

McGill University

Department of Philosophy

PHIL 651 Seminar: Ancient Philosophy Winter 2019

Instructor: Professor Gaëlle Fiasse

<https://www.mcgill.ca/philosophy/gaelle-fiasse>

<https://www.mcgill.ca/religiousstudies/gaelle-fiasse>

Monday: 09:35-11:25 PM, LEA 927

Contacting me

Email: write to me at gaelle.fiasse@mcgill.ca. Please write « RELG 571 » in the subject. I will not use « Mycourses » for emails (only for submission of the electronic version of assignments).

Office hours (Leacock 940): after the seminar and by appointment.

Topic

The seminar will be based on the ethics of Aristotle. We will pay special attention to the role of the sentient life and its intersection with practical reason. Through a close reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*, we will focus on the senses, the passions, the imagination, the memory and their roles for the ethical life. For instance, Aristotle speaks about ethical judgment as a kind of perception. He mentions the memory of the incontinent, what are therefore the link between the sentient life and the ethical judgment? Aristotle also believes that some passions are necessary and that their absence can make one's vicious. Not to have enough fear leads one to be rash, not to have enough attraction for pleasures makes one insensitive. Therefore, in parallel to the ethics, we will also have a close reading of some chapters in the *Rhetorics*, *On The Soul*, *The Movement of Animals* and the *Metaphysics* where these themes are further developed.

The role and the analogy of the sentient life also echo the preoccupation of contemporary moralists who focus on the respect of individuals and the sense of equity. Although the seminar will focus on primary texts and on secondary literature from Aristotelian scholars, it will also take into consideration contemporary ethical challenges.

The goal of the seminar is to acquire a strong background in Aristotelian ethics and to reflect on the challenges of his texts from an ethical point of view.

Methodology and Evaluation

Participation	10%	Attendance, in-class participation, quality of discussion
Short Papers and Oral Presentation	30%	2 short papers, three pages and their oral presentation
Research Paper	30 %	10 pages (double-space)
Oral Exam	30 %	

Commitments and use of electronic devices

I am available to help you attain the objectives of the course and to be attentive to your questions and possible difficulties with the course material. I highly value a collegial environment in the classroom and mutual attention being paid to each other's contributions. Therefore, all computers, mobile phones, web-accessible electronic devices (iPads, etc.) must be turned off during the class period and stored away. As you know, it is not really pleasant to express one's views orally when others are writing emails. Exceptions for the use of computers will be made with an official note from the Office for Student with Disabilities, but even in this case, Internet access will be prohibited during class time. Another exception will be made when you need to examine the complete works of Aristotle if you don't have a hardcopy. But you need to bring a hardcopy of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Irwin's translation) for each lecture.

Required textbook (available at McGill Bookstore, and on reserve at the library):

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd edition, transl. T. Irwin, Cambridge: Hackett, 1999. ISBN : 978-0-87220-464-5
- Aristotle. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. 2 vols. © 1984 The Jowett Copyright Trustees. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Also available as an ebook at McGill library.
- Articles (available on Mycourses).

Suggested reading:

- For those of you who know Greek: The *Nicomachean Ethics* in Greek: *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea*, éd. par I. Bywater, Oxford, Oxford University Press (Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis), 1894.

Plagiarism

Not mentioning your sources, published or unpublished, constitutes an act of plagiarism. For instance, if you use a website without due reference in the text and in the bibliography; if you use a paper written by another (ideas or words of someone else), without making any reference to the author; if you quote a book or a paper as a reference of your own, without having read it; if you use your own work submitted for another class.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/> for more information).

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. The oral exam can be in English or in French.

Health and Wellness Resources at McGill

Student well-being is a priority for the University. All of our health and wellness resources have been integrated into a single Student Wellness Hub, your one-stop shop for everything related to your physical and mental health. If you need to access services or get more information, visit the Virtual Hub at mcgill.ca/wellness-hub or drop by the Brown Student Services Building (downtown) or Centennial Centre (Macdonald Campus). Within your faculty, you can also connect with your Local Wellness Advisor (to make an appointment, visit mcgill.ca/lwa).