

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

ARABIC 3601 *Introduction to Arabic Philosophy*

Meeting Time/Location

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Is the universe eternal or did it have a beginning in time? Is matter made up of atoms or is it continuous? Is logic a universal language or is it limited by its cultural circumstances? How does the mind relate to the body? These are just some of the questions posed and answered by Muslims, Christians, and Jews writing philosophy in Arabic throughout the medieval Islamic world. This course introduces students to the central texts, themes, and authors of the Arabic philosophical tradition as well as the translation and reception of Greek philosophical writings that lie at its start. The course is taught in English and all readings will be presented in English translation.

Instructor:

office:

office hours:

email:

REQUIRED TEXTS

Adamson, Peter. *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 9780199683673.

McGinnis, Jon and David C. Reisman. *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007. ISBN 9780872208711.

All other readings will be made available in electronic form on Canvas.

ASSESSMENT

Attendance, Readings and Participation: This class thrives on in-class discussions of texts that we have read together *before* coming to class. In order to demonstrate to me that you have read the assigned reading prior to coming to class and to help me steer in-class discussion, you are required to email me (connelly.146@osu.edu) a minimum of **3** questions on the assigned readings by noon on the day of class. Your class participation grade is directly dependent on

your turning in these questions and your vocal participation in class discussions. Class attendance is required. Finally, please make sure to bring with you to each class a copy of the texts under discussion, either in hard copy or on a device with a sufficiently large screen.

Papers: There will be two short papers. Prompts and more detailed requirements for the papers will be announced in class and on Canvas. The papers are due by 5:00pm via electronic submission on Canvas on the following dates and penalties for lateness will apply:

Paper 1 (2-3 pages) due **February 17**

Paper 2 (3-4 pages) due **April 14**

Take-Home Midterm and Final Exams: There will be both a take-home midterm and a take-home final exam. Both exams will be open-book and open-note and will test your ability to write with clarity and insight about the topics and texts we have covered. As such both exams will consist of a series of passage analyses and short essay questions. You will be on 'on your honor' to spend no more than two hours on either exam; however, you will have a window of approximately one week in which to take the exam whenever you choose. Both exams should be submitted electronically by 5:00pm on Canvas on the following dates and penalties for lateness will apply:

Take-home Midterm Exam due **March 3**

Take-home Final Exam due **April 28**

Grading Scheme:

Attendance, Readings and Participation: 25%

Paper 1: 15%

Paper 2: 20%

Take-home Midterm Exam: 20%

Take-home Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale:

100-93 = A; 92-90 = A-; 89-87 = B+; 86-83 = B; 82-80 = B-; 79-77 = C+; 76-73 = C; 72-70 = C-; 69-67 = D+; 66-60 = D; 59 or below = E

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

DISABILITY POLICY

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

FOR YOUR SAFETY, the OSU Student Safety/Escort Service is available after 7 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

Class Meeting and Reading Schedule

N.B. This week-by-week schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

Week 1

Wed (Jan 11) Course Introduction and Organization

Fri (Jan 13) Philosophy (*Falsafa*) in Arabic: An Historical Overview

READINGS:

Adamson, 1-29.

McGinnis & Reisman, xvii-xxxi.

Week 2

Wed (Jan 18) The Birth of Arab Hellenism: The Impulse behind the Translation Movement

READINGS:

Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London, 1998), 11-60.

Fri (Jan 20)

READINGS:

Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London, 1998), 61-104.

Timothy I (East Syrian Patriarch), Letter 59 (selections), tr. A. Mingana in “The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928), pp. 32-39 and 60-69

Week 3

Wed (Jan 25) **REASON AND REVELATION**

READINGS:

Adamson, 30-46.

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī on Prophets: Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Proofs of Prophecy*, tr. T. Khalidi

Fri (Jan 27) Aristotelian Logic

Robert Smith, “Aristotle’s Logic”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016)

Week 4

Wed (Feb 1) Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī on Logic and Certainty

READINGS:

The Eisagōgē, in McGinnis & Reisman, 55-63

The Book of Demonstration (selections), in McGinnis & Reisman, 63-78.

Fri (Feb 3) Rhetoric, Poetics and Logic

U. Vagelpohl, “The *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* in the Islamic world” in A. Alwishah and J. Hayes (eds.), *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition* (CUP 2015: 76-91)

Handout of primary source selections

Selections from al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā in V. Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics in the Golden Age* (Leiden, 1975).

Week 5

Wed (Feb 8) Logic and Its Critics

READINGS:

D.S. Margoliouth, “The Discussion between Abū Bishr Mattā and Abū Sa‘īd al-Sīrāfī on the Merits of Logic and Grammar,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 37.1 (1905): 79-90, 111-129 (skip over the Arabic text).

Averroës, *The Decisive Treatise*, in McGinnis & Reisman, 309-330

Fri (Feb 10) READINGS:

Ibn Taymiyya against the syllogism: from W. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford, 1993), 30-66.

A. von Kügelgen, “The Poison of Philosophy: Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle for and against Reason,” in *Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Law: Debating Ibn Taymiyya and Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (Berlin, 2013), 253-328.

Week 6

Wed (Feb 15) **GOD AND BEING**

READINGS:

Adamson, 47-60.

Alexander Treiger, “The Origins of Kalām,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford, 2016)

Fri (Feb 17) al-Kindī on Philosophical Monotheism

READINGS:

On Divine Unity and the Finitude of the World’s Body, in McGinnis & Riesman, 18-22.

The One True and Complete Agent and the Incomplete Metaphorical ‘Agent’, in McGinnis & Reisman, 22-23.

Week 7

Wed (Feb 22) Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) on the Necessary Being

READING:

The Salvation, “Metaphysics,” in McGinnis & Reisman, 209-219.

Fri (Feb 24) Saadia Gaon and Jewish *Kalām*

READING:

Excerpt from Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, tr. A Altman (Cambridge, 2002), 49-73

Gregor Schwarb, “Kalām,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. N. Stillman *et al* (Leiden, 2009), 3: 91-98.

Week 8

Wed (Mar 1) **ETERNITY**

Adamson, 61-77.

Fri (Mar 3) Abū Bakr al-Rāzī on the Five Eternals

READINGS:

On the Five Eternals, in McGinnis & Reisman, 44-49.

Patricia Crone, “Ungodly Cosmologies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. S. Schmidtke (Oxford, 2016)

Week 9

Wed (Mar 8) al-Ghazālī on the World’s Eternity

READING:

The Incoherence of the Philosophers, in McGinnis & Reisman, 241-254.

Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford, 2009), 97-110, 123-46.

Fri (Mar 10) Averroës against al-Ghāzālī

READING:

The Incoherence of the Incoherence, in McGinnis & Reismann, 295-309.

Week 10

Wed (Mar 15) **NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK**

Fri (Mar 17) **NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK**

Week 11

Wed (Mar 22) Maimonides on the Origin of the World

READINGS:

Excerpt from *The Guide for the Perplexed*, in Manekin, ed., *Medieval Jewish Philosophical Writings*, 88-139

Fri (Mar 24) **ATOMISM**

READINGS:

Avicenna, *The Cure*, “Physics”, in McGinnis & Reisman, 164-171.

J. van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, tr. J.M. Todd (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), 70-116.

Week 12

Wed (Mar 29) **NO CLASS – OUT OF TOWN TO GIVE A TALK**

Fri (Mar 31) **KNOWLEDGE**

al-Fārābī's Epistemology

READING:

Adamson, 78-96.

al-Fārābī, *Letter on the Intellect*, in McGinnis & Reisman, 68-78.

Week 13

Wed (Apr 5) Avicenna's 'Flying Man' Argument

READING:

The Cure, "The Soul," in McGinnis & Reisman, 175-209.

Fri (Apr 7) Knowing God

READING:

Averroës on the nature of prophecy; from Ibrahim Najjar, tr., *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroës' Exposition of Religious Arguments* (London, 2001), 92-105.

Ibn Ṭufayl and the noble savage *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (selections), in McGinnis & Reisman, 284-293

Week 14

Wed (Apr 12) **POLITICS AND ETHICS**

Ethics and the Philosophical Life

READINGS:

Adamson, 97-118

al-Kindī, *On the Means of Dispelling Sorrows*, in McGinnis & Reisman, 23-35.

Abū Bakr al-Rāzī *On the Philosopher's Way of Life*, in McGinnis & Reisman, 36-44.

Fri (Apr 14) The Other Team: The Sunni Jurists' Vision of Political Community

READINGS:

Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juvaynī, *Kitāb Irshād al-adilla*, tr. P. Walker (Reading, UK, 2000), 225-39

Week 15

Wed (Apr 19) The Philosophers on Political Community

READINGS:

P. Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York, 2004), 165-96, "The Greek Tradition and 'Political Science'."

al-Fārābī, *Book of Religion*, tr. C.E. Bosworth, *Alfarabi: The Political Writings* (Ithaca, 2001), 93-113

Fri (Apr 21) READINGS:

Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Nasirean Ethics* (selections)

Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, tr. F. Rosenthal (selections)