

Philosophy 500: Special Topics in the History of Philosophy

Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's *De Anima*

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Introduction

In this course, we will be reading Ibn-Rushd (Averroes) and Thomas Aquinas on Aristotle's *De Anima*. We will read only their commentaries on Book III of Aristotle's text, the part dealing with those souls that enact life through intellection. More specifically, I would like to look carefully at the question of the materiality of intellection in two directions. First, we will be interested in the question of whether the soul must be understood as entirely disconnected from materiality or whether, although immaterial, it has a necessary relation to and perhaps dependence upon matter. Second, we will be interested in the question of whether the soul has understanding (*nous*) of only that which is immaterial or whether, again, the soul's understanding of the actuality of any given thing necessarily relates to its materiality.

Texts

The two texts we will be using are:

Averroes, *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle*. This text is available in the bookstore. For those of you with Latin, if you are willing to try to read some abbreviated Latin, the Latin text can be found at gallica.bnf.fr (this is an amazing resource that is worth knowing about).

Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. An online version of this text is available at <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/DeAnima.htm#31> and the Latin text can be found at <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/can3.html>.

Course Requirements

Each student will be required to write a paper of 12-15 pages in length. Ideally, this paper will deal with both Averroes and Aquinas, though this is not strictly required. I would also be fine if you wanted to extend, expand, and rethink the paper you wrote for the first part of this course in light of the truth you now see for yourselves. If you have any questions about this paper, please feel free to contact me or stop by during office hours.

Medieval Commentaries on De Anima

Course Schedule

Date	Reading
April 3	Introduction
April 10	Averroes Book II: Contextus 129 (p. 249) through 143 (p. 265); Aquinas Book III, chs. 1 & 2, Lectio 1 & 2
April 17	Averroes Contextus 144 (p. 265) through 154 (p. 278); Aquinas chs. 2 & 3, Lectio 3 & 4
April 24	Averroes Contextus 155 (p. 279) through 162 (p. 291); Aquinas ch. 3, Lectio 5 & 6
Mayday	Averroes Book III: Contextus 1 (p. 292) through 11 (p. 340); Aquinas ch. 4, Lectio 7 & 8
May 8	Averroes Contextus 12 (p. 340) through 20 (p. 363); Aquinas chs. 4 & 5, Lectio 9 & 10
May 15	Averroes Contextus 21 (p. 363) through 36 (p. 401); Aquinas chs. 6 & 7, Lectio 11 & 12
May 22	Averroes Contextus 37 (p. 401) through 48 (p. 413); Aquinas chs. 8 & 9, Lectio 13 & 14
May 29	Averroes Contextus 49 (p. 413) through 58 (p. 430); Aquinas ch. 10, Lectio 15 & 16
June 5	Averroes Contextus 59 (p. 430) through 68 (p. 442); Aquinas chs. 12 & 13, Lectio 17 & 18
	Final Paper Due