Philosophy's website <http://phil.ucalgary.ca> or contact one of Philosophy's current Undergraduate Advisors (see below)
- **Registration Overload/Prereq Waivers** – If you are seeking to register in a Philosophy course that is full or to get permission to waive the prereqs for a course, email the instructor of the course.

Protection of Privacy

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor.

Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representatives

The Student Ombuds Office provides independent, impartial, and confidential support for students who require assistance or advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. For more information, see www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds. For the Students' Union Faculty of Arts rep: arts1@ucalgary.ca.

Safewalk

Call 403-220-5333 (24/7/365) for a Safewalk volunteer to accompany you safely to your destination on campus including parking lots, housing, and the LRT station or use a Campus Help Phone.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

The Department of Philosophy is located on the 12th floor of the Social Sciences Building and on the web at www.phil.ucalgary.ca

PHILOSOPHY UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISORS FOR WINTER 2015:

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For assistance with registration issues in Philosophy courses, contact

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