

**Topics: Aristotle's Psychology**  
Fall 2016, Phil 450-01

**Dr. Krisanna Scheiter**

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday  
4-5pm and by appointment

Time: 9:00-10:45am

Classroom: RCC 301+

Office: Lamont 307

**Course Description**

What is the difference between a living thing and a non-living thing? According to Aristotle, the difference is that living things have souls. For Aristotle the soul is essentially whatever explains why a living thing is alive and the particular capacities that living things have, which non-living things lack. *All* living things have souls: plants, animals, and humans. In this class we will look at Aristotle's account of the soul and the soul's capacity for perception, imagination, thinking, understanding, remembering, recollecting, desiring, and feeling. Some questions that will arise are questions we are still trying to answer today. Is perception purely a physiological process or is perception some sort of non-physical awareness? How do our thoughts and perceptions come to be in error? How can we come to have abstract universal concepts when the world is made up of particulars? What is desire and how does desire lead to action?

In this class we will focus on Aristotle's *De Anima* (which is Latin for "*On the Soul*"), while also examining select passages from some of his other treatises, such as *De Sensu*, *De Memoria*, *De Insomniis*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, and *De Motu Animalium*, in order to get a more complete picture of his account of the soul and all the capacities peculiar to the soul.

**Required Texts**

- Shields, Christopher. (Ed.). (2016). *Aristotle: de Anima* (Clarendon Aristotle Series). Oxford University Press.
- Additional works will be available on *Nexus* including alternative translations.

**Recommended Texts**

- *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*. Edited by Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Barnes, J. (1984). *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*. 1&2 vols. (Bollingen Series, 71: 2).

## Resources

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center (second floor of Schaffer Library) provides free one-on-one consultation, both by appointment and as available on a walk-in basis. I encourage you to visit the writing center for any and all writing assignments. <http://www.union.edu/Resources/Academic/writing/index.php>.

**Accommodations:** It is the policy of Union College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please bring your accommodation ID card to your instructor's office hours as soon as possible. Your instructor will then discuss with you any necessary special arrangements. No accommodations will be provided to students who do not have an accommodation ID card from the Office of Student Support Services (x8785).

## Assignments

5%	Argument Reconstruction Papers
10%	Secondary Reading Presentation
20%	Class Presentations
30%	First Short Paper
35%	Final Research Paper

## Description of Assignments

**Participation:** This is a discussion-based course. Active student participation will be a central feature of the learning experience. In order to ensure successful participation, it is important that you attend to two main tasks:

- **Reading Assignments:** You should complete the assigned reading prior to the class for which they are assigned in order to contribute meaningfully to class discussion. If you have not read philosophy before, you may find the readings difficult at first. Don't give up! As you read try to identify core claims and arguments. Take notes, jotting down questions or critiques.
- **Class Discussion:** You should contribute to class discussions regularly and in a respectful manner, either by asking questions relating to the topic or contributing your own meaningful insights. Discussion will be based on the reading assignments. One way to prepare for class discussions is by trying to answer the study questions at the end of the reading assignments.

**Argument Reconstruction (AR):** There will be a handful of short (one page) papers due throughout the term that aim at reconstructing an argument in the text. Papers should be no longer than one single-spaced page (shorter is even better). 12pt Times New Roman font is preferred. **Reconstructions are NOT summaries.** You want to be clear, to the point, even dry. Do not try to be poetic or creative in these papers. You are just

identifying Aristotle's conclusion and explaining how he gets there, pointing out which claims he supports and which ones he does not offer any support. You do not need to provide an assessment of the arguments in the paper. We will discuss the strengths of his arguments in class.

**Class Discussion on Secondary Literature:** Each student will be required to lead the class in a discussion on one piece of secondary literature. Each presenter must provide a comprehensive handout highlighting the thesis of the paper and the main arguments in the paper. In the presentation students should explain the thesis of the paper and explain how the author of the paper argues for the thesis. Students should also feel free to focus on specific parts of the paper (you do not have to present on the entire paper). Moreover, students should study the parts of Aristotle's text the paper refers to and tell us whether or not you agree with the author's interpretation of Aristotle. You must raise at least one possible objection to the article and provide at least three discussion questions to facilitate class discussion. Both the handout and the presentation will be graded on organization and clarity as well as content (a rubric will be provided).

**Class Research Presentation:** The last two days of class will be student presentations. Each student will give an oral presentation on their final research paper. The presentation should include one visual aid (either handout or power point presentation). The student should present the thesis of their paper at the beginning of the presentation and then present the argument, using text from Aristotle to support their interpretation

**Term Papers:** There are two papers for the course. The first paper is a short paper (5-6 pages) on a topic of your choice. You **MUST** meet with me at least once **before October 13<sup>th</sup>** to discuss your topic and receive approval. I will not approve topics via email and I will not grade any paper that has not received approval from me first.

The second paper is a longer paper (12-15 pages) that ideally should be an expansion of the short paper. The second paper must include at least 2 secondary sources beyond what we discuss in class. You **MUST** have those secondary sources approved by me no later **November 8**.

I will provide you with a grading guideline and a guide to writing philosophy papers, as well as a description of all the requirements you must meet before turning in the paper.

**Extra Credit:** This term there will be **two** ancient philosophy colloquiums hosted by the Union College Philosophy department. Students who attend these colloquiums will receive extra credit towards their Argument Reconstruction grade. Details to come.

### **Expectations and Classroom Policies**

#### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are permitted three unexcused absences (in which you do not have to notify me of your

absence). Your grade will be dropped 3% for every unexcused absence after the first three. Excused absences are ones that have been approved by me in advance of the class.

### **Email**

- Please feel free to email me any time, but allow me 24 hours to respond.
- If you have questions about the class or the assignments please **check the syllabus** first before emailing.
- If you cannot find the information you need on the syllabus, then send me an email.
- If you have any questions about the content of the class or would simply like to discuss some philosophical thoughts of your own do not hesitate to come to my office hours or set up an appointment.

### **General Expectations**

- Come to class prepared, on time, and with your books.
- Turn off your phone, no texting, no laptops unless absolutely necessary, no newspapers, no talking to one another unless it is part of class discussion, no sleeping.
- You are expected to pay attention and engage respectfully with your classmates.
- If you must use your laptop for note taking, please be aware that you may not use the Internet *for any purpose* during class and you may wish to disable it if you will be otherwise tempted. Failure to abide by this requirement will result in loss of the privilege to use your laptop in class.

### **Plagiarism**

Students are expected to adhere to the Union College Academic Honor Code, which you can access at: [www.union.edu/academic\\_depts/ethics/union/Honor%20Code.php](http://www.union.edu/academic_depts/ethics/union/Honor%20Code.php)

## TOPICS AND READINGS

September 8: Introduction

### I. THE SOUL

September 13: **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 1.1-3 (pp. 1-12); Commentary pp. 79-134

September 15: **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 1.4-5 (pp. 13-21); Commentary pp.135-164  
**AR paper due (409b19-410b15)**

September 20: **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.1-3 (pp. 22-28); Commentary pp.165-199

**Recommended:**  
Menn, Stephen. (2002). Aristotle's Definition of Soul and the Programme of the *De Anima*'. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 22, 83-139. (Nexus)

### II. NUTRITION AND PERCEPTION

September 22: **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.4-6 (pp. 28-35); Commentary pp.199-228

September 27: **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.7-11 (pp. 35-47); Commentary pp. 228-247

**Recommended:**  
*Sense and Sensibilia* 1-2 (Nexus)

September 29: **Require:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 2.12-3.2 (pp. 47-55); Commentary pp. 247-274

**Recommended:**  
*On Sleep* (Nexus)

### **III. IMAGINATION**

October 4:           **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.3 (pp. 55-58); Commentary pp. 274-291

### **IV. *Nous***

October 6:           **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.4-5 (pp. ); (Nexus); *Physics* VIII.6 (Nexus);  
*Metaphysics* XII.9 (Nexus); Commentary pp. 292-329

**Recommended:**  
Franz Brentano, “*Nous Poietikos*: Survey of Earlier Interpretations” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima* (Nexus)

October 11:          **Required:**  
Aristotle *De Anima* 3.6-8; *Posterior Analytics* II.19 ; Commentary  
pp. 330-347

### **V. DESIRE, ACTION, AND THE GOOD**

October 13:          **Required:**  
Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.9-13 (pp. 65-73); Commentary pp. 347-379

**Recommended:**  
*De Motu Animalium* 6-11 (Nexus)

### **VI. QUESTIONS ABOUT *DE ANIMA*** **(All Readings in this Section are Required)**

October 18:          **What is the soul’s relationship to the body?**  
Sorabji, R. (1974). Body and soul in Aristotle. *Philosophy*,  
49(187), 63-89 (Nexus)

October 20:          **Does the sense organ physically change when we perceive an  
object or does the sense organ remain unchanged?**  
Caston, V. (2005). The spirit and the letter: Aristotle on perception.  
*Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics: Themes from the work of Richard  
Sorabji*, 245-320 (Nexus).

**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE**

PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM: Martina Jimenez (Emory University), “Aristotle Two Justices and the Proper Lover of Self” Everest Lounge 4:30pm, October 20, 2016

- October 25:           **What is the faculty of *phantasia* (imagination)?**  
Malcolm Schofield, “Aristotle on Imagination,” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima* (Nexus)
- October 27:           **Does *phantasia* produce images or appearances or both?**  
Scheiter, K. M. (2012). Images, appearances, and phantasia in Aristotle. *Phronesis*, 57(3), 251-278 (Nexus)
- November 1:           **Why must *nous* be separate from the body?**  
Miller, F. D. (2012). Aristotle on the Separability of Mind. *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, 306-39 (Nexus)
- November 3:           **Is *nous poietikos* (productive *nous*) divine *nous* or a second human *nous* or something else all together?**  
Victor Caston, “Aristotle’s Two Intellects: A Modest Proposal” (Nexus)

PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM: Gabriel Richardson Lear (University of Chicago), “Plato on Beauty” Everest Lounge, 4:30pm, November 3, 2016

- November 8:           **How does desire and the good produce movement in animals?**  
Henry Richardson, “Desire and the Good in *De Anima*” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*

## **VII. PRESENTATIONS**

- November 10:           Presentations
- November 15:           Presentations

**Final Paper Due Monday, November 21st at 5pm (via Email)**