

# PHIL 301 – PLATO

Fall 2017, University of Victoria

Department of Philosophy

Course website: available at <http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>

## Instructor and Contact Information

Dr. Clifford Roberts ([cliffordroberts@uvic.ca](mailto:cliffordroberts@uvic.ca))

Office hours: Wed 1:30 – 2:15 (or by appt.)

Office: CLE B318

## Meeting Times & Place

Tue–Wed–Fri 12:30-1:20

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## Course Description

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 must submit a digital copy of each of the assignments through CourseSpaces and by the assignment deadline.

### (1) Essays

Value: 1st essay = 20%, 2nd essay = 30%, 3rd essay = 35% (total = 85%)

Length: 1st & 2nd essays = 1500 – 2100 words (per essay), 3rd essay = 2100 – 3000 words

Assignment: Students must write a paper of the relevant length on one of a selection of topics provided by the instructor. Each assignment will be provided 2 – 3 weeks before the due date. Further information will be provided with each assignment.

Due dates: see course schedule.

(2) Class participation

Value: 15%

This will be based on both class attendance and contributions to class. While this course is primarily lecture based, there will be time allotted each class for questions and students are strongly encouraged to raise questions during the lecture.

### **Course Grading**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>GPV</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Description</b>
A+	9	90-100	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.
A	8	85-89	
A-	7	80-84	
B+	6	77-79	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. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B	5	73-76	
B-	4	70-72	
C+	3	65-69	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.
C	2	60-64	
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.

### **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.

#### *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*

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 understand the University's policy on academic integrity:  
<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

### **Policy on Late or Missed Assignments**

The default expectation is that the student completes the assignments by the relevant deadline. However, I will consider extensions for assignments provided the student indicates a desire for an extension *when* the assignment is provided. Otherwise, delays in handing in assignments will be penalized by one letter grade for every day late (i.e., an A paper will become an A- paper after a day), unless the student can provide official documentation of the reason for the delay (e.g., a physician's note). 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.

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<u>Week 1</u> : Sep 6 & 8	No reading.
<u>Week 2</u> : Sep 12, 13 & 15	Reading: <i>Theaetetus</i> (142a-187aa)
<u>Week 3</u> : Sep 19, 20 & 22	Reading: <i>Theaetetus</i> (187b-201c)
<u>Week 4</u> : Sep 26, 27 & 29	Reading: <i>Theaetetus</i> (201d-210a)
<u>Week 5</u> : Oct 3, 4 & 6	Reading: <i>Meno</i> <b>1<sup>st</sup> essay due on Oct 8<sup>th</sup></b>

<u>Week 6:</u> Oct 10, 11 & 13	Reading: <i>Phaedo</i> (57a-85b)
<u>Week 7:</u> Oct 17, 18 & 20	Reading: <i>Phaedo</i> (85c-118a)
<u>Week 8:</u> Oct 24, 25 & 27	Reading: <i>Republic</i> , Books I-III
<u>Week 9:</u> Oct 31, Nov 1 & 3	Reading: <i>Republic</i> , Books IV-VI <b>2<sup>nd</sup> essay due on Nov 5</b>
<u>Week 10:</u> Nov 7, 8 & 10	Reading: <i>Republic</i> , Books VII-IX
<u>Week 11:</u> Nov 17 ( <b>No class:</b> Reading Break, Nov 13-15)	Reading: <i>Republic</i> , Book X
<u>Week 12:</u> Nov 21, 22 & 24	Reading: <i>Parmenides</i> (126a-134e)
<u>Week 13:</u> Nov 28, 29 & Dec 1	Reading: <i>Parmenides</i> (134e-166c) <b>3<sup>rd</sup> essay due on Dec 3<sup>rd</sup></b>