Aristotle’s Philosophy of Science: the *Posterior Analytics*

Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* is the first systematic work on scientific method in the history of philosophy, and is probably the most influential work on scientific method of all time, having been apparently influential on, among other works, Euclid’s *Elements*, the most important work of Greek mathematics and science. And yet the interpretation of the work remains controversial, as does even its overall purpose, unity, relationship to other works of Aristotle’s so-called *Organon*, and relationship to other works in the Aristotle Corpus, especially the works of theoretical science.

The purpose of this seminar is to get a solid overview of Aristotle’s philosophy of science, and to develop a research project focused on a special science in relation to it. Seminarians are encouraged to relate their own area of interest (e.g. logic, philosophy of physics, ethics, social-political philosophy, the philosophy of Kant, etc.) to Aristotle’s views, and try to see how Aristotle’s theory and practice of science relates to contemporary concerns in philosophy and science.

The first meeting of the seminar will consist of an overview of the Aristotle Corpus and the place of the *Posterior Analytics* in it, as well as an introduction to the major problems surrounding the translation and interpretation of the text. The next five meetings will consist of a close reading of the *Posterior Analytics* from beginning to end. The seventh meeting will be a guest lecturer and discussion by an expert translator and interpreter of the text, Professor Richard McKirahan (Professor of Classics and Philosophy at Pomona). In the last three meetings, the seminarians will present their own interpretation of the work in terms of its relation to their own research, and will critique each other’s research.

**Provisional Schedule**

1. April 2. Overview and review of Aristotle’s works, especially the *Organon*. The division of philosophy into arts and sciences. The theory of the syllogism in the *Prior Analytics*.

   - Leszl, W. “Aristotle’s logical works and his conception of logic”, *Topoi* 23 (2004), 71-100.


- Secondary reading recommendations TBD.


- Secondary reading recommendations TBD.


- Secondary reading recommendations TBD.

7. May 14. Guest Lecturer: Professor Richard McKirahan (Professor of Classics and Philosophy Pomona College) “on *nous* in Aristotle, which takes a new approach to the question of the kind of grasp we have of scientific principles”; and “about Aristotle’s three types of scientific principles and how they are related to earlier and later Greek mathematics and how Philoponus treats them (maltreats them, rather)”.

- McKirahan, R. “The Place of the Posterior Analytics in Aristotle’s thought, with particular reference to the Poetics”, in J. Lesher (ed.), *From Inquiry to Demonstrative Knowledge: new essays on Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics / Apeiron* 43 (2010), 75-104.


- Primary and secondary reading recommendations TBD.


- Primary and secondary reading recommendations TBD.


- Primary and secondary reading recommendations TBD.
Bibliography

Greek Editions:

*Aristotelis Opera (Aristotelis Opera ex recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri edidit Academia Regia Borussica accedunt fragmenta scholia index aristotelicus).* Edited by I. Bekker. 2 vols. Berlin, 1891. Volume I contains Analytica Posteriora, pp. <This is the standard modern edition which sets the pagination for all subsequent editions and translations.>


English Translations and Commentaries:


Essay Collections:


Monographs:

