

C C304C/CTI 310/PHL301K: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy Spring 2018

Instructor: Sosseh Assaturian
Email: sossehassaturian@utexas.edu

“The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition,” Alfred North Whitehead once wrote, “is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.” The *Republic* is not only one of Plato’s richest dialogues, but one of his most influential. In it, the reader encounters some of the most fundamental philosophical questions:

- What is goodness?
- What can we really know?
- How is knowledge different from belief?
- What does a just society look like and who should be in charge?
- Is fate real? If it is, how can we be responsible for anything?
- How should we live?

In this course, we will focus on Plato’s answers to these and other questions in the *Republic*. Along the way, we’ll stop to look at different and dissenting responses to these questions from other figures in ancient and Hellenistic philosophy, such as Heraclitus, Aristotle, the Sceptics, the Stoics, and some of the so-called Sophists.

To goal of this course is to introduce students to philosophy and the study of arguments by practicing extracting, interpreting, and evaluating philosophical arguments that are situated in difficult sources. While these arguments may, at first, seem mysterious, they represent the origins of the western philosophical tradition and help us understand the trajectory of this tradition into today. By forcing us to confront and understand difficult texts from a context that is very different from our own, study of ancient philosophy deepens both the care with which we read and the depth with which we listen and empathize.

Course Materials

Plato’s *Republic* (trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C Reeve). 1975. Hackett Publishing. 2nd edition.

Please use only this translation and edition.

All other readings will be made available on Canvas.

Evaluation Breakdown

In-Class Weekly Quizzes: 10%
Short Argument Summaries (5% each x5): 25%
Short Papers (15% each x2): 30%
Final Paper: 35%

A = 100-93, A- = 92.9-90, B+ = 89.9-87, B = 86.9-83, B- = 82.9-80, C+ = 79.9-77, C = 76.9-73, C- = 72.9-70,
D+ = 69.9-67, D = 66.9-63, D- = 62.9-60, F = 59.9-0

Description of Assignments

In-Class Weekly Quizzes (12 quizzes = 10%): Each week, students will be given a short quiz on the day's readings, to be completed in the first 5-7 minutes of class (make sure you are on time!) There will only be one quiz each week (total 14 quizzes), and the day of the quiz (MWF) will be chosen at random. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped from each student's grade. No make-up quizzes will be permitted for missed quizzes.

Short Argument Summaries (5% each x5 = 25%): Students will complete six short argument summaries (1-2 pages double spaced). Students must summarize the argument from the text that will be posted one week in advance of the due date. The point of this assignment is to practice picking out the premises (both explicit and implicit) and conclusion of an argument, as well as explaining the logical flow. Summarizing an argument charitably is an important philosophical skill, and doing well on these assignments will ultimately help you get practice for being a more efficient reader and for writing papers. The short argument summary with the lowest score will be dropped from each student's grade.

Summary 1 Due **Friday, January 26**
Summary 2 Due **Friday, February 9**
Summary 3 Due **Friday, February 16**
Summary 4 Due **Friday, March 9**
Summary 5 Due **Friday, March 23**
Summary 6 Due **Friday, April 13**

Short Papers (15% each x2 = 30%): Students will choose one prompt from a list of 4 questions and write a short paper (5-6 pages) responding to it. We will discuss how to write a philosophy paper in more detail, but briefly, about half of the short paper should be a summary of the relevant argument, and the other half should be your critical evaluation of the argument.

Short Paper 1 Due **Friday, February 23**
Short Paper 2 Due **Friday, April 6**

Final Paper (35%): Students will write a 7-8 page paper either (a) choosing one of their short papers to revise and expand OR (b) choosing any of the other prompts from the short papers OR (c) choosing from a list of 4 new prompts. Roughly 1/3 of the paper should summarize the relevant argument, 1/3 should critically evaluate it, and the final 1/3 should develop objections and replies to the main response.

Final Paper Due **Friday, May 4**

There is no final exam for this class.

The short assignments and papers are to be submitted on Canvas by 11:59pm on the day they are due. **Please do not write your name on anything you submit—just your UT eid.**

Late Assignments

Each student gets four "late days" to use however they like throughout the course. These allow you to turn in assignments late, without penalty, and without official documentation (e.g. doctor's note) for up to a total of four days. For example, you could turn in one assignment four days late, without penalty, or you could turn in four assignments, each one day late, without penalty. One late day will excuse lateness up to 24 hours from when the assignment is due. Once the late days run out, 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each additional day the assignment is late (unless the student can provide proper documentation in the event of a serious illness or unforeseen emergency). It is my recommendation that you save your late days. You don't need to tell me when you use a late day; I'll keep track of your late days, and assume, unless you contact me, that if you turn in an assignment late, you are using a late day.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken in lecture. Each student gets four excused absences. Students who show a pattern of missing class beyond this (without a documented reason) will be demoted 1/3 of the letter grade earned on the assignments. Please make sure you are in class on time. Lateness will count as an absence.

Class Expectations

Plagiarism: Any assignment that exhibits plagiarism, a failure to cite sources, or any form of academic dishonesty whatsoever will be given an automatic failing grade and the student will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty are encouraged to meet with me. See also: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/index.html>

Readings: Students are expected to come to class prepared and having completed the readings for each session.

In-class Etiquette: Laptops are not permitted in lectures. If you absolutely need to use one, please come see me to make arrangements. Phones are not to be out during lecture under any circumstances. Please make sure they are put away and on silent.

Disagreement is a part of philosophy, but so is being respectful towards your peers. I will do my best to foster a friendly and inclusive learning environment, and I encourage students to approach one another with patience, kindness, and a collaborative spirit, both in and outside of the classroom.

Special Accommodations

Accommodations need to be formally approved by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with accommodations will need to provide a letter of verification from the SSD. I also encourage students to meet with me the first week of class to discuss what I can do to ensure that their learning needs are met throughout the semester. To contact SSD, see <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/accommodations-and-services>

Contact

Students must have an updated email address in UTDirect. Class announcements will be made on the Canvas page (go to <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> and log in).

I am happy to set up appointments and answer questions about basic course mechanics via email but please avoid emailing me substantive questions about the material. For these, come to office hours, or better yet, bring them to class with you. I will try to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them. I will not respond to questions about assignments that are emailed fewer than 24 hours before they are due. This is to encourage you to start working on your assignments well in advance.

Helpful Resources

Philosophy Undergraduate Advising: <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/philosophy/undergraduate/advising.php>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu>

Counseling & Mental Health: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu>

Division of Student Affairs: <http://www.utexas.edu/students>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Reading Schedule

* = on Canvas

Week	Date	Reading	Assignment
1. Introduction & Background	W 1/17 F 1/19	Introduction & Background Plato, <i>Apology</i> *	
2. Piety & the Socratic Elenchus	M 1/22 W 1/24 F 1/26	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> * Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> * Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i> *	Short Argument Summary 1 Due
3. What is Justice?	M 1/29 W 1/31 F 2/2	Plato, <i>Republic</i> I Plato, <i>Republic</i> I Plato, <i>Republic</i> I	
4. Nature and Convention	M 2/5 W 2/7 F 2/9	Plato, <i>Republic</i> II Plato, <i>Republic</i> II Plato, <i>Republic</i> II	Short Argument Summary 2 Due
5. The Sophists on Nature and Convention	M 2/12 W 2/14 F 2/16	Antiphon, <i>On Justice</i> * Anonymous, <i>Dissoi Logoi</i> * Anonymous <i>Dissoi Logoi</i> *	Short Argument Summary 3 Due
6. Soul Parts and Inner Conflict	M 2/19 W 2/21 F 2/23	Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV Plato, <i>Republic</i> IV	Short Paper 1 Due
7. Opinion vs. Knowledge	M 2/26 W 2/28 F 3/2	Plato, <i>Republic</i> V Plato, <i>Republic</i> V Plato, <i>Republic</i> V	
8. Goodness and Truth	M 3/5 W 3/7 F 3/9	Plato, <i>Republic</i> VI Plato, <i>Republic</i> VI Plato, <i>Republic</i> VI	Short Argument Summary 4 Due
9. Spring Break	M 3/12 W 3/14 F 3/16		
10. The Sun, the Divided Line, and the Allegory of the Cave	M 3/19 W 3/21 F 3/23	Plato, <i>Republic</i> VII Plato, <i>Republic</i> VII Plato, <i>Republic</i> VII	
11. Heraclitus & Aristotle on Knowledge & What There Is	M 3/26 W 3/28 F 3/30	Heraclitus (Fragments) * Aristotle, <i>Posterior Analytics</i> I.1-3, II.19, <i>Metaphysics</i> I.1-3 * Aristotle, <i>Categories</i> 1-5 *	Short Argument Summary 5 Due

12. Skepticism	M 4/2 W 4/4 F 4/6	(catch up?) Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines</i> I. 1-30, 100-117, III.1-12 * Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines</i> I. 1-30, 100-117, III.1-12 *	Short Paper 2 Due
13. Plato on the Unjust Society	M 4/9 W 4/11 F 4/13	Plato, <i>Republic</i> VIII Plato, <i>Republic</i> VIII Plato, <i>Republic</i> VIII	Short Argument Summary 6 Due
14. Thrasymachus Revisited	M 4/16 W 4/18 F 4/20	Plato, <i>Republic</i> IX Plato, <i>Republic</i> IX Plato, <i>Republic</i> IX	
15. Aristotle on Virtue	M 4/23 W 4/25 F 4/27	Aristotle, <i>NE</i> I.1-2, 7, 8, 13 * Aristotle, <i>NE</i> II. 1, 6-7 * Aristotle, <i>NE</i> X. 6-9 *	
16. Fate & Responsibility in Plato and the Stoics	M 4/30 W 5/2 F 5/4	Plato, <i>Republic</i> X Stoics (LS52 Causation & Fate)* Stoics (LS52 Causation & Fate)*	Final Papers Due