



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 609.44 Lec 01**  
**Topics in the History of Philosophy: Aquinas**

**Winter Term 2015**

**Course Outline**

**Lectures:** T 17:00 - 19:45, SA 123

**Instructor:** J. J. MacIntosh

**Office:** SS 1249

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**Three Notes about Email:**

- 1) Students wishing to get in touch with me via email should ensure that "Philosophy 503" 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 names are clearly included in the body of any email message.

**Office Hours:** In the period September 8 - December 8, except for the period November 11-13, office hours are Thursdays 10:00 - 12:00, except Thursday, Oct. 22.

**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:** In this course we shall be dealing with some of the many philosophically interesting arguments of one of the world's great philosophers, St Thomas Aquinas. Although he is one of the cleverest and most interesting of philosophers St. Thomas is also, by those who do not share his faith, greatly unread. His (almost) always interesting arguments are frequently better than his detractors are aware; equally frequently they are less good than his defenders suggest. In this course we shall consider the strengths and weaknesses of Aquinas's arguments in three overlapping areas: I: Natural Philosophy (Necessity, Causality, Time, Infinity); II: Philosophical Theology (God's existence, God's attributes, Foreknowledge and freedom); III: Human Beings (The soul and immortality, Epistemology, Morality and method). Following is a rough schedule which may be altered due to topic difficulty, class desires, etc.

Week 1, Sept. 8, Introduction & background: general

Week 2, Sept. 15, Introduction & background: Aquinas

Week 3, Sept. 22, Necessity

Week 4, Sept. 29, Causality

Week 5, Oct. 6, Time and Motion

Week 6, Oct. 13, Infinity  
Week 7, Oct. 20, God's existence I: failed proofs, ontological and others  
Week 8, Oct. 27, God's existence II: ST and SCG proofs  
Week 9, Nov. 3, God's attributes  
Week 10, Nov. 10, God's foreknowledge and human freedom  
Week 11, Nov. 17, Souls  
Week 12, Nov. 24, Epistemology  
Week 13, Dec. 1, Morality and Method  
Week 13+, Dec. 8, Review of problems

### **Texts:**

Almost all of Aquinas's works are available on-line—<http://dhsprory.org/thomas/> and elsewhere—and those will provide our texts. In particular we shall be mining, in translation, *Summa Theologiæ*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *De Potentia*, *De Veritate*, and perhaps others. In addition, a background knowledge of Aristotle's philosophical views are indispensable in reading Aquinas. One of the best short introductions is John Ackrill's *Aristotle the Philosopher*. Of course students at this level are expected to be familiar with, and to consult, on line resources such as the *Philosophers Index*, and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

In addition the following are on reserve in the library:

Copleston, F. C. *Aquinas* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955)  
Copleston, F. C.: *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1972)  
Davies, Brian, *The Thought of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)  
Geach, P. T., *God and the Soul* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969)  
Grant, Edward, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)  
Kenny, A., ed., *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1969).  
Kenny, A., *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993)  
Leaman, Oliver, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)  
Leaman, Oliver, *Moses Maimonides* (London: Routledge, 1990)  
Maimonides, Moses, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlander (New York: Dover, 1956)  
Marenbon, John, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007)  
McMullin, E., ed., *The Concept of Matter in Greek and Medieval Philosophy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965)  
Weisheipl, James O., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974)

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

### **Evaluation**

- This class meets in conjunction with Philosophy 503.6. As with that class, marks will be based on two take home tests and class contribution. In addition to the 503 class presentation and discussion, 609 students will meet regularly with the instructor at a time to be arranged.
- Tests: There will be two take home tests, each worth 40% of the final mark. The first take home test is due by 23:59, October 14. The second take home test is due by 23:59, December 8. Electronic submissions are strongly preferred. Please make the subject line of your submission *Your Last Name T1* (or *T2*, as appropriate.) If possible, please send your test as a MS Word or PDF attachment. The take home test questions will be posted two weeks before the test is due. If you wish you may submit a rough draft of your answer at

least one week before the test is due and I will, usually within 24 hours, reply with suggestions for improvement. Your answer should not be longer than 3,000 words (it's a test, not a term paper). Please ensure that your name is on your test as well as in the accompanying email. There will be no Registrar-scheduled final examination.

- In-class work: After the second meeting, a paper devoted to the following week's topic will be posted in advance on D2L. The first part of the next meeting will be a presentation by the instructor on the topic; the second part of the meeting will begin with a short 15-20 minute presentation by 1 or 2 class members, responding to the posted paper, followed by class discussion. Your class presentation, participation in class discussion, and work in the extra 609 meetings will be worth 20% of the final mark. A mark for your presentation will be available a week after your presentation; a mark for your remaining in-class discussion, including our extra meetings, will be available after each take home test.
- 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.

**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 your paper 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."

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 author, should I keep the sexist language? — Answer: Yes. Quote accurately. You might notice, however, that although Aquinas and other authors we shall discuss were undoubtedly sexist, Latin does not impose the sexist language that translators into English often choose.

**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**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on student accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)

**D2L Help**

Desire2Learn is the University of Calgary's online learning management system. Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/services/d2l> for help.

**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 or teaching assistant.

**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.