

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Course Title, Time and Location	Course Code Number	Credit Value
The Philosophy of Plato Mon, Wed, Fri 2-3 pm	PHIL 310 001 W1 2024	3 credits

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Willow Verkerk	willow.verkerk@ubc.ca	BUCH E 158	Mon, Wed 3-4PM

#### OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Xiaoyan Huang

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on two key texts of Plato: *Republic* and *Symposium*. While some have argued that the *Republic* is most of all a text on ethics, the title is a translation of the Greek *Politeia*, which refers to the affairs of the city state. The main theme is justice, which has led other scholars to claim it is a political text, first and foremost. What is fascinating about the longest and, for many, most well-known dialogue of Plato is that it includes his theory of knowledge (epistemology) as well as a metaphysics, in his theory of the forms and account of the soul. Further, his analysis of mimesis provides a surprising critique of art and poetry while also speaking to the philosophy of being. This course will examine these topics through a close reading of the *Republic* and then turn to Plato's dialogue on love, the *Symposium*, to consider the meaning of *eros*, and its connection with beauty, knowledge, creation, the good, and the life of the philosopher.

This is an in-person lecture style course with class discussion.

#### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Students are expected to read the materials before class and come prepared to take part in class discussion. The schedule includes the assigned readings which can be found in the assigned books (available through the bookstore):

Plato, *The Republic*, G.R.F Ferrari, ed. and Tom Griffith, trans. Cambridge: CUP, 2000.  
Plato, *The Symposium*, Christopher Gill, trans. London: Penguin, 1999.

Any additional readings can be found in LOCR on under Modules.

#### ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Take Home Exam 1 (750 words) 20% posted October 4; *Due October 7.*

Take Home Exam 2 (750 words) 20% due posted November 1; *Due November 4.*

Final Essay (3000 words) 50% posted November 6; *Due December 6.*

Participation 10%: self-assessment based on attendance and participation in class and/or during office hours. Posted December 2; *Due December 8.*

All assignments are submitted on Canvas.

SCHEDULE: MON, WED, FRI 2-3 PM

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**Wednesday September 4: Reading Plato on Justice and Love: An Introduction**

**Friday September 6: Introducing *The Republic***

**September 9-13: The Republic Book 1- What is Justice?**

Read: Book 1

**September 16-20: The Republic: Books 2: Is the just life a happy life? Why be just? Gyges ring and the temptations of self-interest.**

Read: Book 2

**September 23-27: Book 3: How should the guardians be educated? Truth, morality, and the dangers of mimesis.**

Read: Book 3

**September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (no class)**

**October 2-4: Book 3-4: The ideal city-state, the division of the soul, and the virtues**

Read: Book 3-4

*Take Home Exam 1 posted October 4*

*\*Take Home Exam 1 due October 7\**

**October 7-11: Book 5: The just state: women, the family, and the philosopher ruler**

No in-person classes (See Zoom and recorded lectures)

Read: Book 5

**Holiday October 14- Thanksgiving Day**

**October 16-18: Books 5-6: The Forms and the philosopher ruler**

Read: Books 5-6

**October 21-25: Books 6-7: The sun, the allegory of the cave, and the training of guardians**

Read: Books 6-7

**October 28- November 1: Books 8-9: Injustice in the city-state and the soul: timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny**

Read: Books 8-9

*Take Home Exam 2 posted on Friday November 1*

*\* Take Home Exam 2 due November 4\**

**November 4-8: Books 9-10: Socrates' defence of justice, critique of art and poetry, and the myth of Er**

Read: Books 9-10

*Final Essay Topics posted November 6*

*Midterm Break November 11-13*

**November 15: Discussion Day****November 18-22: *The Symposium*: Introduction + speeches of Phaedrus and Pausanias**

Read sections 172a-185e

**November 25-29: On the meaning of love: speeches of Eryximachus, Aristophanes, and Agathon**

Read sections 185e-197e

**December 2-6: Diotima and Socrates: Love, beauty, philosophy, and immortality**

Read sections 198a-223d

*Self-assessment posted December 2*

*\*December 6 Final Essay due\**

*\*December 8 Self-assessment due\**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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During the course, students will learn concepts central to Plato's philosophy. They will practice talking and thinking critically about the arguments and ideas. The take home exams provide opportunities to demonstrate understanding of the concepts studied to date. The final paper is an exercise in critical thinking to explore and deepen understanding of one or more of the problems/arguments/concepts studied during the course. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with key themes in Plato's philosophy.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SUPPORT**

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UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

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<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

The use of *Chat GPT* and similar online resources is considered “cheating” in the UBC policy if students make unauthorized use of this tool in the creation of assignments or on exams (“use...of unauthorized means to complete an examination or coursework...including, but not limited to, ...accessing websites or other online resources not specifically permitted by the instructor or examiner”).

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