

PHIL3172
Topics in Medieval Western Philosophy 中古西方哲學專題

Course Outline

Time : H 9:30am-12:15pm

Location : ELB 303

Office Hours: H 2-4pm

Course overview

This course investigates *the Medieval problem of universals*. The course begins with an investigation into the Ancient form of the problem in Plato and Aristotle, and investigates how the Medieval problem develops out of its Ancient form. Special attention will be given to the following thinkers, who explicitly thematize the issue in its epistemic and ontological aspects: Porphyry, Boethius, Aquinas, Augustine, Peter Abelard, Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham.

Offerings with different subtitles can be taken up for credit, up to a maximum of *two times*.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Students will become fluent in the Medieval Problem of Universals.
2. Students will be able to distinguish the Medieval Problem of Universals with the Ancient form of the problem.
3. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the primary/secondary source texts.
4. Students will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with the major ideas and theories of the philosophers, as well as the relations between the various philosophical movements, covered in the course.
5. Students will develop the capacity to think through a philosophical problem, reconstruct a philosophical argument from a primary text, and develop the capacity to construct their own critiques.
6. Students will develop familiarity with the way the Medieval problem of universals forms a *bridge* to early Modern European philosophy.
7. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the distinction between realism and nominalism, as well as the *Via Antiqua* and *Via Moderna*.
8. Students will be familiar with the theological, ontological and epistemic dimensions of the Medieval problem of universals, as well as theories of learning, such as theories of abstraction, intuition, and illumination.

Topics

Universals and particulars

Divine and Human Knowing

Abstraction, Illumination, and Intuition

The Ancient and Medieval Problem of Universals

Medieval Epistemology, Theology, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Mind

Porphyry

Boethius

Aquinas

Augustine

Peter Abelard

John Duns Scotus

William of Ockham

Learning activities

Attend lectures and participate in class discussions. Each lecture is approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Participation	See Remarks.	15%
Argument Reconstruction	See Remarks.	10%
Argument Critique	See Remarks.	25%
Term Paper	See Remarks.	50%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Grade Scale:

A: 87-100

A-: 80-86

B+: 77-79

B: 71-77

B-: 68-70

C+: 65-67%

C: 59-64%

C-: 56-58%

D+: 53-55%

D: 50-52%

F: < 5

Grade Criterion for Argument Critique:

A:

The student knows the authors positions, and proves this knowledge by knowing the argument(s) supporting the theses in the text. Student evidences self-initiated thinking and understanding of the arguments through his/her ability to present her own counter-arguments and possible replies to counter-arguments. The student exhibits thorough understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

B:

The student knows the authors positions, and generally understands the arguments supporting them. Student has difficulty developing her own criticisms and rebuttals to criticism. The student exhibits relatively complete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

C:

The student shows the ability to properly relay information about the text and the positions contained therein, but has difficulty re-constructing the arguments, presenting counter-arguments, and criticism. Student has a difficulty understanding arguments. The student shows an incomplete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

D:

The student cannot explicate the positions or the arguments for such positions in the text. The student exhibits seriously incomplete understanding.

F:

The student exhibits all the failures mentioned under 'D'. The student earns an F by failing to complete the assignment.

Remarks:

Class Participation:

Students are required to attend *every session*. The class participation grade will be calculated based on *the percentage of meetings the student has attended*. In addition, *two unexcused absences* are permitted. For each unexcused absence beyond two, *one-half* a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. In case of emergencies, either notify me of your absence ahead of time, or plan to bring some formal documentation of your absence. Without documentation, I will not accept absences as excused.

Argument Critiques:

The Argument Critiques consist of three parts. In respect to the papers, I shall provide you with passages from the texts which we are reading, and I will ask you to choose one passage to work on. You will formulate the argument contained in that passage, and formulate a critique of that passage. The last stage consists in formulating a reply to the criticism that you raise. I encourage you to utilize the texts that we are reading in formulating the criticisms; you are encouraged to employ the philosophers against each other. Argument Critiques should be 3-4 double spaced pages in length.

Term Paper:

The term paper will require students to uncover a philosopher problem in one of the texts that we have read together and clearly explicate that problem. Following the explication of the problem, students should work through various solutions to the problem and clearly formulate their own thesis concerning that problem. The term paper requires students to consult and cite at least one work of secondary literature in addition to the required readings. The term paper should be at least 5-7 double spaced pages.

Late Work/Make-Ups:

Late assignments will be penalized one-half a letter grade for each day the paper is tardy. If you would like a grade changed, you must provide me with a detailed written argument for why you think it should be changed, otherwise I will not consider it.

Required Text:

Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals, Translated and Edited by Paul Vincent Spade, Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1994.

Recommended learning resources

The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy:

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195379488.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195379488>

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
1	Ancient Problem of Universals in Plato and Aristotle	
2	Porphyry, <i>Isagogue</i>	
3	Boethius, Second Commentary on Porphyry's <i>Isagogue</i>	
4	Peter Abelard, "Glosses on Porphyry"	
5	Augustine and Aquinas On Illumination and Abstraction (handout)	Argument Reconstruction
6	Augustine and Aquinas On Illumination and Abstraction (handout)	
7	Henry of Ghent (Handout)	
8	John Duns Scotus, <i>Ordinatio</i>	
9	John Duns Scotus, <i>Ordinatio</i>	
10	John Duns Scotus, <i>Ordinatio</i>	
11	William of Ockham, <i>Ordinatio</i>	Argument Critique
12	William of Ockham, <i>Ordinatio</i>	
13	Transition to Early Modern Philosophy	

Term Paper Due Date: May 12th

Details of course website

We will use Blackboard for this course. Lecture notes and information on assignments and examinations will be posted on the website.

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	Moss, Gregory
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Telephone:	3943 9875
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TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.