

Classical Ethical Theory: Plato
Spring 2007, Mondays and Wednesdays 4:15-5:30

Professor: Suzanne Obdrzalek
Office: 219 Roberts North
Email: suzanne.obdrzalek@claremontmckenna.edu
Tel.: 621-8842

Required Texts:

- Cooper, ed.—Plato: Complete Works

Course Description: Plato is considered the first philosopher in the Western tradition to propose significant theories in ethics, moral psychology and political philosophy. This course will focus on a close reading of Platonic dialogues such as the *Protagoras*, the *Republic* and the *Statesman*. We will examine Plato's views on virtue and vice, psychological conflict, our moral obligations to others, and the political role of the philosopher. We will assess Plato's views for their philosophical merit, as well as discuss their influence on subsequent philosophers.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Week One	M	21/1	MLK day
	W	23/1	Introduction (no assigned reading)
Week Two	M	28/1	<i>Euthyphro</i>
	W	30/1	Vlastos, "Socratic Piety"
Week Three	M	4/2	<i>Gorgias</i>
	W	6/2	Vlastos, "Does Socrates Cheat?"
Week Four	M	11/2	<i>Protagoras</i>
	W	13/2	Penner, "The Unity of Virtue," Santas, "Plato's <i>Protagoras</i> and Explanations of Weakness"
Week Five	M	18/2	<i>Meno</i>
	<i>first paper due in class on Wednesday</i>		
Week Six	W	20/2	Irwin, "Recollection and Plato's Moral Theory"
	M	25/2	<i>Symposium</i>
Week Seven	W	27/2	Vlastos, "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades: a Reading of the <i>Symposium</i> "
	M	3/3	<i>Phaedrus</i>
Week Eight	W	5/3	Nussbaum, "'This Story Isn't True': Madness, Reason and Recantation in the <i>Phaedrus</i> ," Ferrari, "Platonic Love"
	M	10/3	<i>Republic</i> , Books I&II
	W	12/3	White, "The Classification of Goods in Plato's <i>Republic</i> ," Kirwin "Glaucou's Challenge"

Week Nine	M	17/3	spring break
	W	19/3	spring break
Week Ten	M	24/3	<i>Republic</i> , Books II-IV
	<i>second paper due in class on Wednesday</i>		
Week Eleven	W	26/3	Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation"
	M	31/3	<i>Republic</i> , Books II-IV
	W	2/4	Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's <i>Republic</i> ," Kraut, "The Defense of Justice in Plato's <i>Republic</i> "
Week Twelve	M	7/4	<i>Republic</i> , Books V-VII
	W	9/4	Santas, <i>Goodness and Justice: Plato, Aristotle and the Moderns</i> , chs. 3-5
Week Thirteen	M	14/4	<i>Republic</i> , Books VIII-X
	W	16/4	Williams, "The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's <i>Republic</i> ," Lear, "Inside and Outside the <i>Republic</i> "
Week Fourteen	M	21/4	<i>Statesman</i>
	W	23/4	Dorter, "Justice and Method in the <i>Statesman</i> "
Week Fifteen	M	28/4	<i>Laws</i> , selections
	W	30/4	Bobonich, <i>Plato's Utopia Recast</i> , ch. 2
Week Sixteen	M	5/5	discussion of application of Plato's ethics to contemporary philosophy
	<i>final paper due in class</i>		
	W	7/5	

The requirements for this class are two short papers (4-6 pages) and one long paper (8-12 pages). In addition, you are required to turn in a paragraph-long response to each week's reading in class on Mondays. I also expect that you will attend every session on time. (If for some reason you need to miss a class, please discuss this with me beforehand; I will provide a make-up assignment.) Finally, the most important requirement of this class is that you participate in in-class discussions; your participation should be thoughtful and should reflect your having carefully completed the week's readings.

Your grade will be determined by the following five components: participation, response papers, first paper, second paper, final paper. The final paper will count for 40% of your final grade, and the other 4 components for 15% each. However, should you fail to satisfy any of these requirements to a minimal degree (for example, you don't turn in a paper, or you miss many class meetings), I may be forced to assign you a substantially lower grade than the aforementioned grading guidelines would ordinarily dictate; in extraordinary cases, I may be compelled to assign a failing grade. Furthermore, should you show substantial progress throughout the semester, I may feel justified in giving you a much higher grade than the aforementioned grading scheme dictates. You should feel free to consult with me at any point concerning your current grade in the course and how to improve it.