

## **Philosophy 505**

### **Islamic and Jewish Philosophy and the Classical Tradition**

**Primary Instructor: Daniel Frank (Professor of Philosophy and  
Director, Jewish Studies Program, Purdue University)**

An intensive study of representative texts and issues in medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy. Possible topics include the commensurability of philosophy and (revealed) law, the creation or eternity of the world, the nature of prophecy, the human good, the nature of God and divine language.

Prereq: PHIL 301 (History of Ancient Philosophy) or consent of instructor.

#### Justification

Often medieval philosophy is presented in its Christian guise alone, giving the impression that the medieval philosophical tradition is exclusively a Latin tradition, and that only Latin thinkers carried on the philosophical legacy of antiquity. In this graduate level course we shall revise this view by studying in detail the substantive philosophical contributions made by those who wrote in Arabic and Hebrew. As much as their Christian colleagues, Muslim and Jewish thinkers will be seen as faithful guardians of the Greek philosophical tradition bequeathed by Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, as well as excellent philosophers in their own right.

After some preliminary study of the major Greek philosophers, familiarity with whom is assumed in this course, we will focus on the 10-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, a roughly three-hundred year period that is a high point in medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy. Amongst authors to be read and discussed are, on the Islamic side, Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ghazali, Ibn Bajja (Avenpace), Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and, on the Jewish side, Saadia, Gabirol, Judah Halevi, and Maimonides. Topics in the philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, philosophical psychology, philosophy of law, and moral and political philosophy are all discussed with considerable subtlety by the thinkers we shall read. This course is offered at the graduate level on account of the undergraduate background in the history of ancient philosophy that is necessary to fruitfully contextualize the authors and ideas that shall be discussed.

Prerequisite: PHIL 301 or consent of the instructor. (PHIL 301 provides the necessary background in ancient philosophy.) Course requirements include class presentations, a midterm examination, and a final paper. (Syllabus attached)

## Syllabus for Philosophy 505

**Requirements:** Class presentations, a mid-term examination, and a final paper determine the grade in the course. The class presentations and mid-term examination will each count for 25% of the course grade, and the final paper will count for 50% of the course grade. **NB: Relevant qualitative and quantitative distinctions will be made for, respectively, undergraduates and graduate students taking this course.** For undergraduates, the final paper will be 10-12 pages in length, while for graduate students, the final paper will be 15-20 pages in length.

### Required texts:

1. P. Adamson and R. Taylor (eds), The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy (Cambridge UP, 2005) ISBN: 0-521-52069-X [=AT]
2. M. Khalidi (ed), Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings (Cambridge UP, 2005) ISBN: 0-521-52963-8 [=K]
3. D. Frank, O. Leaman, and C. Manekin (eds), The Jewish Philosophy Reader (Routledge, 2000) ISBN: 0-415-16860-0 [=JPR]
4. Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed (abridged), Hackett, 1995. ISBN: 0-87220-324-7 [=GP]

### Reading and Discussion Schedule:

- Week 1: Introduction to course  
Greek into Arabic (AT 1-31)  
al-Kindi (AT 32-51)
- Week 2: al-Farabi (K 1-26)  
al-Farabi (AT 52-71)
- Week 3: Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (K 27-58)  
Ibn Sina (AT 92-136)
- Week 4: al-Ghazali (K 59-98)  
al-Ghazali (AT 137-54)
- Week 5: Ibn Tufayl (K 99-154)  
Ibn Bajja and Ibn Tufayl (AT 155-79)
- Week 6: Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (K 155-80)  
Ibn Rushd (AT 180-200)
- Week 7: review of medieval Islamic philosophy  
**Mid-term examination**
- Week 8: Islamic philosophy and Jewish philosophy (AT 349-69)  
Jewish Kalam (JPR 161-71)
- Week 9: Saadia Gaon (JPR 171-81)  
Judah Halevi (JPR 201-14)  
Abraham Ibn Ezra (JPR 214-219)
- Week 10: Maimonides, Mishneh Torah (JPR 220-32)
- Week 11: Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed (GP vii-36)

Guide, introduction (GP 41-49)

Week 12: Guide I (GP 51-87)

Week 13: Guide II (GP 89-147)

Week 14: Guide III (GP 149-202)

Week 15: Draft paper presentations and course review

**Final papers due**