

Philosophy 9121x-y: Plato
Topic for 2006-07: The *Republic*

A. OVERVIEW

The class will run over two semesters, and will be devoted to reading all of Plato's *Republic*. In the Fall Semester, 2006, we shall concentrate on topics in moral psychology and ethics. In the Spring Semester, 2007, we shall concentrate on topics in metaphysics and epistemology. It is obvious that it will not be possible (nor do we intend) to keep things entirely separate; indeed, in the case of certain, key passages, it will be important to discuss them in both contexts.

In accord with this general division of topics, we shall, in the Fall, focus on Books I-V (up to 474d) and VIII-IX, and in the Spring, on Books V (from 474d)-VII, and X. While PHIL 9121x and PHIL 9121y are conceived of as, and intended to be, a sequence, we have designed the course(s) so that it is possible to take only the one or the other part of the year-long course, i.e., PHIL 9121x is *not* a prerequisite for taking PHIL 9121y, *nor* does taking PHIL 9121x *require* that you also take PHIL 9121y.

Topics to be covered in the Fall include: The theory of moral motivation. The tripartite soul. Each part of the soul as desiring its good. The unity of virtue. Wisdom as related to the other virtues. Justice as related to the other virtues. Education and virtue. Knowledge and virtue. Pleasure and pain.

In both semesters, we shall spend some time pursuing the questions to be addressed in connection with the *Republic* in some other dialogues as well, most importantly, in the *Euthyphro*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Theaetetus*, and *Philebus*. Thus we shall be using John Cooper's edition *Plato: Collected Dialogues* (Hackett, 1996)—this also contains the translation of the *Republic* we prefer (that by G. M. A. Grube, as revised by C. D. C. Reeve)—this will make it possible to go back and forth easily between different dialogues in class, and to refer to various additional passages as we go along. We also have ordered several copies of Paul Shorey's Loeb Edition (Harvard University Press, 1930-35) (with Greek and English on facing pages) for those who wish to do some of the reading in Greek.

While we anticipate paying some attention to historical and philological issues, our focus will on philosophical questions. To that end, we are assigning and recommending a number of works which are neither on the *Republic*, nor on Plato more generally, but on relevant philosophical topics (e.g., the nature of moral motivation) as they have come up in recent discussions.

NOTE: If you have never read the *Republic*, you should read all of it very early on in the semester. Similarly, if you have never read the *Euthyphro*, *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, or *Meno*, you should read each of these dialogues as soon as possible.

B. REQUIREMENTS

For E-credit. (i) Regular attendance and participation in class. (ii) Keeping up with the primary *and* the secondary readings. (iii) Two papers. A shorter one (1500-1750 words) on an assigned topic (a list of topics will be handed out in class), and a longer one (5500 words) on a topic of your choosing, to be selected in consultation with the instructors. The papers are due on October 11th and December 15th. **N.B.: It is the policy of the Columbia Philosophy Department NOT to give INCOMPLETES! Please be aware that this also applies to students from other departments or institutions, even if this is NOT the policy of the relevant home department or institution.**

For R-credit. (i) Regular attendance and participation in class. (ii) Keeping up with the primary *and* the secondary readings. (Note: Just signing up for R-credit is not sufficient for receiving R-credit!)

C. PREREQUISITES

This course is open to regularly enrolled graduate students (= degree candidates) in the Departments of Philosophy and Classics. **N.B.: All others must receive the instructors' permission to attend!**

We are *not* presupposing any prior familiarity with Plato's philosophy in general, or with the *Republic* in particular. However, we are expecting students to read all of the dialogue early on in the semester.

All assigned readings will be in English. And while we are presupposing *no* knowledge of ancient Greek, such knowledge will obviously be helpful.

D. BOOKS

The following books are ordered through Labyrinth Books (on 112th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam):

John Cooper (ed.). *Plato: Complete Dialogues*. Hackett: Indianapolis, 1996.

Paul Shorey (trans.). *Plato: The Republic*, 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1930-35.