



PHIL 3---: Philosophy of the Islamic World

Class Time: TBD

Class Location: TBD

Instructor: Chris Rahlwes

Email: TBD

How to reach me: *Please drop by my open office hours (TBD) or email me to make an appointment (either in-person or online). Always include PHIL 3--- in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday.*



Course Description:

In this course we look at two interrelated but competing traditions in Islamic philosophy: the Peripatetics and the Sūfīs. We will start the course off with the debate between Avicenna and al-Ghazālī over the incorporation of Greek philosophy into Islamic theology (*kālam*). This will require some overview of Aristotle and Plotinus, which we will relate to through al-Kindī and al-Fārābī. From the debate, we will look at (i) the pro-Peripatetic side with Averroes, Maimonides, and al-Ṭūsī and (ii) the pro-Sūfī side with Ibn ‘Arabī, Mullā Ṣadrā, and Rūmī. The main topics we will focus on are epistemology, logic, metaphysics (esp. personal identity, being vs. existence, and God), and soteriology. Out of these topics the (i) relationship between the individual soul and God as well as (ii) how far human knowledge can reach will be of special interest.

Course Goals:

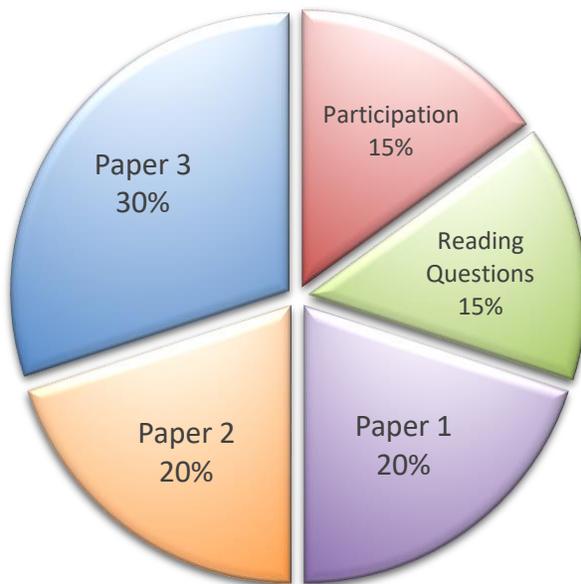
By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and summarize the Peripatetic school and the Sūfī school of Islamic thought.
 2. Evaluate and analyze (i) arguments between Avicenna and al-Ghazālī and the continuations of these debates and (ii) determine which side “won.”
 3. Engage in interpretive debates surrounding issues in the texts covered.
 4. Advance positions based on these texts using the tools of philosophical argument.
 5. Develop a research project focusing on a philosophical text from the Islamic world, in which you carefully and with great precision explain a key philosophical principle in that text.
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Means of Evaluation

- **Participation (15%).** Participation will be measured through active class engagement as well as group questions and workshops.
- **Reading Questions (15%).** The Sunday before each class you are required to email two questions you have regarding the readings for the week (at least one question must be on the primary text). These will help guide the lecture throughout the week.
- **Paper 1 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** This paper focuses on your ability to explain a key philosophical principle clearly and precisely from one of our texts. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the author’s position, the structure of your paper, and if your argument is compelling. You are allowed up to two revisions of this paper.
- **Paper 2 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** Same as Paper 1, but you must focus on a different tradition or text.
- **Paper 3 (30%) 8–10 Pages.** This paper is a revision of Paper 1 or Paper 2, in which you further develop your explanation, ideas, and/or argument. This paper is the culmination of the course and shows your ability in designing a research project that is philosophically fruitful. You will be asked to submit a brief prospectus for this paper.

Weighted Grade



Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

Required Materials:

- All course readings will be available online.
(When possible, I will include the readings as an audiobook as well.)
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments
Module 1: The Greek to Arabic Movement			
Week 1		Introduction to the Course Review Aristotle and Plotinus Greek into Arabic <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D’Ancona (2005) Greek into Arabic 	
Week 2		Al-Kindī and al-Fārābī <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adamson (2005) Al-Kindī and the reception of Greek philosophy • Reisman (2005) Al-Fārābī and the philosophical curriculum • Al-Fārābī, “The Aims of Aristotle’s <i>Metaphysics</i>” in McGinnis and Reisman 	Weekly Questions
Module 2: The Avicenna and al-Ghazālī Debate			
Week 3		Avicenna’s Metaphysics <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wisnovsky (2005) Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition • Rahman (1958) Essence and Existence in Avicenna • Avicenna, <i>The Salvation</i>, “Metaphysics,” I.I2 and II.12–13 in McGinnis and Reisman 	Weekly Questions
Week 4		Avicenna’s Epistemology and Philosophy of Mind <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adamson (2005) On Knowledge of Particulars • Marmura (1986) Avicenna’s ‘Flying Man’ in Context • Avicenna, <i>The Cure</i>, “The Soul” in McGinnis and Reisman 	Weekly Questions

Week 5		<p>Al-Ghazālī <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marmur (2005) Al-Ghazālī • Kukkonen (2000) Possible Worlds in <i>Tahafut al-Falasifa</i>: al-Ghazali on Creation and Contingency • Al-Ghazālī, <i>The Incoherence of the Philosophers</i>, “The First Discussion” in McGinnis and Reisman 	Weekly Questions
Module 3: The Defense of <i>Falasifa</i> (Philosophy)			
Week 6		<p>Averroes <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor (2005) Averroes: religious dialectic and Aristotelian philosophical thought • Taylor (2000) Truth Does not Contradict Truth: Averroes and the Unity of Truth • Averroes, <i>The Incoherence of the Incoherence</i>, “First Discussion” 	Weekly Questions
Week 7		<p>Maimonides <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeskin (2006) Metaphysics and its Transcendence • Stern (2006) Maimonides’ Epistemology • Maimonides, <i>The Guide for the Perplexed</i>, selections from Book Two 	Weekly Questions
Week 8		<p>Al-Ṭūsī and the Ismā’īlīs <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walker (2005) The Ismā’īlīs • Madelung (1985) Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and the Ismailis • Al-Ṭūsī, selections from the <i>Solution to the Difficulties of Pointers</i> 	Paper 1 Due Weekly Questions
Module 4: Philosophical Sūfism			

Week 9		<p>Philosophical Sufism <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akasoy (2011) What is Philosophical Sufism? • Silver (2014) Early Pious, Mystic Sufi Women • Xavier (2020) Women, femininity, and queer identities on the Sufi path 	Weekly Questions
Week 10		<p>Ibn ‘Arabī <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chittick (1996) Ibn ‘Arabī and the School of Ibn ‘Arabī • Dobi (2007) The Phenomenology of <i>Wujud</i> and the Thought of Ibn ‘Arabi • Ibn ‘Arabī, <i>The Meccan Revelations</i>, Selections 	Weekly Questions
Week 11		<p>Suhrawardī and The Illumationist <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ziai (1996) The Illumationist Tradition • Walbridge (1995) Shurawardī and Illuminationism • Suhrawardī, <i>The Philosophy of Illumination</i>, “On light and its reality, the Light of Light, and that which first was generated from it” 	Weekly Questions
Week 12		<p>Mullā Ṣadrā <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risvi(2005) Philosophy and Mysticism: Ibn ‘Arabi and Mulla Sadra • Risvi (2009) “The Modulation of Being” • Mullā Ṣadra, <i>Asfār</i>, selections 	Paper 2 Due Weekly Questions
Week 13		<p>Rūmī <u>Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rūmī, selections from <i>Love is my Savior</i> • Azadibougar and Patton (2015) Coleman Barks’ Versions of Rumi in the USA 	Weekly Questions
Finals Week			Paper 3 Due

Resources Available to All Students: **TBD**

College is a challenging time in your life.

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at TBD. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.