

Course: PHIL 011: Aristotle and Philosophical Method

1. Date of Application: 11/19/201
2. Name, Dept of Proposer: W. Harter, Philosophy
3. Name of Dept/Program housing course: Philosophy
4. Name of Chair/PD: W. Harter
5. How often is the course taught:yearly
6. Course Prerequisites:none
7. Unit value of course:1
- 8: Normal Class Size: 25
9. Number of sections expected Fall 2012:1
10. Number of sections expected Spring 2013:0
11. Is the course appropriate for first-year students: Yes
12. Relevant Learning Goal(s):Common Good
13. Chair will oversee submission of student work: Yes
14. Chair will oversee instructor participation in norming/asst: Yes

15. Teaching: "This course is designed as introduction to philosophy in general, and the philosophical science of Aristotle in particular. Apropos the Common Good learning goal, it introduces students to ""common good"" as the object which defines and makes possible political association. It then turns to deepen their understanding, by placing the subject of ""common good"" in the context of the science of being, metaphysics.

Ethics, the science of good attained through human action, begins from the practical extension of metaphysical truths. While understanding the good is certainly not the same as being good, nevertheless the common good of political and social life is more intelligible, if not more secure, when moral virtue is understood in light of Being.

Placing the common good within the context of metaphysical science also provides (with a little additional help from Aristotle's logical treatises) introduction to the philosophy of social science. The social sciences begin with some notion of common good, declining from some notion of human nature in its flourishing. But as special sciences their beginning premises are necessarily unexamined, subalternated to the study of philosophy. Thus, this course also provides the fundamentals for critical thinking within social sciences when the latter concern themselves with the common good."

16. Learning: "This course is taught in the mode of seminar. Each day each student is expected to be ready and able to return to the conversation in progress, to summarize and refine the argument as it is provided by Aristotle, and as it has developed in prior class sessions. In addition to this active contribution to shared inquiry, students will be evaluated by mid-term and final examination. They will give evidence of a developing capacity to understand, engage and evaluate philosophical answers to questions regarding virtue, justice, nature and being. They will distinguish between ""What should we do?"" and ""What should we be?"" They will be engaged by questions regarding different objects, all ""good"", but with important difference in meaning: ""the good"", ""particular goods"", ""common good"" and ""good in general"".

The mid-term exam is oral, joining student and instructor in conversation of a dialectical character. And this serves a two-fold end. Not only does such conversation allow a more nuanced determination of the student's philosophical progress by the instructor; it also clarifies for the student, by probing junctures wherein his or her understanding is making progress or being stymied by misconception, where further, more careful consideration is needed.

The final, written examination is an opportunity for the student to provide an explication of terms, and to offer arguments for conclusions that have been the subject of class conversation, and of conversations with the instructor over the course of the semester."