PLATO
PHIL 301 (CRN 12679, 1.5 Units)
Fall 2025,
University of Victoria
Department of Philosophy
Course website: https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/424845

Instructor & Contact Information
Dr. Clifford Roberts (cliffordroberts@uvic.ca)
Office hours: Tue-Wed 1:30-2:30pm (or by appt.)
Office: CLE B318

Class Times & Location
Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday 12:30-1:20pm – Location: MAC D016

Course Description & Intended Learning Outcomes
This course surveys some of the work of the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato (428/7-348/7 BCE). A student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle, Plato is one of the most influential and important figures in the history of Western thought. The mathematician and philosopher A. N. Whitehead remarked that: "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." It is no surprise, therefore, that today, more than 2300 years later, Plato's ideas and methods continue to excite interest and reflection. Plato thought rigorously and systematically about a dizzying variety of topics. In this course we will consider some of his ideas, arguments and theories in political philosophy, moral theory, metaphysics, epistemology, and psychology. We will discuss such questions as: what is the best form of socio-political organization? What is justice? How do we come to know anything? What is knowledge? What is the nature of the soul or mind? In what sense, if any, do we survive after death? Whether or not we agree with Plato's often surprising answers to these questions, there can be little doubt that his method of rigorous argument and careful reasoning in pursuit of those answers calls for careful study and contemplation as much today as during Plato's lifetime.

Course Texts
Required: *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by J. M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers)

Course Evaluation
Students' grades will be based upon:

(1) Take-Home Tests
Value: 1st = 30%, 2nd = 33% (= 63%)
Assignment: Students will have 24-hours to answer questions online covering course material.
Due dates: *see course schedule.*

(2) Final Essay
Value: 34%
Assignment: Students will complete a final essay of 2500-3500 words. Essay topics will be provided two weeks before the due date.
Due date: *see course schedule.*

(3) Participation Grade
Value: 3%
Assignment: Students will be awarded a grade on the basis of their participation in the class; this includes, but is not limited to, attending lectures.

Course Grading

Grades	GPV	Percentage	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90-100 85-89 80-84	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
B+ B B-	6 5 4	77-79 73-76 70-72	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material.
C+ C	3 2	65-69 60-64	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
D	1	50-59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
F	0	0-49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see the September 2025 issue of the academic calendar (online here: Grading). All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to percentage scores. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that the student submits, whether individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences and they will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism includes the use of Chat GPT and similar technologies.

The responsibility of the institution
Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student
It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the [University's policy on academic integrity,](#) as well as the or the [Tri-Faculty Standards for Professional Behavior for Students](#), which draws together a number of existing UVic policies in one place for ease of reference.

Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If the student is unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing sources, the instructor should be consulted. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the University's policy on academic integrity. For the policy, see the September 2025 edition of the academic calendar (online here: [University of Victory Statement on Academic Integrity](#)).

Intellectual property of materials on the LMS website
Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the LMS website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without the instructor's permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity (link above). Any evidence that you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

Policy on Late or Missed Assignments
For assignments that are missed for no legitimate reasons, there will be arrangements made for a make-up assignment, however, a penalty of **10%** will be levied on this assignment. For assignments missed for legitimate reasons, the penalty will be waived. For information about what constitute legitimate reasons for academic concession, please see [here](#). The previous policies do not apply to students with documented disabilities; all attempt will be made to accommodate such students including, but not restricted to, providing make-up assignments and tests.

Accessibility
The University of Victoria is committed to creating a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability or chronic health condition, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with an advisor at the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). For more information about CAL, see:
https://www.uvic.ca/accessible-learning/

Counseling Services

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with the university's **Counseling Services** (https://www.uvic.ca/students/health-wellness/counselling/index.php)which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact Counseling Services. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates

Please consult the university calendar's **Academic Year Important Dates** for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, and so on: https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/

Academic Advising

For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your CAPP report, please visit **Undergraduate Advising** (https://www.uvic.ca/services/advising/) or make an appointment with an adviser.

Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the **Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement**: https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/.

Course Schedule

Dates	Assignments
Weeks 1-2: Sep 3, 5, & 9	No reading.
Weeks 2-3: Sep 10, 12, & 16	Reading: *Meno*
Weeks 3-4: Sep 17, 19, & 23	Reading: *Phaedo* 57a-84b
Week 4: Sep 24, 26 *Sep 30: National Truth & Reconciliation Day No Class*	Reading: *Phaedo* 84c-118 **Take-Home Test #1: Sep 27-8**

Weeks 5-6: Sep 30, Oct 1 & 3	Reading: *Republic* I-II
Week 7: Oct 7, 8, & 10	Reading: *Republic* III-IV
Week 8-9: Oct 14, 15, 17, 28, 29, & 31	Reading: *Republic* V-VII **Take-Home Test #2: Nov 1-2**
Week 10: Nov 4, 5, & 7	Reading: *Republic* VIII-IX
Week 11-12: Nov 14, 18, & 19 *Nov 11 & 12: Reading Break No Class*	Reading: *Republic* X
Week 12-13: Nov 21, 25, & 26	Reading: *Symposium* 172a-198a
Week 13-14: Nov 28, Dec 2 & 3	Reading: *Symposium* 198b-223d **Final Essay: Due Dec 6th**

Other Resources

Student Resources
   a. UVic Learn Anywhere. UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students. It offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
   b. Library resources. Information for students wishing to use the UVic library.
   c. Indigenous student services
   d. Centre for Academic Communication
   e. Learning Strategies Program
   f. Academic Concession Regulations
   g. Academic Concessions and Accommodations
   h. Academic accommodation & access for students with disabilities – Policy AC1205
   i. Student wellness resources.
   j. Ombudsperson. A resource to help resolve disputes or complaints.

k.   Other [student groups and resources](#).

University Statements and Policies

a.   University Calendar – ["Information for all students"](#)
b.   [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
c.   [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
d.   [Student Conduct and Non-Academic Student Misconduct](#)
e.   [Accessibility](#)
f.   [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
g.   [Equity and Human Rights](#)
h.   [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
i.   Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)