

# "MATTER & TELEOLOGY IN ARISTOTLE'S NATURAL PHILOSOPHY"

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This lecture looks at what Aristotle has to say about matter and the limits to which natural substances can be understood teleologically. It argues that Aristotle's natural philosophy is grounded in the following claims: 1) All perceptible objects are, at some level, composites of a formal and a material cause. 2) The proximate material cause of every perceptible object must be something physical in its own right; that is, all perceptible objects are made of a physical material cause. 3) The ultimate material cause of perceptible objects consists of the material elements and the physical matter from which they are made. 4) The basic properties of the material elements and their matter cannot be understood teleologically. Two conclusions follow from these claims: 1) There is something about every perceptible object that cannot be understood teleologically, namely its material nature. 2) Only the formal nature of perceptible objects can be understood teleologically. This lecture defends these claims by looking at Aristotle's account of the material nature of perceptible objects, in particular his mechanics and laws of motion.

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**FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2020**  
**3228 RICHCRAFT HALL**  
**1:00 P.M.**

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