Islamic Philosophy

PHIL 450W/550  Thérèse Bonin, Ph.D.
Spring 2014  320 College Hall
MW 3–4:15  bonin@duq.edu

An introduction to major philosophers from the classical period of Islamic thought through their own writings. We will give special attention, as did they, to the relation between philosophy and prophecy and that between philosophy and theology, to divine and natural causality, and to the nature and destiny of the soul.

This course fulfills the Faith & Reason Theme Area requirement.

Prerequisite

Basic Philosophical Questions. Because Islamic philosophers built on the work of ancient philosophers, you also need some knowledge of Greek philosophy, especially of Plato and Aristotle, whether from having taken PHIL 300 or from some other source. If you have not taken PHIL 300, consult with me before registering.

Readings

- al-Kindī, On First Philosophy (preface, on foreign learning)
- pseudo-Aristotle, Exposition of Pure Goodness (also known as the Book of Causes; a monotheistic reworking of a polytheistic text)
- al-Kindī, The One True and Complete Agent and the Incomplete Metaphorical "Agent" (on divine and natural causes)
- al-Fārābī, Commentary on the Treatise of Zeno, the Great Man of Greece and the introduction to Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages: Plato the Divine and Aristotle (on everything from prophethood to the nature of the afterlife)
- Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Book of Definitions; The Cure: The Soul (selections) and The Cure: Physics (selections on atomism)
- al-Gazālī, Incoherence of the Philosophers (prefaces and §17, attacking natural philosophy)
- Ibn Rušd (Averroës), Incoherence of the Incoherence (§17, defending natural philosophy); Decisive Treatise (status of philosophy in Islamic law)
- Ibn Bajja (Avempace), Conjunction of the Intellect with Man (on the fulfillment of human life)