GR 352 Aristotle: Aristotle’s Chemistry (DRAFT)

Greek 352 Department of Classics, University of Southern California, Fall 2024

Seminar: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30–11:50, in PED 132C (office)

Professor Alexandre Roberts (robe941@usc.edu)
Office hours: Mondays 12:00–1:00pm and Wednesdays 3:30–4:30pm, in PED 132C

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an advanced course in reading ancient Greek focusing on a single, highly influential author: Aristotle (384 BCE–322 BCE).

In the present iteration of this course, we will closely read and discuss a key passage for recovering Aristotle’s understanding of the transformation of matter, De generatione et corruptione 1.10, in the original Greek, samples from a later Greek commentary on the treatise by John Philoponos, and selections from Aristotle’s Meteorology, book 4. Themes of discussion will include Aristotle’s theory of mixture, how it was used and adapted in late antiquity and the middle ages, and how it relates to modern chemistry.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course students will have the opportunity to read, in the original Greek, one of the most influential thinkers ever to take pen to paper: Aristotle. From Central Asia to Andalusia, Alexandria to Athens to Italy to Ireland, his treatises were the starting point for commentaries, critiques, school curricula, and scientific innovation expressed in Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Latin, and many other languages from the centuries after his death until the early modern period and, arguably, even up until the present day. This course aims to introduce students to Aristotle’s distinctive vocabulary and modes of argumentation while more generally developing their comprehension of philosophical Greek.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

- Participation (10%)
- In-class translation (25%). The emphasis is not on perfection but on earnest effort to study the assigned portion of this conceptually difficult text before class (with a dictionary) and to translate it viva voce in class (without a dictionary).
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (20%)
- Paper 1 (10%). Focused exegesis/commentary on a passage, 5–7 pages.
- Paper 2 (15%). Essay, 7–10 pages. Suggested topics will be provided.

As part of the required participation and preparation, please add 5 new vocabulary items to the class vocabulary list by 5pm the day before each class. (This may mean choosing key vocabulary items before you have finished preparing for class. The idea is that studying the vocabulary list will help you prepare for class more efficiently.) Selections from the resulting vocabulary list will feature on the exams.
Book

Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione*


Commentary by John Philoponos:


Other Books (Recommended)

Smyth, *Greek Grammar* | available online and in hard copy at Doheny and Leavey Libraries.

Schedule

Week 1


W 8/28:

- Greek 1.1, 314a6–16

Week 2

M 9/2: NO CLASS: Labor Day

W 9/4: Greek 1.10, 327a30–b6 (i.e., from the beginning of 1.10)

Week 3

M 9/9: Greek 1.10, 327b6–17


Week 4

M 9/16: Greek 1.10, 327b29–328a5.

W 9/18: Greek 1.10, 328a5–19.
Week 5
W 9/25: Greek 1.10, 328a31–b8

Friday 9/27: Paper 1 due via email as a PDF

Week 6
M 9/30: Greek 1.10, 328b8–17
W 10/2: Greek 1.10, 328b17–22 (i.e., to the end of 1.10)

Week 7
M 10/7: Discuss Gen. corr. 1.10 as a whole
W 10/9: Midterm Exam

Enjoy (a very short) Fall Recess! (10/10–11)

Week 8
M 10/14: Philoponos, commentary on Aristotle’s Gen. corr. 1.10:
   • in English, Williams pp. 94–99 (lemmas 327a30 through 327b22)
   • in Greek, beginning of comment on 327a30 only: Vitelli p. 187 lines 18–22
W 10/16: Philoponos, commentary on Aristotle’s Gen. corr. 1.10:
   • in English, Williams pp. 99–104 (lemmas 327b27 through 328a3)
   • in Greek, beginning of comment on 327b31: Vitelli p. 192 lines 20–28

Week 9
M 10/21: Philoponos, commentary on Aristotle’s Gen. corr. 1.10:
   • in English, Williams pp. 104–109 (lemmas 328a15 through 328a33)
   • in Greek, comment on 328a17: Vitelli, 196.30–197.
W 10/23: Philoponos, commentary on Aristotle’s Gen. corr. 1.10:
   • in English, Williams pp. 109–113 (lemmas 328a35 through 328b22)
   • in Greek, comment on 328b22: Vitelli, p. 203, lines 9–16

Week 10
W 10/30: Aristotle, Meteorology, 4.1: 378b20–31

Week 11
M 11/4: Aristotle, Meteorology, 4.1: 378b31–379a5

**Friday 11/8: Paper 2 due via email as a PDF**

**Week 12**
M 11/11: NO CLASS: Veterans Day

**Week 13**

**Week 14**
W 11/27: NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 15**
M 12/2: Aristotle, *Meteorology*, 4.8: 385a1–21
(F 12/6: end of classes)

**Final Exam**
Date TBA (exam period is December 11–18)
STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS (FROM THE UNIVERSITY)

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university’s mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity’s website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call.
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call.
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides
free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7
days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local
crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The
new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis
services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and
represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call.
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and
power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086.
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of
protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and
applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298.
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal
Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776.
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations
and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411.
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely
affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101.
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity
Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call.
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in
which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call.
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC).
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work
with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu.
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and
routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.