Course description: This course is an introduction to the natural philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Our core texts will be Plato’s *Timaeus* and Aristotle’s *Physics* Books I-IV. We will inquire into the different answers each philosopher provides to the following questions: What sorts of things are subject to change? What does it mean to say that one thing changes into another? Is there more than one kind of change? Does change always involve motion? If it does, what kinds of motion does change involve? What kind of items do we have to have in our philosophical economy in order to explain change? Is it necessary that change take place in space? Does everything that exists have to be at some spatial location? Does everything that changes have to change in some place? What does it mean for something to occupy some place? Can there be places in which nothing exists? In the course of learning how Plato and Aristotle answer these questions, we will also learn about their different views of teleological explanation and the material constitution of individual objects.

Course requirements: There will be seven take-home problems (approximately one every other week). Each of these home-works will be worth 3-5 points for a total of 25 points. Two ten-page papers will be assigned (one on Plato, one on Aristotle). A selection of paper topics will be distributed in the second week of the course. Each paper is worth 25 points. The first paper is due in class on Monday, March 22nd. The second paper is due in class on Monday, May 3rd (the last day of class). There is a final exam, also worth 25 points. The final will be take-home, open book, open notes. It will be distributed to you on the last day of class, and is due in the office of the undergraduate secretary of the philosophy department at 4 p.m. Monday, May 10th.

Grading: Your grade for the course will be based on the number of total points you earn, assessed according to the following scale: A = 100-91, B+ = 90-81, B = 80-71, C+ = 70-61, C = 60-51, D = 50-41, F = 40-31. However, if you do not complete three of the home-works, you will automatically be given an ‘F’. (I will not read your papers, and you will not be permitted to take the final). You will also receive an ‘F’ if you do not complete either paper or the final.
Other course policies:

(1) **Attendance is required**, and roll will be taken. If you miss four sessions, your grade will be lowered by 10 points. If you miss six sessions, you will be automatically failed.

(2) **I expect you to do your best work** on your papers, on your home-works, and in your daily presence in class. In particular, I expect you to show up to class on time, prepared to listen to lecture, to take notes, and to participate in class discussion. You may earn up to 10 extra credit points by participating in class. You may either bring up questions of your own, either before or during lecture, answer questions raised by me or your fellow students, or (on occasion) volunteer to do a brief presentation.

(3) The home-works will usually be assigned on Mondays. They will be due the following Monday. **If you fail to turn in the work on the required day, you may not make up the work.** That means that under no circumstances will you be allowed to turn in late homework. There are no exceptions.

(4) The papers and exam are due on the dates specified above. If the papers are turned in late they will be marked down 10 points for every 24-hour period after they are due. (That means that a paper that is two hours late will be marked down 10 points, a paper that is 25 hours late will be marked down 20 points). I will not accept late final exams. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in cases of unforeseeable emergency (e.g. extreme or prolonged illness, or family crisis), and only with your Dean’s written confirmation of the existence of the excuse. Examples of unacceptable excuses therefore include: my printer broke. I overslept. My car wouldn’t start. I signed up for too many courses. I had to work. I had to go to a wedding, etc.

(5) **All completed work must be brought to class.** You may not e-mail your course work to me without my express prior approval. I will not read it and I will delete your attachment. Do not under any circumstances put your work in my departmental mailbox.

(6) **All written work, including home-works, must be typed.** I will not accept handwritten work. (That means you cannot attempt to turn in a handwritten version and then ask for more time to submit a typed version of your work when I refuse to accept your handwritten version).

(7) Papers that are full of typos and grammatical errors will be marked down an entire grade.

(8) **You may not use as source materials for your papers any secondary literature that is not on the syllabus below.** In particular this means you may not ‘research’ your papers by cutting and pasting (i.e., plagiarizing) from a website. **Any suspected violations of academic integrity will be turned over to the Dean of Judicial Affairs.**
A selection of paper topics will be provided to you for both the Plato and the Aristotle papers. Each topic question will come with a (short) list of required readings from the syllabus below. Other items from the syllabus will be suggested (i.e., not required) as background reading in connection with the paper topics.

Course syllabus:

Our core texts will be Plato’s *Timaeus* and Aristotle’s *Physics*, Books I-IV. We will also read the middle books (i.e. V-VII) of Plato’s *Republic*. The following translations of the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* are on sale at the Rutgers University Bookstore:


Translations of *Physics* I-II and *Physics* III-IV are on our course E-reserve. They are:


Please do not purchase alternative translations.

All other texts we will use are listed on the syllabus below. Some items on the syllabus will be assigned readings for the entire class. Other items will be either required or suggested readings for particular paper topics. Still other items are included merely as helpful background for particular topics covered in the course. Books on the syllabus are on regular (i.e., shelf) reserve. Journal articles are either available online, or are on our course E-reserve, as indicated below.
On the Presocratic philosophers:


On Plato’s Republic:


On Plato’s Timaeus:


On Plato’s Sophist:


On Aristotle’s Categories:

On Aristotle’s *Physics*:


On Aristotle’s **De Generatione et Corruptione:**
