

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to some of the key figures, seminal texts, and main themes of Islamic philosophy in the classical period. Developing in the late ninth century A.D. and evolving without interruption for almost half a millennium into the fourteenth century, this body of thought was instrumental in the revival of the philosophical tradition in Europe. Philosophers in the Islamic world were strongly influenced by Greek philosophical works and adapted some of the Platonic, Aristotelian, and other ideas to their Islamic brand of monotheism. But they also developed an original philosophical culture of their own.

The philosophical writings to be examined express various viewpoints and tackle a range of philosophical questions. Among the questions to be discussed are the following: What is the nature of the good life? What is the relation between virtue and happiness? What is the best form of government? Can we know anything at all? Is knowledge gained through rational thought or through mystical apprehension? What is the relation between reason and faith? Can religious truths be demonstrated through reason? How is the soul related to the body? What is the nature of prophecy? Can miracles occur? What are the limits, if any, of God's power? The authors to be read include: al-Razi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), al-Ghazali, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

### Course Requirements

**Reading Quizzes (10%):** Four times throughout the semester, students will be required to take a very brief reading quiz on Moodle. These quizzes will be announced one week in advance and will test whether you have done the assigned reading for the day in question. You will only be able to do these quizzes in the 48-hour period prior to the class during which that reading will be discussed.

**In-Class Exam (25%):** This exam will take place in class on 25 October. Sample questions and further information will be distributed at least one week in advance. If you miss the exam due to a genuine medical or other emergency, you should contact me by email *in advance* to say so and then produce proper documentation within a week of missing the exam (e.g. a medical report). In such cases, a makeup exam will be administered (but note that make-up exams tend to allow students less choice than the actual exam).

**Take-Home Essay (30%):** Around halfway into the semester you will be asked to write a short essay on one of a set of questions that will be distributed two weeks before the essay is due. There will be a firm deadline for turning in the take-home essay (15 November); late submissions will be penalized according to a fixed penalty schedule.

**Final Exam (35%):** The final exam will contain some short-answer questions and some essay questions. Please note that *the date for the Final Exam will not be set until around halfway into the semester* and will be announced as soon as it is set. So make sure that you do not make travel plans during the examination period until the date for the final exam has been set by the university. The same policy applies for a makeup exam as for the in-class exam (see above).

## **Moodle**

All registered students will be automatically added to the course's MOODLE site:

1. Go to <http://moodle.yorku.ca>
2. Click on **Moodle11**
3. Enter your Passport York id in the username field
4. Enter your Passport York password in the password field

If you have not been added, please email to tell me as soon as possible. Important announcements concerning the course and course policies will be posted on Moodle, so you are responsible for checking the Moodle site on a regular basis. Several of the readings for this course will also be posted on Moodle and must be downloaded and printed out from that site; they are not available in any other form. I will also post all Powerpoint lectures on Moodle, but only after having presented them in class. In addition, the Reading Quizzes will be administered via Moodle. In short, it is crucial that you sign on to Moodle and check the Moodle course website very regularly throughout the semester.

## **Policy on Email**

Email is an effective way of communicating with me and I would encourage you to send me an email message if you have a relatively straightforward question concerning course requirements or something of that kind. (You should also email me if some emergency arises and you have to miss a class deadline. But I should stress that any such contact needs to take place in advance of the deadline in question. Otherwise, there is very little chance that you will be excused in whole or in part.) However, based on past experience, I don't think email is a very good way of asking substantive questions about class material. If you have such questions and you do not get a chance to ask them in class or don't think that they've been satisfactorily answered in class, I would strongly encourage you to make an appointment to come see me during office hours. I find that a substantive philosophical discussion is hard to carry out over email and it's usually much more productive to conduct it face-to-face. Incidentally, I don't care how you address me over email (although "Hey dude" is not advised), but *please include your full name* and student number in your email. I won't answer unsigned emails!

## **Office Hours**

My regular office hours this semester are Thursday 11:30 am-1:00 pm and my office is in Ross Building S 438, down the hall from the Department of Philosophy office. But I may also be able to meet at other times during the week if this time does not work for you. So please contact me by email if you would like to arrange a different time. Even if you intend to show up during my regular office hours, it is preferable to contact me beforehand, so that I can help ensure that you don't have a long wait.

## **Access and Disability**

Students with health-related, learning, physical, psychiatric, or sensory disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods should discuss their concerns with me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**Required Texts**

The readings for this class are either found in the required textbook or will be posted on Moodle. The required textbook for this course is available at the York University Bookstore and you are strongly advised to buy a copy:

M. A. Khalidi (ed.), *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

The readings posted on Moodle should be downloaded and saved to your own computer or printed out. I would encourage you to print out such readings and place them in a binder or folder for easy reference.

In the Reading Schedule, readings from the textbook are marked (T), while readings posted on Moodle are marked (M).

**Academic Honesty**

All students are expected to abide strictly by standards of academic honesty. Please familiarize yourselves with the University Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/>

If you have any questions concerning what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please consult with me as soon as possible.

## Reading Schedule

Please come to class having done the reading for the day in question. Any changes in the reading schedule will be announced in class and posted on Moodle.

		<b>8 September</b>
		Introduction
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>13 September</b>	<b>15 September</b>
	Razi, "Spiritual Physick," pp.20-35 (M)	Razi, "Spiritual Physick," pp.36-49 (M)
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>20 September</b>	<b>22 September</b>
	Razi, "The Philosophical Life," pp.1-9 (M)	Farabi, "The Book of Letters," pp.1-19 (T)
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>27 September</b>	<b>29 September</b>
	Farabi, "The Book of Letters," pp.19-26 (T)	Farabi, "The Political Regime," pp.31-41 (M)
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>4 October</b>	<b>6 October</b>
	Farabi, "The Political Regime," pp.41-57 (M)	Farabi, "The Political Regime," cont'd. (M)
	<b>11 October</b>	<b>13 October</b>
	SEMESTER BREAK	SEMESTER BREAK
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>18 October</b>	<b>20 October</b>
	Ibn Sina, "Necessary and Possible Existence," pp.74-84 (M)	Ibn Sina, "On the Soul," 27-40 (T)
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>25 October</b>	<b>27 October</b>
	IN-CLASS EXAM	Ibn Sina, "On the Soul," pp.41-58 (T)
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>1 November</b>	<b>3 November</b>
	Ibn Sina, "On the Soul," cont'd. (T) ESSAY TOPICS POSTED	Ghazali, "Rescuer from Error," pp.59-76 (T)
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>8 November</b>	<b>10 November</b>
	Ghazali, "Rescuer from Error," pp.76-98 (T)	Ghazali, "Rescuer from Error," cont'd. (T)
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>15 November</b>	<b>17 November</b>
	Ibn Tufayl, "Hayy bin Yaqzan," pp.99-132 (T) ESSAYS DUE	Ibn Tufayl, "Hayy bin Yaqzan," pp.132-153 (T)
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>22 November</b>	<b>24 November</b>
	Ibn Tufayl, "Hayy bin Yaqzan," Epilogue (M)	Ibn Rushd, "The Decisive Treatise," pp.1-12 (M)
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>29 November</b>	<b>1 December</b>
	Ibn Rushd, "The Decisive Treatise," p.12-16 (M)	Ibn Rushd, "The Incoherence of the Incoherence," pp.155-170 (T)
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>6 December</b>	
	Ibn Rushd, "The Incoherence of the Incoherence," pp.170-180 (T)	

(T) = Reading is in the required textbook

(M) = Reading is posted on Moodle