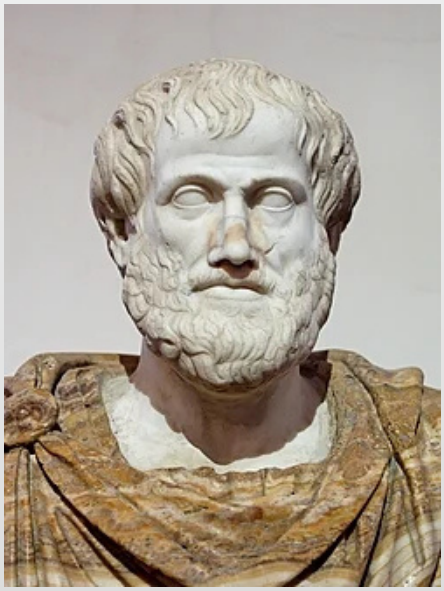
# Gabriel Shapiro

*University of Michigan*

***will present a talk titled***

## *Aristotle's Argument for Essentialism*



**Friday**

**Nov 14th**

**3:30pm**

**Helen C. White**

**4207**

**(Bunge Room)**

Aristotle is about as much of an essentialist as one can be. He not only endorses essentialism—the view that things have essential features—but he also makes essentialism a central and foundational tenet of his philosophical system, and he subjects essentialism itself to careful study by developing sophisticated theories of core essentialist notions.

It is, therefore, rather surprising that Aristotle offers very little direct evidence in favor of essentialism. There is just one explicit argument, found in Metaphysics Γ.4 1007a33–b17, for essentialism in Aristotle's corpus. But even this argument appears not to provide meaningful support for essentialism: modern commentators—including Kirwan, Furth, and Priest—have charged that it is invalid and that it relies upon an unmotivated assumption.

I reconstruct Aristotle's argument for essentialism and show that the argument is valid, that its premises are well motivated, and that at its heart is a significant challenge for anti-essentialism.

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