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


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-xxx.

Week 2
Wed (Jan 18) The Birth of Arab Hellenism: The Impulse behind the Translation Movement

READINGS:

Fri (Jan 20)

READINGS:
- 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.

Fri (Jan 27) Aristotelian Logic

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


Handout of primary source selections


Week 5

Wed (Feb 8)  Logic and Its Critics

READINGS:


Fri (Feb 10)  READINGS:


Week 6

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

READINGS:

Adamson, 47-60.

Fri (Feb 17) al-Kindī on Philosophical Monotheism

READINGS:


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:


Fri (Feb 24) Saadia Gaon and Jewish Kalām

READING:

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


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.


Week 9

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

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

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:


Fri (Mar 24) **ATOMISM**

READINGS:


*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.

*Week 13*

Wed (Apr 5)  Avicenna’s ‘Flying Man’ Argument

READING:

Fri (Apr 7)  Knowing God

READING:

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

*Week 14*

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

Ethics and the Philosophical Life

READINGS:
Adamson, 97-118
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:
Week 15

Wed (Apr 19) The Philosophers on Political Community

READINGS:


Fri (Apr 21) READINGS:

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

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