

**\*\*UPDATED January 9, 18\*\***  
**PHILOSOPHY 3170G: ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS**  
Department of Philosophy Winter 2017  
The University of Western Ontario

**Instructor:** Professor D.M. Henry, 661-2111 ext. 85876, [dhenry3@uwo.ca](mailto:dhenry3@uwo.ca)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11:30-12:30, StH 3140

**Short Course Description.** A close reading of the text of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* with a focus on. Topics include: the human good, the 'Function Argument', character virtues, friendship, pleasure, practical wisdom, and the nature of happiness.

**Course texts:**

This course will use the Terence Irwin translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Hackett), available at the UWO Bookstore, though other translations may be used as long as they have the appropriate line numbers (e.g. 1098a).

Students are also encouraged to purchase Michael Pakaluk's *Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics: An Introduction* (available at the Bookstore) and/or David Bostock's *Aristotle's Ethics* (check Amazon.ca for availability). Both are accessible introductions to the main topics in the *Ethics* and will help students worth through the text.

**Course Requirements.** Choose one of the following assignment options. Students must decide before the end of January (notify me by email). Students will not be permitted to change their option after they have submitted their first assignment. **\*\*All assignments are double-spaced, standard font and size.\*\***

Option #1. Term Paper

1. Annotated Bibliography **20%** (8 sources accompanied by 100-150 word abstracts, due by Wednesday Feb. 14)
2. Outline **20%** (2 pages, well-developed outline of the major paper, including thesis and argument structure; due by March 1)
3. Major paper (15 pages) **50%** (due by last day of classes)
4. Participation **10%**

Option #2. Short papers.

1. Short Paper #1 (10-12 pages) **45%** (Due Wednesday Feb. 14, topic from first half of the course)

2. Short Paper #2 (10-12 pages) **45%** (Due by last day of classes, topic on second half of course)
3. Participation **10%**

#### Option #3. Short analytical assignments

1. Literature review x 2 (5 pages each). **45%** (first one due by Wednesday Feb. 14; second due by last day of classes)
2. Textual Analysis x 4 (3 pages each). **45%** (due dates: Jan 31, Feb 28, Mar 14, April 4)
3. Participation **10%**

**\*\*Expectations for Option 3.** Good scholarly writing in the History of Philosophy requires a number of different skills. You must be able to summarize the argument in the primary text, defend a coherent thesis supported by well-organized arguments, summarize the current state of the literature, situate your position within some broader debate, and provide a close analysis of difficult arguments or stretches of text. While a term paper would involve all of these skills, Option 3 focuses on two in particular. The aim of the literature review is to summarize the current state of the debate in the literature. The review should begin with a description of the relevant debate and then provide an overview of the major scholarly positions (dividing them into “camps” if possible). Students need not take a side in the debate, but they should demonstrate a grasp of the major positions taken in the literature and be able to summarize the key arguments of specific authors involved. This assignment is designed to help students develop their research skills. The textual analysis assignments (as the name implies) are meant to help students develop the ability to provide a close analysis of difficult arguments or stretches of text. The analysis should not be a short paper, nor should it be a mere summary or narration of the text. You should pick a difficult passage, argument, or some other notable aspect of the *Ethics* and provide a close analysis of the argument or ideas contained therein. For example (from Plato), how does the Power Argument at *Gorgias* 466b-468e work? What are the premises and how do they support the conclusion? What role is played by the distinction between “doing what appears best” and “doing what you want”? Or: How exactly should we understand Thrasymachus’ immoralist position as set out at Republic 343c-344c? What assumptions are being made? What exactly is Thrasymachus committed to in that passage? The literature reviews can dovetail with the texts chosen for the textual analysis (though must be completed separately). But each textual analysis must present the student’s own original research and not draw on the secondary literature. While students may select texts from readings already covered in previous lectures, you are encouraged to seek out texts and passages that have not been discussed in class. This better allows me to evaluate your independent critical reading skills.

#### **Late Penalties.**

Assignments will be deducted -3% per day, with the exception of those due on the last day of class (see below).

### **Final Deadline for All Outstanding Assignments**

All coursework (with the exception of final examinations) must be submitted by the last day of classes. Students seeking the return of coursework after the last meeting of the term should make arrangements with their instructor prior to the end of the term. Exceptions to these work submission dates may be granted only as a result of a petition to the Academic Counsellor of the student's Home Faculty. Instructors have no authority to waive this requirement, and any unofficial arrangements they make with students will not be respected by the administration. This does not preclude instructors from setting earlier deadlines for coursework.

### **Audit**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.