Philosophy 452: Aristotle  
Spring 2008, M-W 1.00-2.30 pm  
Wilson 104

Instructor  
Mariska Leunissen  
Email: mleuniss@artsci.wustl.edu  
Office: Wilson Hall Rm. 112 / 935-4753  
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11-12 or by appointment

Course Description  
This course offers an examination of Aristotle’s most important philosophical doctrines, with a strong focus on his philosophy of living nature and scientific methodology. We will read a wide array of works of Aristotle, as well as relevant secondary sources. Topics that will be discussed are (among others) Aristotle’s notions of nature, movement, teleology, and necessity; the notions of essence, substantial being, and definition; Aristotle’s account of the soul and of soul-functions; his biology (including embryology); his bio-cosmology; Aristotle’s views on the ‘special’ status of human beings; and his theory of intentional action. The primary readings will include (selections from) the Physics, the Metaphysics, On the Soul, the biological works, On the Heavens, and the Nicomachean Ethics and Politics. Special attention will be paid to interactions of Aristotle with his predecessors in his discussions of philosophical problems and to the methodological problems involved in the study of Aristotle’s treatises, many of which are notoriously difficult and obscure.

Prerequisites  
This class is mainly designed to offer graduate students a more thorough understanding of key notions and ideas in Aristotle, but the class is open to anyone who has completed at least one course in Philosophy at the 300-level or has received permission of the instructor. These prerequisites, however, are the minimum: students who have not previously taken any introductions to ancient philosophy (such as Phil. 347C: Ancient Philosophy) or do not already have some experience reading Aristotle might find this course very difficult.

Course requirements

1) One short (15 min.) seminar presentation  15%  
2) Three short (2-page) critical essays  30%  
3) One research paper (15-20 pages)  50%  
4) Participation  5%

Note: You must complete all five assignments to receive credit for this course. In addition, regular attendance and class participation are expected. Please bring assigned readings to class.

Ad 1. One short (15 min.) seminar presentation  
Each student will be expected to give a short presentation, which provides an introduction to both the assigned primary and secondary texts. The presentation mainly serves to help focus the discussion of the texts on the most important or interesting issues.
Ad 2. Three short (2-page) critical essays
Students will be asked to write three critical essays (two pages, double-spaced, standard font and margins) on selections from the primary texts. Each essay constitutes 10% (30% in total) of the final grade, and they all must be completed on time, as assigned, in order to pass the seminar. Unless special permission is obtained from the instructor in advance, late papers will not be accepted without grade penalty: for each 24h that the paper is late, one-third of a letter grade will be deducted (e.g., an A will become an A-). Permission will only be given in case there is a genuine emergency or the circumstances are exceptional in some other way (e.g. extreme or prolonged illness, or family crisis). The essays are due on 2/4; 3/17; 4/7 in class.

Ad 3. One research paper
Each student will be expected to write a research paper (15-20 pages, double-spaced, standard font and margins) on a topic of his or her choice related to the course material (students are encouraged to discuss this topic first with the instructor before starting their research). A research paper should develop a genuine argument, while both giving a thorough analysis of primary texts and taking account of the relevant secondary literature on the issues discussed (more detailed instructions will be provided in class). The research paper constitutes 50% of the final grade. The paper is due on May 1.

Ad 4. Participation
Students are expected to be willing to participate in discussions. In order to be able to participate actively students will have to have prepared the primary and secondary literature recommended. Participation constitutes 5% of the final grade. (Bonus points at instructor’s discretion)

Plagiarism will be punished as severely as the university allows. Please make yourself familiar with the university’s policies on plagiarism.

Grading scale:

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<tr>
<th>Numeric Grades</th>
<th>0.00%</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>62.5</th>
<th>67.5</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>72.5</th>
<th>77.5</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>82.5</th>
<th>87.5</th>
<th>90</th>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
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### Course schedule (subject to adjustment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>1/14; 1/16</th>
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| **Introduction:** How to study Aristotle?  
*Physics I: Change, causation, analogy art & nature*  
**Primary readings:**  
*Metaphysics* *alpha*; *Physics II.1-7*  
**Secondary readings:**  

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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>1/23</th>
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| **Physics II: Defense of natural teleology; different concepts of necessity**  
**Primary readings:**  
*Physics II.8-9; On Generation and Corruption II.11; Meteorology IV.12*  
**Secondary readings:**  

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>1/28; 1/30</th>
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| **Psychology: the concept of soul and soul functions**  
**Primary readings:**  
*On the Soul* I.1-2; II.1-4; III.9-13  
**Secondary readings:**  

| Essay I (physics & psychology): due 2/4 |
|--------|-------------|
| **Biology I: historia or the collection of facts**  
**Primary readings:**  
*History of Animals* I-II.1  
**Secondary readings:**  
### Week 5
**2/11; 2/13**

**Biology II: teleological explanations (final causes; teleological principles; demonstration in the natural sciences)**

**Primary readings:**
- *Parts of Animals* I; *Posterior Analytics* II.11

**Secondary readings:**

### Week 6
**2/18; 2/20**

**Biology III: Aristotle’s science in theory and practice; material and formal natures**

**Primary readings:**
- *Parts of Animals* II-IV

**Secondary readings:**

### Week 7
**2/25; 2/27**

**Biology IV: Theory of natural reproduction and the development of the embryo**

**Primary readings:**
- *Generation of Animals* I-II

**Secondary readings:**

### Week 8
**3/3; 3/5**

**Biology V: The four causes in embryology**

**Primary readings:**
- *Generation of Animals* V

**Secondary readings:**

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*Spring break 3/10-3/14*

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*Essay II (biology): due 3/17*
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<tr>
<th>Week 9 3/17; 3/19</th>
<th>Motion 1: Animals as self-movers in biology</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary readings:</strong></td>
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<td>Movement of Animals; Progression of Animals</td>
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<td><strong>Secondary readings:</strong></td>
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<th>Week 10 3/24; 3/26</th>
<th>Motion 2: the motions and features of the heavenly bodies in cosmology</th>
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<td><strong>Primary readings:</strong></td>
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<td><em>On the Heavens II</em></td>
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<td><strong>Secondary readings:</strong></td>
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<th>Week 11 3/31; 4/2</th>
<th>Motion 3: Unmoved movers in theology</th>
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<td><strong>Primary readings:</strong></td>
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<td><em>Metaphysics L</em></td>
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<td><strong>Secondary readings:</strong></td>
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**Essay III (motion): due 4/7**

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<th>Week 12 4/7; 4/9</th>
<th>Metaphysics: Substance and Essence, Form and Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary readings:</strong></td>
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<td><em>Metaphysics Z</em></td>
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<td><strong>Secondary readings:</strong></td>
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Week 13
4/14; 4/16
Politics: natural cities and political animals

Primary readings:
Politics I

Secondary readings:

Week 14
4/21; 4/23
Ethics: friendship and happiness

Primary readings:
Nicomachean Ethics VIII

Secondary readings:

Research Paper: due May 1

Texts

- Primary texts - required:


[This is the ‘standard’ English translation, to which most scholars writing in English turn first; it is often referred to as the ‘Revised Oxford translation’. The translations collected in these two volumes are decent, but not perfect. You are therefore encouraged to check the original Greek as much as possible: for this you can use the Oxford Classical Texts series (note, however, that not all of Aristotle’s text have been published in this series), or the Budé; the Loeb Classical Library series is very unreliable (both the Greek and the translation). If you do not know Greek, the alternative is to compare different translations: if you detect significant differences in translation you are encouraged to bring those up in class, because you have likely hit on a much disputed passage.]

Here are a few alternative translations:
- highly recommendable are the Clarendon Aristotle Series, which include translations with commentary of selected parts of Aristotle’s works (check out http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/series/ClarendonAristotleSeries/?view=usa for which translations are available).

Invaluable web-pages are:
- Perseus: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
- Thesaurus Linguae Graecae:
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:
Primary texts – highly recommended:


Secondary literature – required:
See course schedule.
Ereserve: password is ‘nature’.

Secondary literature – recommended for general reading:

- J. Barnes et. al. (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle*, 4 vols., Duckworth.

Secondary literature – (edited) books with articles on Aristotle’s philosophy of nature: