

Department of Philosophy &
College of the Humanities
Carleton University
PHIL 3000/CLCV 3011

**Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*
Winter 2017**

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Office hours: Fridays, from 9am to 11am

Course Description:

In this course, we will undertake a close reading of the whole of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Like so many other works of ancient moral theory, the *Nicomachean Ethics* is principally concerned with the nature of human happiness and the means to its attainment. Our primary aim shall thus be to get clear on Aristotle's account of both. In the process, we shall endeavour to elucidate Aristotle's stance on such fundamental questions of moral philosophy as: its proper method; the purpose of the state and the relation between moral philosophy and political science; the nature and varieties of moral virtue; the nature of choice and moral agency; the cognitive and affective components of moral action; the nature and varieties of moral weakness and moral fortitude; the nature and moral significance of friendship; and the nature and value of philosophical wisdom (or contemplation). There is no overstating the influence the *Ethics* has had on the history of moral philosophy. Our progress in this course will thus be facilitated – but also complicated – by the very long history of the reception of, and commenting upon, this seminal work. We will look to this history often to guide us in our reading, to offer different interpretive vantage points, and to feed our critical reflections. Finally, since Aristotle began his philosophical career as a student in Plato's Academy, and he clearly learned a great deal from his master, we will read the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an eye to relevant Platonic texts and teachings.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students can expect to have achieved:

- A global understanding of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*;
- In-depth knowledge of a more circumscribed topic pertaining to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as of the secondary literature related to this topic; and
- An awareness of Aristotle's principal philosophical sources and interlocutors.

They can also expect to have progressed in their ability to:

- Distil scholarly arguments and respond to them;
- Unpack and appraise complex philosophical arguments with an appreciation for how they fit into their historical context; and
- Develop original interpretations of (aspects of) a major philosophical work and defend them through rigorous exegesis, methodical scholarship, and sound argumentation.

Prerequisites:

- 0.5 credits in philosophy and second-year standing, or special permission from the Department of Philosophy.

Lectures:

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1:05pm to 2:25pm.

Required Text:

- Aristotle. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. R. McKeon. New York: Random House, 1941.
 - This text is available at Singing Pebble Books (206 Main Street, across from Saint-Paul's University and a few doors down from the Green Door restaurant; tel. 613-230-9165).

Grades:

- Grades will be based solely on individual, academic merit as judged against absolute standards. They will not be adjusted to achieve a supposedly normal distribution or manipulated in any other way.
- Grades for the course will be based on the following:
 - (1) Class participation, for a total of 25% of the final mark;
 - (2) Three annotated bibliography assignments with three entries each, worth 25% of the final mark in total (**see the schedule of lectures and readings for their due dates**);
 - (3) One term paper, 10 to 15 pages in length, worth 25% of the final mark, **due on April 6th**; and

(4) One final examination, worth 25% of the final mark, to be held during the formal April examination period (April 10th to 25th).

- I will make separate handouts describing my expectations for (1) through (4) available on cuLearn.
- At the end of the course, you will be assigned a letter grade corresponding to your final percentage, according to the standard Carleton University grading scale (which can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar online here:
<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/>).

Course Requirements at a Glance:

- To pass, you will have to regularly attend, and do the readings assigned for, the course lectures, complete all of the course assignments, and sit the final examination, all unless formally excused by the instructor because of illness or some other legitimate reason. Failure to complete *all* of the course assignments, sit the final examination, and attend course lectures regularly will result in the grade 'FND'.

Attendance:

- *Attendance and participation are critical components of all courses in the liberal arts (e.g., philosophy). Thus, a pronounced pattern of non-attendance will in and of itself constitute sufficient grounds for my awarding a final course grade of 'F'.*
- This means that you must attend lectures regularly or you will fail the course automatically. If you find yourself having to miss more than one or two sessions, you will have to justify your absences, and the onus will be on you to do so (I will not chase after you). You will not be penalized if there are legitimate reasons for your repeated absences.
- Furthermore, it is your responsibility to stay on top of any materials covered, to find out about and obtain any materials distributed, and to enquire about any announcements made during lectures you must miss for whatever reason.

Submission Guidelines:

- All written assignments for this course are to be uploaded to a file folder prepared for that purpose in cuLearn. The only exception to this policy is the question sheets (for more information on which, including how they should be submitted, see the document on class participation available on cuLearn).
- Your assignments will be considered submitted when they are uploaded.

- All uploaded documents must be in MS Word (i.e., .doc or .docx) format. Documents in any other file format will not be considered submitted, and late penalties will accrue, until the MS Word document is submitted.
- Do not upload your document a second time in order to fix a minor issue since the second submission date and time will replace the original one. If you need to re-submit, do so by emailing the document to me directly at erik.stephenson@carleton.ca

Late Assignments:

- Assignments will be docked 3% (or one third of a letter grade) for each calendar day after their due-date. Late penalties on assignments accompanied by a medical certificate or other proof of a legitimate reason for lateness will be adjusted accordingly.
- Late assignments will very quickly sink to a grade of 'F'. Hand in your assignments on time.
- Even an assignment that is so late it will merit a grade of 0%(F) must be completed or you will fail the course.

Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is an academic offence. A professor who suspects a student has plagiarized an assignment is required to turn the matter over to the Dean. Students found guilty of plagiarism can receive a 0% for the assignment or a grade of 'F' for the whole course. In extreme cases, they can even be suspended or expelled from the university.
- In this course you will be required to consult secondary sources for both major written assignments (i.e., the annotated bibliographical entries and the take-home examination). However, if you use ideas or language from secondary sources in your assignments without citing those sources properly, you will have committed plagiarism, and I will have no choice but to hand over your work to the Dean for investigation.
- Submitting the same work as another student also constitutes plagiarism. Therefore, although I encourage you to help each other, if you hand in an assignment that is substantially the same as another student's, I will have to turn both of them in to the Dean to be investigated for plagiarism.
- Please read the full Departmental policy on plagiarism, which can be found on the final page of this course syllabus.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

L#:	Date:	Topic:	Reading:
1	5 Jan.	Introduction to Aristotle, the <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , and ancient moral philosophy in general.	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.3
2	10 Jan.	Background (I): Aristotle on nature and the natural	<i>Physics</i> II.1-3, 7-9
3	12 Jan.	Background (II): Aristotle on the soul	<i>On the Soul</i> I.1; II.1-6; III.3-13
4	17 Jan.	On happiness or the highest human good	<i>NE</i> I.1-2, 4-5, 7
5	19 Jan.	Two forms of happiness; two forms of human virtue	<i>NE</i> I.8-13
6	24 Jan.	Aristotle's critique of Plato's theory of the Good	<i>NE</i> I.6; <i>Categories</i> 1-5, 8; <i>Metaphysics</i> I.9
7	26 Jan.	Class discussion #1	First annotated bibliography assignment due on cuLearn
8	31 Jan.	Moral virtue	<i>NE</i> II.1-9
9	2 February	Choice and responsibility	<i>NE</i> III.1-5
10	7 Feb.	The moral virtues	<i>NE</i> III.6-12; IV.1-9
11	9 Feb.	The external nature of justice as a mean	<i>NE</i> V.1-7
12	14 Feb.	Justice and choice	<i>NE</i> V.8-11
13	16 Feb.	Class discussion #2	Second annotated bibliography assignment due on cuLearn
14	28 Feb.	Contemplation (I): the existence and nature of the unmoved first cause of motion	<i>Physics</i> VIII.1-11; <i>Metaphysics</i> XII.6-9
15	2 March	Contemplation (II): the science of being <i>qua</i> being	<i>Metaphysics</i> I.1-2; IV.1-3; VII.1-4, 8, 15-17; VIII.2-3; IX.1-2, 6, 8; XII.1-3, 5
16	7 Mar.	Intellectual virtue (I): the virtues of theoretical reason	<i>NE</i> VI.1-3, 6-7, 12
17	9 Mar.	Intellectual virtue (II): the virtues of calculative reason	<i>NE</i> VI.4-5, 8-13
18	14 Mar.	Continenence vs. temperance	<i>NE</i> VII.1-10
19	16 Mar.	Class discussion # 3	Third annotated bibliography assignment due on cuLearn
20	21 Mar.	Pleasure (I)	<i>NE</i> VII.11-14
21	23 Mar.	Friendship (I)	<i>NE</i> VIII.1-12
22	28 Mar.	Friendship (II)	<i>NE</i> VIII.13-14; IX.1-12
23	30 Mar.	Pleasure (II)	<i>NE</i> X.1-5
24	4 April	The contemplative life vs. the political life	<i>NE</i> X.6-9
25	6 Apr.	Class discussion #4	Term paper due on cuLearn

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2016-17)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations (both formally scheduled and take-homes), you must apply within 3 working days after the scheduled date of the exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 3 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two

weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Classes start.
Sept. 20	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 24-28	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Dec. 9	Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 20	Family Day – University closed.
Feb. 20-24	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 7	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 10-25	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 14	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 25	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735