

Philosophy 208
Introduction to Islamic Philosophy
Spring 2018

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Office Hours: Monday 1130 - 1220 hrs Thursday 1130 - 1220 hrs. and by appointment..

Texts: (1) Works of the philosophers studied in this course are available on-line without charge (see URLs listed below).

(2) Good reference texts are:

- Fakhry M. *A History of Islamic Philosophy*. 2nd ed.(Columbia University Press) - Sharif MM. *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Pakistan Philosophy congress), available online free at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/hmp/index.html>

(3) The instructor's own lecture notes will be available on CourseSpaces. They are required reading. They are arranged in chapters. They contain the philosophical theories and themes advanced by the individual philosophers or groups of philosophers who form the subject of this course.

Formal Course Requirements and Grading Procedures

Two examinations: a mid-term examination worth 25 % of the course grade, a final examination worth 50% of the course grade and a short term paper (topic to be announced at the end of the second week of lectures or arranged in consultation with the instructor) worth 25% of the course grade.

Significant dates:

- Mid-term examination: approximately Feb. 8 (80 mins)
- Final examination: scheduled by the university (180 mins.)
- Term paper: due April 5(electronically handed in)

It is impossible to give dates for lectures since the amount of time spent on each person or group of persons depends on the familiarity of students with the philosophical background of the thinkers (especially in Greek and neo-Platonic philosophy) and the need to fill in any gaps in their knowledge. The mid-term examination will be returned as soon as it is graded. Final examinations are the property of the University and will not be returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office at a time designated by the University. Terms papers may be picked up from the instructor's office one working week after April 5.

Exceptions from course requirements, adjustments for taking examinations at set examination dates, etc. will only be made in accordance with UVic regulations as published in the Calendar. It is the responsibility of the student to acquaint themselves with this fact.

Grading

Marks will be assigned on a percentile basis as follows:

F = 0-49; D = 50-59; C = 60-64; C+ = 65-69; B- = 70-72; B = 73-76; B+ = 77-79; A- = 80-84; A = 85-89; A+ = 90-100.

Tentative Outline of Lectures

1. Introduction:

- A brief introduction to the Islam
- A brief introduction to the history of Islamic culture & expansion

2. Philosophical background of Islamic philosophical speculation

The Islamic philosophers that are studied in this course assumed that whoever read their works would be familiar with the works of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. There is no such prerequisite for taking this course. Consequently, the instructor has to provide students who take this course with the requisite information—which he does by making it available in notes that are posted on CourseSpaces. These notes do not cover all the works of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus but only deal with information that provides an appropriate background for understanding the works of the Islamic philosophers that will be studied in this course. The works of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus that are mentioned below are not required reading. However, students are encouraged to read on their own as much as possible of the works that are mentioned.

a. Plato

- *Republic, Theaetetus*
- *de Anima, Metaphysics, Nicomachean Ethics*
- Plotinus, *Enneads*, available online at

b. Aristotle

c. Neo-

Platonism

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.html>

(d. Nestorians as transmitters)

3. Mu'tazilah (9th century)

There is no text for studying the works of the Mu'tazilah because there are no formally published texts. Students who are interested in secondary comments on their teachings might wish to consult the discussion at the following URL: <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H052>
Subjects that will be discussed include the topics listed below. They are discussed as part of the

course because the Mu'tazilahs' speculations on these topics influenced later Islamic philosophy.

- a. The nature of God and of the Divine Attributes
- b. The status of the Qur'an
- c. Ethical objectivism

- 4. Al-Kindi** ((c. 801–873 CE), - *On First Philosophy* (Part I: chapter 1-2) available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/books/kindi-met.pdf>
- a. scientific achievements
 - b. metaphysics

5. The Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa') (10th century)

- brief synopsis by O. Farrukh, available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/hmp/18.htm>
- a. Philosophical doctrines, an outline available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H051.htm>
- b. Influence

6. Ash'arites (10th century)

- Article available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/hmp/14.htm>
- a. The nature of God and of the Divine Attributes
- b. The status of the Qur'an
- c. Atomic nature of space and time
- c. Ethics

Mid-term examination: Approx. February 8

7. Al-Farabi ("Second Teacher") (~872 - ~ 950)

- *Social Psychology*
- *The Ideas of the Citizens of the Virtuous City* (response to Plato)
- *Categories of Science* (response to Aristotle)
- *The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* "Introduction", available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/books/farabi-pl-arist.pdf>
- Non-Aristotelian, future contingents
- a. logic (response to Aristotle)
- b. Neoplatonism
- c. Sufism and philosophy

8. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (~950 - 1037)

- *Logic* available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/books/dansh.pdf>
- *Remarks and Admonitions*, "Introduction" available at <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/books/inati1.pdf>
- a. metaphysics
- b. cosmology
- c. human beings

d. arguments for the existence of God

9. **Omar Khayyam** (1048-1122)

a. the Rubaiyat, available at http://www.okdac.net/docs/PERFORMANCE_SCRIPT.pdf

10. **Al-Ghazali (Algazel)** (1058 - 111)

- *Tahafut al-falasifah*, "Introduction," available at <http://www.ghazali.org/works/tafeng.pdf>

- *The Mysteries of the Human Soul* (Optional) available at <https://www.ghazali.org/works/soul.htm>

- *The Deliverance from Error*, Chapter III, available at <http://www.ghazali.org/books/md/IIA-02main.htm> and at <http://www.ghazali.org/works/watt3.htm> pp. 19-

a. Certainty and Error

b. Attack on philosophers

11. **Ibn Tufail** (1105 - 1185)

- *On the Improvement of Human Reason: The history of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* (optional) available at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16831/16831-h/20018-h.htm>

a. nature of human beings

12. **Ibn Rushd (Averroës)** (1126 - 1198)

- *On the Incoherence of the Incoherence*, available at

<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/tt/index.html>

- *Decisive Treatise on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*, available at

<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/fasl.htm>

- *Treatise on Metaphysics Book lambda*, (Chapter 1 and 2) available at

<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/books/ir-meta.pdf>

a. Philosophy and religion

b. God

c. Human beings

- *Al-massir*: (optional) award winning movie about Ibn Rushd, available in YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaXy6i6ZP7o>

13. **Sufism**

a. Ibn Arabi (1165 - 1240)

Two selections from texts available at <http://www.livingislam.org/i/index.html>

B. Rumi (1207 - 1273)

Three selections from texts available at <http://www.rumionfire.com/shams/index.htm>
A selection of translation from Rumi is available on the Mevlevi Order's website at <http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/divan.html>

14. Review