

Phil 213: Ancient Philosophy

DAMIEN STOREY | FALL 2022 | VERSION 2.95

WHEN & WHERE: TBD

Please note that only those students who attend in person will get the full experience of these lectures. Moreover, where I have to make a choice about the quality of teaching, I will always put the interests of those in the classroom first. Remotes students, therefore, will inevitably have significant difficulties keeping up with this course. This lecture will not be recorded.

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COURSE PARTICULARS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce the key thinkers and texts of ancient Greek philosophy, beginning with the very earliest western philosophers, the Pre-Socrates; following this with an careful look at the works of Plato and Aristotle; and concluding with Hellenistic philosophy, focusing on Epicureanism and Stoicism. In addition to a wide range of philosophical ideas—including physical and metaphysical theories, theories of belief and knowledge, and accounts of justice and the good life—the course will introduce the skills needed to read and interpret ancient texts. We will learn to appreciate that these texts are both remote in time, and so require an understanding of their cultural and historical context, and also highly sophisticated, and so require careful philosophical analysis.

Required texts: Plato's *Euthyphro*, Plato's *Meno*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Office hours: TUE 14.00–15.00 | *Office:* SOS 162 | *Email:* dstorey@ku.edu.tr

I'm also always happy to answer questions by email. And I can usually make time to see students either virtually or in my office—drop by or arrange a meeting.

Please *always* refer to me as 'Damien', whether in person or by email. Please never call me Dr. Storey, and certainly not Mr. Storey (I'm not a bank manager).

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

For each lecture there is assigned reading and, some weeks, a lecture-prep task. You'll find these in the [Lecture Outline](#) below. Your most important responsibility is to do the assigned reading and task (if you find the reading is too much or too difficult, please let me know). In addition, in lectures, students are expected to take an active role: listening carefully, asking questions, and engaging in discussion with each other and me.

ASSESSMENT

The course is assessed by:

1. (30%) Lecture tasks. These are short tasks that you'll do before specific lectures. These aim largely to give you some practice writing philosophy and they'll be marked with this in mind. Assessment: letter grade, F to A+.
2. (40%) An essay of between 1000 and 1500 words. This will be due near the end of the course (approximately week 15). You'll be given a choice of essay questions and additional reading. Assessment: letter grade, F to A+.
3. (30%) Exam. An in-class written exam new the end of the course. Assessment: letter grade, F to A+.

4. Attendance. You can miss 8 lectures without consequence. Every lecture after that you lose 0.1 GPA off your final grade for each lecture missed.

Your grades will always be given to you as one of the following letter grades.

A+	—	Exceptional / Almost publishable
A	4.00	Superior
A–	3.70	Above Average
B+	3.30	Above Average
B	3.00	Average
B–	2.70	Average
C+	2.30	Below Average
C	2.00	Below Average
C–	1.70	Borderline
D+	1.30	Deficient
D	1.00	Deficient
F	0.00	Failing

Marking criteria: For many of you, philosophy is a new subject and you might be wondering about the marking criteria for written work. The very best way to understand this is to look carefully at my writing advice (in the final pages of this PDF) and at Jim Pryor's excellent advice about writing philosophy: [Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Essay](#).

COURSE POLICIES

Course material. All required reading will be on Blackboard at least a week prior to the relevant lecture. Optional reading will not usually be on BB, but both the library and the internet exist.

Late work. Late work will not be accepted.

Extensions and exemptions. Extensions and exemptions are possible (though not guaranteed) if *both* of two conditions are met: (a) they are for official academic or medical reasons (with appropriate documentation) and (b) I am made aware of the request *before* the due date.

Assessments and grades. All students have the opportunity to attempt the same assessments and their final grade reflects the academic merit of the work they produce. Students cannot achieve grades in *any other way*.

Referencing and plagiarism. Any plagiarism—even if it is just a couple of lines and *even if it is accidental*—results in immediate failure of the entire course, with no second chances. It is a requirement of this course that by the end of the first week you have read and understood the section 'plagiarism' at the end of this document.

English coherence rule. From your first day as a fresher, you are expected to be able to write in English, even if it is bad English. We are typically forgiving about language errors, and they do not effect your grade except insofar as they make your writing imprecise or unclear. However, if your English is highly unusual, so that it appears not to have arisen from a normal process

of writing—i.e. not to have arisen from you using what English you have to try to say what you mean—there will be a significant marking penalty. Examples might be the incoherent sentences sometimes produced using Google Translate or by paraphrasing with a thesaurus.

GENERAL READING

In addition to the recommendations I make here, I encourage you to root around in the library to find some of the many books on the topics we'll be looking at, especially when it comes to preparing for written work (though be sure to always reference any texts you use).

For texts from ancient authors, there are usually a variety of translations to choose from, which can differ from each other a great deal (including in quality). The following are some examples of reliable collections of translations:

- Julia Annas, *Voices of Ancient Philosophy: An Introductory Reader* (OUP, 2000) [This collection organises texts thematically, which might be helpful for written assignments.]
- Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary*, 2nd edn, (Hackett Publishing, 2011) [Also has a useful commentary]
- Patricia Curd, *A Presocratic Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia* (Hackett Publishing, 2011)
- John M. Cooper (ed) *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett Publishing, 1997)
- C.D.C. Reeve & G.M.A. Grube (translators) *Plato, Republic* (Hackett Publishing, 1992)
- Terence Irwin & Gail Fine (translators) *Aristotle: Selections* (Hackett Publishing, 1995) [Has useful notes]
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translation and notes by Terence Irwin, 2nd edn (Hackett Publishing, 1999) [Has useful notes]

The following are some useful collections of papers, which we'll be reading from in some weeks:

- A.A. Long (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (CUP, 1999)
- Christopher Shields (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2003)
- Mary Louise Gill & Pierre Pellegrin (eds) *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2006)
- Frisbee Sheffield & James Warren (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Routledge, 2014)

You should also listen to [The History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps](#): a podcast series by philosopher Peter Adamson that covers all the philosophers we'll be looking at—and many more—in episodes that are short and entertaining.

The following are required texts:

- Plato, *Euthyphro*
- Plato, *Meno*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- Brickhouse and Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*

LECTURE OUTLINE

PART I: A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

What is ancient philosophy?

Week 1: Lecture 1 & 2

- Listen to episodes 1 and 2 of [The History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps](#).

The Presocratics

Week 2: Lecture 3 & 4

- Listen to episodes 3 and 4 of [HPWG](#).
- Richard McKirahan 'Presocratic Philosophy' in Shields (ed.)

Heraclitus & Parmenides

Week 3: Lecture 5 & 6

- Heraclitus, selected fragments.
- Listen to episodes 5–8 of [HPWG](#).
- Edward Hussey 'Heraclitus' in A.A. Long (ed). (This will also help with the task.)
- And this is optional, but very useful: Patricia Curd, 'Parmenides and After: Unity and Plurality' in Gill & Pellegrin (eds)
- And this is totally optional, but is a good example of a reading different from Curd's: David Sedley 'Parmenides and Melissus' in Long (ed).
- **TASK:** Fragment B12. (The full task will be on Blackboard.)

The Athens of Socrates

Week 4: Lecture 7 & 8

- Listen to episode 14–18 of [HPWG](#)
- Plato, *Apology*
- Josiah Ober, 'Orators' in Christopher Rowe & Malcolm Schofield (eds) *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (CUP: Cambridge, 2008)
- Optionally: Brickhouse & Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, chapter 1
- Optionally: John Gibert, 'The Sophists' in Shields (ed)

Plato & Aristotle

Week 5: Lecture 9 & 10

- Chapters 15 (Silverman) and 23 (Shields) in J. Warren and F. Sheffield (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Routledge, 2014)
- Note that we will look at Plato and Aristotle in more detail later in the course.

Hellenistic Philosophy

Week 6: Lecture 11 & 12

- Shields (ed) 'Hellenistic Philosophy: Introduction'
- Listen to episodes 52 and after of [HPWG](#) (as much as you can)

Winter break

Week 7

Discussion class: might is right?

Week 8: Lecture 13

- Plato *Gorgias*, 482c–484c—Callicles on justice
- Plato, *Republic*, book I, 336b–344c—Thrasymachus on justice
- **(SHORT) TASK**: Might is right? (The task description will be on Blackboard.)

PART 2: PLATO'S *EUTHYPHRO* & *MENO*.

Reading Platonic dialogues

Week 8: Lecture 14

- Plato's *Euthyphro*
- Optionally: The introduction to T. Brickhouse & N. Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Westview Press, 2000) [Think especially carefully about the interpretive principles they introduce]
- Optionally: Christopher Gill, 'The Platonic Dialogue' in Gill & Pellegrin (eds)

The Socratic search for definitions

Week 9: Lecture 15 & 16

- Plato, *Euthyphro* (again) and *Meno*, 70a–80e & 86d–87e
- Brickhouse & Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, chapter 3
- T. Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (OUP: Oxford, 1995), sections 12–18 & 88–91
- **TASK**: Socratic definitions. (Task will be on Blackboard)

'All desire is for the good'

Week 10: Lecture 17 & 18

- Plato, *Meno* 77c–78b, *Gorgias* 467c–468e, & *Protagoras* 351b–END [These passages are all quite difficult, with each making complex arguments—read them carefully.]
- Brickhouse & Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, chapter 5.3 (pp. 173–182).

Belief, knowledge, and Meno's paradox

Week 11: Lecture 19 & 20 (week starting December 13th)

- Meno 85b–86c & 96d–end
- D. Scott Plato's *Meno* (CUP: Cambridge, 2006), chapters 7 & 14
- G. Fine 'Knowledge and True Belief in the Meno' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 27 (Winter 2004) 41–81

PART 3: ARISTOTLE'S NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

The human function and the human good

Week 12: Lecture 21 & 22

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1 [chapter 7, where Aristotle presents his function argument, should be read in great detail]
- **TASK:** The function argument.

Aristotle on character virtue and practical wisdom

Week 13: Lecture 23 & 24

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1, chapter 13; book 2; and try to read book 3, chapters 6–12
- Listen to episodes 44 and 45 of [The History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps](#).
- TBD

Aristotle on *akrasia*

Week 14: Lecture 25 & 26

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 7, 1–10 [chapter 3, where Aristotle gives his main account of *akrasia* should be read in great detail]
- Re-read the relevant sections of the *Protagoras*.

Aristotle on contemplation and the good life

Week 15: Lecture 27 & 28

- TBD

SOME ESSAY & WRITING ADVICE

WRITING PHILOSOPHY

Please pay close attention to the following advice, especially 1 and 2. They try to cater for the most common and most easily solved problems I find in students' writing. Please take them seriously.

1. *Explain.* In short: explain *everything*. It should be possible for an intelligent peer who hasn't studied philosophy to *fully* understand your essay without needing to read the authors you're writing about. For example: if you use a technical term that has particular significance for an author, make sure you clearly define it. Similarly, for any argument or position you discuss, you must clearly and fully explain it to your reader. This is partly because good academic writing should be explicit and easily understood, but it is also because your ability to explain the ideas you're discussing—clearly, precisely, and succinctly—is what you're being assessed on. Your readers, including your grader, know that you understand something only if, and to the extent that, you've successfully explained it. Don't expect anyone to just assume you understand something that you've failed to explain. You might well know, for example, what a categorical imperative is, but you need to *show* that you know it and how precisely you know it. Explaining even small, simple ideas well is a lot harder than you might think; don't underestimate how important it is, and how much work it takes.
2. *Justify.* Assume that for every claim you make, the reader is asking 'why on earth should I believe that?' In a philosophy essay, there should always be an excellent answer to this question. You should consider this to be, above all else, your aim when writing an essay. The worst thing you can do is to make bold assertions without defending them, and the second worst is to make bold assertions and defend them weakly. Note that this includes interpretive claims: if you write 'Plato believes that p', you need to show your reader, perhaps by giving a supporting quote, that this is indeed something Plato believes.

A bad essay: 'p!'

A good essay: 'For reasons x, y, and z, it seems that p.'

An excellent essay: 'Reasons x, y, and z give us good grounds for thinking that p, although someone might offer an objection along the following lines ... However, I think there is a promising response to this objection ...'

3. *Use headings.* Before you start writing, sketch a structure for your essay. When writing, use headings that reflect this structure. A typical essay might have 2–4 headings.
4. *First understand, then assess.* Be careful not to rush into criticisms of what you read before you've fully understood it. Approach everything you read with charity. That is, assume that the author has thought intelligently and carefully about what they've written, so is unlikely to have made obvious mistakes. For example, if you notice a *prima facie* objection to something you're reading, read it again carefully to see if there's a way

to understand it that avoids the objection or try to think of a plausible implicit assumption the author might have made that caters for the objection.

5. *Be sufficiently detailed.* The topics you'll consider are broad. Someone could write hundreds of pages about them, but you have at most a few pages. This presents a challenge: on the one hand, you want to show that you're familiar with the whole topic; on the other hand, you want to do more than simply scratch the surface, never looking at any one issue in detail. This can be a difficult balance to achieve, but in general it is much better to *err on the side of detail*. One approach might be to devote about the first third of your essay to a more general introduction of the topic and then use the last two-thirds to examine one or two smaller points in much greater detail—you might, for example, focus on *one* argument, premise, or objection that you think is especially important or interesting.
6. *Ensure your conclusions reflect your arguments.* You might have been taught that strong, persuasive prose requires confident assertions, rather than hesitant, qualified ones. But in philosophy your assertions should reflect the actual degree of confidence that is warranted by the evidence you've provided. Decisive arguments are rare—even rarer are decisive arguments in just a few lines of a student's essay. So be careful not to mistake considerations that give us a good reason for believing that *p* for an argument that shows conclusively that *p*. A good essay is likely to have a large range of (appropriate) qualifying phrases: 'this shows decisively that *p*'; 'this is a strong reason to believe that *p*'; 'this suggests that *p*'; 'this makes it less implausible that *p*'; and so forth. Be especially careful with strong success verbs like 'refutes', 'proves', or 'shows'.
7. *Show 'independence of thought' rather than 'originality'.* You might think that philosophy encourages you to express your own unique opinions, ones different from those of the authors you read. But originality—the simply fact that an idea is new—has little value by itself and it should not be your aim. After all, an idea can be both original and obviously false. What *has* value is independence of thought. For example, if you agree with the conclusions of a certain author because you fully understand them, have thought critically about their arguments, and carefully assessed alternative possibilities, then you believe nothing original, but you are showing admirable independence of thought.
8. *Use quotes correctly.* Especially in historical subjects, including quotes from relevant primary texts can be an excellent way to illustrate, justify, and give some focus to your discussion. One way (of many) to use a quote is the following: make a claim; present a quote that supports the claim; and then explain and interpret the text of the quote in order to *show* that and why it supports your claim. But two cautions: first, quotes from secondary sources are rarely useful; second, *never use a quote as a way of saying something*—rather, a quote should be presented as evidence *about which* you have something to say.

For more guides to essay writing, see Jim Pryor, [Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Essay](#), and James Lenman, [How to Write A Crap Philosophy Essay](#).

The following are a few typographic conventions worth learning.

1. *Indent paragraphs.* But do not indent the opening paragraph of the document or the first paragraph after a section heading. You may instead—not in addition—separate paragraphs with a blank line, although this is better suited to list-like texts, such as legal documents, than continuous prose.
2. *Use single line spacing.* It's easier to read. Double spacing is only necessary when a printed copy of your work will be annotated.
3. *A footnote mark is always placed after punctuation.*¹ It is almost always best to place a footnote at the end of the sentence, *after* the sentence-ending full stop, even if you are referring to something earlier in the sentence. Avoid consecutive footnotes; instead, place all information in one footnote if possible.
4. *Correctly indicate titles.* The titles of books and journals should be italicised; the title of articles should be in inverted quotes.
5. *Indicate quotes with either quotation marks or by using a block quote.* Extra flourishes, such as italicising, are unnecessary. And never place a block quote within quotation marks.
6. *Learn the difference between a hyphen (-), en-dash (–), and em-dash (—).* Use an en-dash like 'to' in ranges of dates or numbers (e.g. 87–142) and to express certain relationships between words: for example, an 'on–off switch' or 'Irish–American relations'. Either an en- or em-dash can be used to indicate a parenthetical phrase. If you use an en-dash, add a space either side – like so – but em-dashes are always unspaced—like so.
7. *Make ellipses with three full stops separated by spaces.* Like this . . . , with a space either side. You will most commonly use an ellipsis to indicate portions of text that you've omitted from quotes. Don't omit any sentence-ending full stops that precede an ellipsis (i.e. together they make four stops). For example:

[P]articular care needs to be exercised when eliding text to ensure that the sense of the original is not lost . . . A deletion must not result in a statement alien to the original material. . . . Accuracy of sense and emphasis must accompany accuracy of transcription. (CMS, 16th, 13.49)
8. *Use a single space after full-stops.* A double space, once common, is now rightly recognised as unnecessary.

REFERENCING

In your essays you should reference both quotes and claims or arguments that originate from one of the authors you've been reading. You should also have a bibliography of all the works you've referred to in the text.

You can use whatever bibliographical style you choose, so long as it's consistent. The following is an example of a typical author–year referencing style, starting with what the bibliography will look like:

Book: Author (Year) *Title*, Place: Publisher.

1. This includes full stops, commas, colons, semi-colons, and quotations marks.

Fine, G. (1993) *On Ideas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freeman, S. (ed.) (2003) *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Article: Author (Year) 'Title', *Journal*, Volume, pp. Pages.

Irwin, T.H. (1977) 'Plato's Heracleiteanism', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 27, pp. 1–13.

Article in book: Author (Year) 'Article Title' in Editor(s) (ed(s).) *Book Title*, Place: Publisher.

Scanlon, T.M. (2003) 'Rawls on Justification' in S. Freeman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

In-text citation: (Author, Year, Page(s))

It has been argued that the charge of conservatism laid against Rawls' idea of reflective equilibrium is unsound (Scanlon, 2003, pp. 150–151).

Scanlon argues that the charge of conservatism laid against Rawls' reflective equilibrium is unsound (2003, pp. 150–151).

PLAGIARISM

Koç University does not tolerate plagiarism of any kind or degree, whether deliberate or accidental.

Definition

The presentation of someone else's work—such as their ideas or phrases—without acknowledgement, so that it is presented as your own work. It is entirely *your* responsibility to learn what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Degree of plagiarism

No amount of plagiarism is acceptable: a single plagiarised line in an essay will result in failure, and could result in disciplinary procedures.

Quotation marks

Quotations need to be in quotation marks; otherwise, it is plagiarism, whether or not you cite the author. If you fail to know this after your first week of undergraduate, you are unfit for any role in academia.

Accidental vs. deliberate

Students accused of plagiarism invariably claim that it was accidental. This is irrelevant: the problem is the plagiarism itself, not the motivation behind it. The consequences of allegedly accidental plagiarism are no different from deliberate plagiarism. Frankly, if you are unable to avoid plagiarism even while sincerely trying, you should not be in a university, just as you should be allowed to drive if you accidentally run people over.

If you are worried that you might be plagiarising, you can ask me before you submit your work.

Paraphrasing

Read this section very very carefully.

Paraphrasing an author is repeating what they say, but in your own words. Some forms of paraphrasing are acceptable, others are not. One reason to paraphrase is simply to state the author's ideas in your essay, perhaps to support your argument: if you genuinely use your own words and reference the author, this is perfectly acceptable. But if you paraphrase because you are unable to describe what they say by yourself—since you do not trust your English, for example, or fully understand them—then you are plagiarising, *even if you cite the author*.

Never use paraphrasing as a *writing* tool. Directly using an author's words to construct your own sentences or paragraphs—looking back and forth at what they wrote as you write—will almost certainly result in plagiarism, even if you try to change the words. What should guide you when you are writing about an author's ideas is not the words they use, but your understanding of what they mean. As a rule of thumb, ask yourself 'could I have written what I wrote even if I had entirely forgotten the original author's original words?' If your answer is no, then you are probably plagiarising their writing, since a genuine understanding of their ideas will be independent of the words and phrases they use to express them.

EXAMPLE ESSAYS

Your essay should be either on one of the following topics or a topic you choose (and permitted by me). You are responsible for finding your own reading, but there are some suggestions below. These are not on Blackboard and you must find them yourself.

MENO'S PARADOX

What is Meno's Paradox, and does Socrates' response to it succeed?

Example reading list:

1. *Meno* 79E–86B & 97D–98A
2. *Phaedo* 72E–84B & *Phaedrus* 245C–249D [Two statements of the theory of recollection]
3. T. Irwin *Plato's Ethics*, sections 92–95 [Reading all of chapter 9 would be excellent preparation for the next few week's topics]
4. G. Fine 'Inquiry in the *Meno*' in R. Kraut (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (CUP: Cambridge, 1992), 200–226
5. D. Scott *Plato's Meno* (CUP: Cambridge, 2006), chapter 6 and 7 [Useful on both the paradox and the role of recollection; Scott has written on recollection for many years.]
6. İlhan Inan, *Philosophy of Curiosity* (Routledge, 2011), chapter 1 'Meno's Paradox and Inostensible Conceptualization'

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF IN PLATO

How, if at all, does the account (or accounts) of knowledge in Plato's dialogues differ from modern accounts of knowledge as something like 'justified, true belief'? What philosophical significance does this have?

Example reading list:

1. *Meno* 85B–86C & 96D–END
2. T. Irwin *Plato's Ethics*, sections 96–103
3. D. Scott *Plato's Meno* (CUP: Cambridge, 2006), chapter 14
4. M. Burnyeat 'Socrates and the Jury: Paradoxes in Plato's Distinction between Knowledge and True Belief' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Suppl. vol. 54 (1980) 173–191 [Burnyeat argues that Plato's distinction is between true belief and understanding, where the latter requires more than justification (e.g. I have a justified, true belief that $E=MC^2$ but I certainly don't understand it)]
5. G. Fine 'Knowledge and True Belief in the *Meno*' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 27 (Winter 2004) 41–81 [Fine argues that knowledge in the *Meno* is closer to justified, true belief than is often assumed]

ANCIENT VIEWS OF AKRASIA

Explain the accounts of *akrasia* we find in Plato's *Protagoras*, Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Which of these three accounts of *akrasia*—or, if you wish, which fourth account—is the most successful?

Example reading list:

1. *Protagoras* 351B–END; *Republic* book 4, 435A–443A; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 7, 1–10.
2. Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith (2007) 'Socrates on Akrasia, Knowledge, and the Power of Appearance' in Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destree (eds) *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy From Socrates to Plotinus* (Boston: Brill)
3. Christopher Shields (2007) 'Unified Agency and Akrasia in Plato's *Republic*' in Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destree (eds) *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy From Socrates to Plotinus* (Boston: Brill)
4. David Bostock *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chapter 6

CHARACTER VIRTUE AND PRACTICAL WISDOM

Aristotle says that '[character] virtue makes the goal right, practical wisdom makes the means towards the goal right': what does this tell us about the relationship between character virtue and practical wisdom?

Example reading list:

1. David Bostock *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chapters 2 and 4
2. Jessica Moss (2007) '[Aristotle's Ethical Psychology: the Role of Reason in Virtue and Happiness](#)' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Ethics*
3. A. Mele 'Aristotle's Wish' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22 (1984) pp. 139–156

ARISTOTLE'S FUNCTION ARGUMENT

Explain and assess the function argument of 1.7 What is intended to show? How does it relate to the stated purpose of the ethics? What are its premises and what assumptions underlie them?

Example reading list:

1. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1 [The translation we'll be using is T. Irwin's (Hackett Publishing, 1999). Translations vary considerably, in both content and quality, so it's important to stick to this edition. It also has very helpful notes]
2. D. Bostock *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chapter 1
3. J. Whiting 'Aristotle's Function Argument: A Defense' *Ancient Philosophy* 8 (1988) 33–48

4. G. Lawrence 'Human Good and Human Function' in R. Kraut *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2006) 37–75 [This Blackwell guide has plenty of articles useful for this course]
5. R. Barney 'Aristotle's Argument for a Human Function' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 34 (2008) 293–322 [Barney looks at Aristotle's argument for the claim that human's have a function]