SPRING 2019

ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICS (PHIL 407W/507-01)
R. Polansky
Thursday 1:40-4:20 Room: TBA
Email: polansky@duq.edu

“For as the eyes of bats are to the blaze of day, so is the mind in our soul to the things which are by nature most evident of all.” (Meta. ii 1.993b9-11)

TEXT: Please use any text or translation of Aristotle’s Metaphysics (it is even available online for free, but this may not, unfortunately, have the Bekker numbers along the sides of the pages that make it easy to locate particular passages)

ASSIGNMENTS

There are four short papers of 3-4 pages each. These papers should have a quite narrow focus. Pick a brief section of text that you do not understand and work on it until you have come to some understanding of it or a way to speak about it intelligently. Papers, for graduate students, should be in the style of professional articles and use secondary literature effectively. There should be a clear statement of the problem or topic, the approach that will be employed to deal with it, and what you will be trying to show about it. There should then be argument(s) defending your resolution. The last paper of 4-5 pages may be either a reworking of a previous paper or on a new topic. It might be discussed with me before it is written. Secondary work used should be either ancient commentators or post 1980 works.

Papers should be handed in on date due or within one week of due date. It is nice to see everyone on a regular basis. The course grade will be based on the papers. There may be plus and minus grades.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students should become appreciative of ancient philosophy generally and the work of Aristotle in theoretical philosophy in particular. They should become more adept at reading and interpreting unusual texts. For graduate students, skills at preparing professional quality papers and artful use of secondary material should be enhanced. Methods of teaching may be discerned from imitating or resisting the instructor’s approach in the class sessions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On paper assignments students will be assessed regarding interpretation of texts, philosophical argumentation, and quality of writing. This should lead to development in these areas. Comments on papers and allowance for rewriting should help achieve the objectives of the course. Class discussions will also contribute to the assessment of and enhancement of skills.

This course fulfills the requirement for Ancient.