

Carleton University
College of the Humanities
HUMS 4904A
The Philosophy of Avicenna
Winter 2017

Instructor Information

Professor: Mohammed Rustom
Office Hours: W 4:00 pm–5:30 pm
Office Location: 2A61 Paterson Hall
Email: mrustom@connect.carleton.ca

Course Information

Class Meetings: T 2:35 pm–5:25 pm
Classroom Location: 2A46 Paterson Hall
Course Website: Available on CU Learn
COH Website: www.carleton.ca/chum/

Course Description

Avicenna (d. 1037 CE) is widely recognized as one of the towering figures of medieval philosophy, his influence spanning not just the entire post-classical Islamic intellectual tradition but also Latin scholasticism. We will investigate the innovative ways in which Avicenna naturalized materials from ancient Greek philosophy, Late Antiquity, and Islam into his highly original, grand philosophical synthesis. Our weekly meetings will be devoted to a careful study of some key texts in the Avicennian corpus, covering topics ranging from metaphysics and psychology to eschatology and philosophy of religion.

Learning Objectives

- ❖ To be able to carefully read and critically analyze a wide range of Avicennian texts
- ❖ To deepen our knowledge of core issues in medieval philosophy and rational theology

Required Texts

J. McGinnis, *Avicenna*
Avicenna, The Metaphysics of the Healing (trans. M. Marmura)
P. Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World* (vol. 3 of *HPWG*)
Avicennian Texts (various translators) (posted on course website) = *AT*

Recommended Texts

H. Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*
D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (2nd ed.)
P. Adamson (ed.), *Interpreting Avicenna* (articles by S. Menn, R. Wisnovsky, et al.)

Requirement and Due Date

/100 Research Paper Apr. 4th

Note: Attendance and participation are critical components of all courses in the Bachelor of Humanities program. As a result, a pattern of non-attendance may in and of itself constitute sufficient grounds for awarding a final course grade of F.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

- Jan. 10th** **Basics: Autobiography, Biography, Conception of Philosophy**
Readings
Autobiography and Biography (trans. A. Arberry) in *AT*
Metaphysics of the Healing I.1
Healing, “Book of Demonstration” I.9 (trans. J. McGinnis/D. Reisman) in *AT*
Healing, “Physics” I.2 (trans. J. McGinnis/D. Reisman) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 3–88
- Jan. 17th** **Metaphysics I: Ontology**
Readings
Metaphysics of the Healing I.2, 6–7; V.1; VI.1; VIII.1, § 3
Remarks and Admonitions IV.9–15, 29 (trans. S. Inati) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 149–168
- Jan. 24th** **Metaphysics II: Theology**
Readings
Metaphysics of the Healing VIII.4–7
McGinnis, pp. 168–177
- Jan. 31st** **Metaphysics III: Cosmology**
Readings
Metaphysics of the Healing IX.1–5
“Avicennian Emanation” (schema by D. Black) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 178–208
- Feb. 7th** **Psychology I: Soul**
Readings
On the Rational Soul (trans. D. Gutas) in *AT*
Deliverance II.6, §§ 1–3, 12–15 (trans. F. Rahman) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 89–116
Begin Adamson
- Feb. 14th** **Psychology II: Intellect and Self-Awareness**
Readings
Deliverance II.6, §§ 4–5, 7–11, 16 (trans. F. Rahman) in *AT*
Remarks and Admonitions III.1–3 (trans. S. Inati) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 117–147
- Feb. 21st** **Winter Break; No Class**
- Feb. 28th** **Practical Philosophy: Prophecy, Ethics, Politics**
Readings
Metaphysics of the Healing X.2, 4–5

On the Proof of Prophecies (trans. M. Marmura), pp. 112–115
McGinnis, pp. 147–148, 209–217

Mar. 7th Mysticism and Love Theory

Readings

Treatise on Love (trans. W. Chittick) in *AT*
“Introduction” to *The Easterners* (trans. D. Gutas) in *AT*
Remarks and Admonitions IX in *AT*

Mar. 14th Philosophy of Religion: Prayer, Destiny, Evil

Readings

Metaphysics of the Healing IX.6; X.3
Essay on the Secret of Destiny (trans. A. Hourani) in *AT*
“On the Nature of Prayer” from *Deliverance* (trans. A. Arberry) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 221–226

Mar. 21st Hermeneutics: Quranic Commentaries

Readings

Commentary on the Chapter of Oneness (trans. J. Dubé)
On the Proof of Prophecies (trans. M. Marmura), pp. 115–121 in *AT*
Complete Adamson

Mar. 28th Aesthetics: Symbolic Treatises, Poems, Supplications

Readings

The Epistle of the Bird (trans. P. Heath) in *AT*
Poem on the Soul (trans. A. Arberry) in *AT*
Supplication (trans. J. Dubé) in *AT*

Apr. 4th Eschatology and Soteriology

Readings

Metaphysics of the Healing IX.7
“On the Return of Human Souls” from *Deliverance* (trans. W. Chittick) in *AT*
McGinnis, pp. 217–221

Research Paper Guidelines

Instructions

Write an 18–20 page paper on any aspect of Avicenna’s philosophy. Begin by carefully looking at the required course readings and the seminar lecture titles. These will give you a good sense of the range of issues addressed by Avicenna. You must decide on your paper topic before reading week.

The literature on Avicenna—both primary texts in translation and secondary studies—is vast. Consult with me when you have an idea of the kind of topic that interests you and I will be happy to point you to relevant materials for your research.

Evaluation

Essays are graded out of 100, and are worth 100% of the total course mark. Each essay will be evaluated in terms of (1) the clarity of its thesis, (2) the coherence of its argument(s), and (3) evidence of original research and its careful integration into the fabric of the essay.

Due Date

Essays are due at the beginning of class on **April 4th, 2017**.

Penalties

Papers submitted late due to a medical or other compassionate reason must be accompanied by relevant documentation (i.e., a medical certificate, etc.). Plagiarized essays will be assigned a zero, and the issue will be taken up with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 9, 2016**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 7, 2017**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 11, 2016** for the Fall term and **March 10, 2017** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

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 a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic & Career Development Services 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library