

Aristotle on Action, Winter 2011
Weds. 1:30-4:20¹, Wieboldt
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Office Hours: Fri. 2-5 (except 2/25)

Abbreviations: NE= *Nicomachean Ethics*; EE= *Eudemian Ethics*; Phys. = *Physics*;
An. Pr. = *Prior Analytics*; An. Po.= *Posterior Analytics*; DMA= *De Motu
Animalium*; Meta.= *Metaphysics*; Rhet.= *Rhetoric*; Top. = *Topics*;
Cat.=*Categories*; GC= *On Generation and Corruption*, DA = *De Anima*

I. Weeks I-2: Aiming at the Good

1/5: The difficulty with thinking that some things are better than others.

Texts:

NE I.1, 2, 4 (1095a14-16).

1/12: Low, Middle, and Highest Goods. The Form of the Good.

Primary Text Reading Assignment: NE I [esp. I.2, I.6 (1096a34-b35), I.7 (1097a15-b21)]; III.4; EE I.8 (1218b7-27); DMA 6 (700b15-16; 23-28), GC II.10 (336b25-337a7), DA II.4 (415a22-b8), Plato, *Republic* II (357b4-358a3).

Required Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

Menn, S. "Aristotle and Plato on God as Nous and the Good" *Revue of Metaphysics* 45 (1992), available on JSTOR.

Lear, G. "The Finality Criterion." (ch. 2 of her, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good*) avail. here under 'course documents.'

Focus Passages: NE I.6 1097a15-b21 and EE I.8 1218b7-27.

Optional Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

Akrill, J. 'Aristotle on Eudaimonia' (in his *Essays on Plato and Aristotle*)

McDowell, J. 'Eudaimonism and Realism in Aristotle's Ethics' (in R. Heinaman, ed., *Aristotle and Moral Realism*), avail. here under 'course documents.'

Weeks 3-6: Human Excellence

1/19 Virtue as a Hexis: disposition, habituation, habit

Primary Text Reading Assignment: Cat. 8b25-9a13, Met. Δ.16, 19, 20, Phys. VII.3, NE I.4 1095b4-14, II (all, but esp. 1,5,6), III.6-9, X.9, EE II.2-5.

Required Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

¹ except for the class of 2/24, which is rescheduled to the 3pm of 2/27.

Broadie, S. "Virtues and Parts of the Soul" (Ch. 2 of her *Ethics with Aristotle*);
Kosman, A.: "Being Properly Affected: Virtues and Feelings in Aristotle's Ethics"
Focus Chapter: [NE II.1](#)

Optional Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

Burnyeat, M. "Aristotle on Learning to be Good"

Sorabji, R. "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue"
(both are in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Rorty)

1/26 Virtue as concerned with the Mean

Primary Text Reading Assignment: NE II, and NE III.6-9, VI.1, 1138b19-35, [EE II.2-5](#).

Required Secondary Text Reading Assignment: Mueller, A "Aristotle's Conception of Ethical and Natural Virtue: How the Unity Thesis sheds light on the Doctrine of the Mean."

Focus Chapter: NE II.6

Optional Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

Brown, L. : "What is the 'mean relative to us' in Aristotle's *Ethics*?"; Hursthouse, R. "The central doctrine of the mean";

2/2 Virtue for its own sake

Primary Text Reading Assignment: NE I.2 (1094a17-22), 5, 7 (1097a15-b22); II.4; III.1 (1109b30-110b16), 3, 7 (1115b22-25 & 1116a12-15); IV.2,3; VI.2,3; X.6-8, Rhet. I.9

Required Secondary Text Reading Assignment:

Ackrill, J., 'Aristotle on Action'

Whiting, J., "Eudaimonia & Choosing Virtuous Actions for Themselves"

Lear, G. "Aristotle on Moral Virtue and the Fine"

Focus Chapter: NE X.6

Optional Secondary Text Reading Assignment; Korsgaard, C. "Aristotle and Kant on the Source of Value"; Tuozzo, T. "Aristotle's theory of the good & its causal basis."

2/9 The Value of External Goods (Honor & Friendship) & Luck (?)

Primary Text Reading Assignment: NE I.7 (1097a15-b22), I.10-11; IV.3,5; IX. 8, 9; X. 8, Rhet. I.9; Phys. II 4-6,8, EE VIII.2

Secondary Text Reading Assignment: Millgram, E. "Aristotle on Making Other Selves"; Cooper, J. "Aristotle on the goods of fortune." + Lear & Whiting from last week.

Focus Chapter: NE IX.9

Weeks 7-10: Human Motivation

2/16 The Psychology and Physics of Self-Movement

Primary Text Reading Assignment: DA III.9-12, & Phys. III. 3; VIII.2 (252b18-28, 253a8-21),4,5,6 (259b1-16) & DMA 6, 8

Secondary Text Reading Assignment: Whiting, J., “Locomotive soul”; Coope, U., “Aristotle on Action”; Furley, D., “Self-Movers”; Berryman, S., “Aristotle on Pneuma and Animal Self-Motion”

Focus Chapter: DA III.10

2/27 (3-6pm) Deliberation and deliberating well (bouleusis and euboulia)

Primary Text Reading Assignment: NE III.1-5; VI.5,7,9 EE II.6-11

Secondary Text Reading Assignment: Wiggins, D., “Deliberation and Practical Reason”; Segvic, H., “Deliberation and Choice in Aristotle”; Kolnai, A., “Deliberation is of Ends.”

Focus Chapter: EE II.10

3/2 The Practical Syllogism I: which kind of cause?

Primary Text Reading Assignment: DMA 7, NE VII.3, NE VI.7,9, DA III.10, 11

Secondary Text Reading Assignment: Broadie, A., “Rational Action”, Corcilius, K., “Two Jobs for Aristotle’s Practical Syllogism” and (for those who can read German) his “Arisoteles’ praktische Syllogismen in der zweiten haelfte der 20. Jahrhunderts” is a terrific survey; Kenny, A., “Practical Inference,” Gottlieb, P., “The Practical Syllogism.”

Focus Chapter: DMA 7

3/9: The Practical Syllogism II: nonstandard syllogizing more generally (inductive and practical)

Primary Text Reading Assignment: everything from last week + NE I.4 (1094a30-b13), I.7 (1098b3-6), III.3 1112b12-25; NE VI. 6 1142a25-31; An. Pr. II.21, 23 An. Po. I.1, 18, II. 19, Met. Θ9, M10, Rhet. I.2, Top. I.12; NE I. 7, 1098a29-b9; III.3 1112b12-25; VI. 6 1142a25-31

Secondary Text Reading Assignment: McKirahan, R.D. “Aristotelian Epagoge in *Prior Analytics* II. 1 and *Posterior Analytics* I. 1.” Mueller, A., “How theoretical is practical reason?”; Vogler, C., “Anscombe on Practical Inference.”

Focus Chapter: An. Po. I.1