

Professor Kara Richardson Email: kricha03@syr.edu Office: 537 Hall of Languages Office Hours:	PHI 710 Seminar in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Hall of Languages 538
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Course Description

A graduate level introduction to the philosophy of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037).

Learning Outcomes

- Ability to describe the key aspects of Avicenna's philosophical system
- Ability to apply contextualist and analytic methods to interpret Avicenna's arguments
- Ability to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of key aspects of Avicenna's philosophical system
- Ability to defend an interpretation of some aspect of Avicenna's philosophy in writing that is clear, concise, informed and well-organized and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of rival interpretations.

Evaluation

1. Short papers (3 X 10% = 30%). Topics and due dates appear on the schedule below. Detailed instructions will be given in class and posted on Blackboard under "Assignments."
2. Term paper (50%) Due one week after our final seminar meeting. Topics must be approved by me by Nov. 30. Detailed instructions will be given in class and posted on Blackboard under "Assignments."
3. Seminar contribution (20%) Come to class with two written questions about the readings.

Texts

1. McGinnis, Jon. *Avicenna* (Oxford)
2. Adamson, Peter. *A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy in the Islamic World* (Oxford) [Optional]

Academic Integrity

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of

signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort.

Students with disabilities/special needs

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations should register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Please provide me with a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS so I am aware of your accommodations. Planning for accommodations as early as possible is best. I'd be happy to meet with you to discuss how I can help.

Provisional schedule of readings

BB = Blackboard

	Topic(s)	Readings	Short paper topics
1.	Avicenna's Life and Times	McGinnis, Avicenna, ch. 1; <i>Life of Ibn Sina</i> , tr. William Gohlman, Albany, 1974.	
2.	Avicenna on Logic and Science	McGinnis, Avicenna, ch. 2; Marmura, Avicenna on the division of the sciences in the "Isagoge" of his "Shifa" in <i>Journal of the History of Arabic Science</i> 4: 239–251.	
3.	Physics: Body, Change, Nature, Cause	McGinnis, ch. 3, pp. 53-64; <i>Physics</i> of the <i>Healing</i> I.5.1-3; I.10-12 (focusing on 1.10)	Practice short paper topic: What is a nature? (Physics I.5.1-3)
4.	Physics: Teleology	<i>Physics</i> of the <i>Healing</i> I.11.1-2; I.14. Richardson, Avicenna on Final Causation and Goodness	According to Avicenna, the claim that natural bodies lack the capacity to deliberate is compatible with the claim that natural action is directed toward an end. How does he defend this claim at Physics I.14.11?
5.	Psychology: Soul and its Cognitive Powers	McGinnis, ch. 4; <i>Psychology</i> of the <i>Healing</i> I.5 in <i>Classical Arabic Philosophy</i> , trans. McGinnis and Reisman, pp. 179-186.	

6.	Psychology: Estimation	Black, "Estimation in Avicenna: The Logical and Psychological Dimensions"; Perler, "Why Does the Sheep Fear the Wolf?"	
7.	Psychology: Intellect and Reason	McGinnis, ch. 5; Black, "Rational Imagination: Avicenna on the Cogitative Power." <i>Psychology of the Healing</i> I.5 in <i>Classical Arabic Philosophy</i> , trans. McGinnis and Reisman, pp.	
8.	Psychology: The Flying Man	Avicenna's Flying Man from <i>Psychology of the Healing</i> I.1, trans. Adamson and Benevich; McGinnis, ch. 5, pp. ; optional: Kaukua	How does Avicenna establish that soul is distinct from body in <i>Psychology of the Healing</i> I.1?
9.	Psychology: Will (with Hamed Shirmohammadi)	TBD	
10.	Metaphysics: God and Creation		
11.	Metaphysics: Thing, Quiddity, Existent, Necessary and Possible Being	McGinnis, ch. 6, pp. 160-174 <i>Metaphysics of the Healing</i> , trans. Marmura, I.5 §1-11, §22-24; I.6	
12.	Metaphysics: Avicenna's PSR	<i>Metaphysics of the Healing</i> , trans. Marmura, I.6; IV.1	What is a cause? (Metaphysics IV.1)
13.	Metaphysics: Necessity and Human Action	<i>Metaphysics of the Healing</i> , trans. Marmura, IV.2.10-11 Avicenna on the Secret of Destiny	
14.	Metaphysics: Ghazali vs. Avicenna on the PSR and Choice		

