

Philosophy 310A: Philosophy of Plato

Winter Term 1 2023/24
Woodward IRC 5
Office Hours: M/W 11-12

Course Professor: Sylvia Berryman MWF 12-1
Office: Buchanan E-269
sylvia.berryman@ubc.ca

Our theme for this exploration of Plato's thought is democracy in crisis. Plato lived at a time when the moral foundations of his community were under threat from the teachings of the Sophists: he offers a striking portrait of his teacher Socrates struggling to articulate a vision of ethics that will speak to the malaise of the times. In an age when our political system is under threat from rhetoric, charismatic demagogues and the reign of 'post truth,' we will consider whether Plato's thought has anything to offer us today.

Text: John Cooper (ed.): *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett). Please buy this particular volume: read the assigned material before the lecture and bring the text to class. Philosophical writing can be difficult, so be prepared to read slowly, take notes, re-read after lecture. This is a reading-intensive course: the experience of reading the original text is essential to this process.

Week One 1	W/F	Sept 6/8	Socrates and his Quest
Introduction, <i>Apology</i>			
Week Two	MWF	Sept 11/13/15	Personal Responsibility in a Crisis
<i>Crito</i> , Friday topical reading			
First short paper due Tuesday Sept 12th			
Week Three	MWF	Sept 18/20/22	Who is the real hero?
<i>Laches</i>			
Week Four	MWF	Sept 25/27/29	Who is the real hero?
<i>Lesser Hippias</i> , Friday topical reading			
Second short paper due Tuesday Sept 26th			
Week Five	MWF	Oct 2/4/6	Who is the real teacher?
<i>Protagoras</i> , Friday topical reading			
Week Six	MWF	Oct 11/12/13	Who is the real teacher?
<i>Protagoras</i> , Friday topical reading			
Third short paper due Tuesday October 10th			
Week Seven	MWF	Oct 16/18/20	Is knowledge possible?
<i>Meno</i>			
Midterm Friday Oct 20th			
Week Eight	MWF	Oct 23/25/27	The soul's journey
<i>Symposium</i> 172-8, 201D-223D			

Week Nine	MWF	Oct 30/Nov 1/3	Preparing for death
<i>Phaedo</i>			
Fourth short paper due Tuesday Oct 31st			
Week Ten	MWF	Nov 6/8/10	Preparing for death
<i>Phaedo</i> , Friday topical reading			
Week Eleven	F	Nov 17	Is Justice Real?
<i>Republic</i> Book 1			
Week Twelve	MWF	Nov 20/22/24	A Better City?
<i>Republic</i> Books 2-4, Friday topical reading			
Optional fifth short paper due Tuesday Nov 21st			
Week Thirteen	MWF	Nov 27/29/Dec 1	Philosopher-Kings
<i>Republic</i> 5-7			
Week Fourteen	MW	Dec 4/6	Imitation and Truth
<i>Republic</i> 10			
Grade Distribution:	Four short papers: 40%		Presentations 10%
	Midterm: 25%		Final: 25%

This is a reading-intensive, lecture-based course: regular attendance is required. Reading the assigned material ahead of class and bringing the text to class with you for reference are essential for following the material. Philosophical reading is dense and sometimes difficult: expect to read slowly or re-read material!

Students will be asked to write four short position papers (600-800 words), engaging philosophically with a theme from the readings, and to show knowledge of course material on two literature exams. Short presentations in small groups will involve students in the teaching of the *Republic*

Policies:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for understanding UBC's policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Students seeking accommodation because of a disability or religious observances are encouraged to contact the instructor as soon as possible. Late papers will be accepted in the case of illness or family emergencies, at the instructor's discretion; otherwise a late penalty of 2% per day applies.