

**Provisional Draft:** This outline gives students a sense of what the course involves, but it is not the final, *official* outline.

## PHIL 301 A01 (12527) – PLATO

Fall 2019, University of Victoria

Department of Philosophy

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

### Instructor & Contact Information

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

Office hours: Fri 12:00-2:30pm (or by appt.)

Office: CLE B318

### Meeting Times & Place

Mon–Wed–Thu 2:30-3:20pm

Room: COR B129

### 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) **Comment Sheets**

**Value:** 1<sup>st</sup> = 10%, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 15%, 3<sup>rd</sup> = 15% (**total** = 40%)

**Length:** ≥800 words

**Assignment:** Students must write a commentary on a passage from the course text from among a provided by the instructor. Each assignment will be provided 1 week before the due date. Further information will be provided with each assignment.

**Due dates:** see course schedule.

(2) **Essays**

**Value:** 1<sup>st</sup> essay = 25%, 2<sup>nd</sup> essay = 30% (**total** = 55%)

**Length:** ≥1500 words (per essay)

**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.

(3) **Class participation**

**Value:** 5%

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**

Grades	GPV	Percentage	Description
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.

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 pp. 51-53 of the most recent (September 2019) edition of the University of Victoria Undergraduate Calendar. 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.

#### *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 read and understand the University's policy on academic integrity: <https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

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

All assignments submitted **on** or **before** the specified due dates will be adjudicated and returned with written comments. Assignments submitted **within one week after** the specified due dates will be adjudicated without penalty; however, they will be returned **without** written comments. Lastly, any assignment submitted **more than one week after** the specified due date will be adjudicated and returned without comments, and a penalty of **6%** per day will be assessed, 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.

### **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/services/counselling/>) 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://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-09/general/dates.html>

### **Technology in Classroom**

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies, so I do not prohibit their use in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of other nearby students, so anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. will be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

### **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**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<u>Week 1</u> : Sep 4 & 5	<i>Plato's Time and Place</i> (No reading.)
<b><i>Meno</i></b>	
<u>Week 2</u> : Sep 9, 11 & 12	<i>A Puzzle About Knowledge</i> Reading: <i>Meno</i>

<i>Phaedo</i>	
<u>Week 3:</u> Sep 16, 18 & 19	<i>Why Not Fear Death? 3 Arguments for Immortality of Soul</i> Reading: <i>Phaedo</i> 59c-84b <b>**1<sup>st</sup> Comment Sheet Due Sep 20th**</b>
<u>Week 4:</u> Sep 23, 25 & 26	<i>Critiques &amp; a Fourth Argument for Immortality</i> Reading: <i>Phaedo</i> 84c-118
<i>Republic</i>	
<u>Week 5:</u> Sep 30, Oct 2 & 3	<i>The Problem of Justice &amp; How to Solve It</i> Reading: <i>Republic</i> I-II <b>**2<sup>nd</sup> Comment Sheet Due Oct 4th**</b>
<u>Week 6:</u> Oct 7, 9 & 10	<i>The Kallipolis in/ &amp; the Soul</i> Reading: <i>Republic</i> III-IV
<u>Week 7-8:</u> Oct 16, 17, 21, 23 & 24 ( <i>No class Oct 14th</i> )	<i>What Do the Philosopher-Guardians Know?</i> Reading: <i>Republic</i> V-VII <b>**3<sup>rd</sup> Comment Sheet Due Oct 22**</b>
<u>Week 9:</u> Oct 28, 30 & 31	<i>Five Cities &amp; Five Souls: Why the Just Life is Best</i> Reading: <i>Republic</i> VIII-IX
<u>Week 10:</u> Nov 4, 6 & 7	<i>Imitation &amp; the Dangers of Art</i> Reading: <i>Republic</i> X <b>**First Essay Due Nov 10 (Assigned Oct 22)*</b>
<i>Symposium</i>	
<u>Week 11-12:</u> Nov 14, 18, 20, & 21 ( <i>No classes Nov 11-13th</i> )	<i>What is Erôs? 5 Answers</i> Reading: <i>Symposium</i> 172a-198a
<u>Week 13-14:</u> Nov 25, 27, 28, Dec 2, & 4	<i>A Philosophical Approach to Erôs</i> Reading: <i>Symposium</i> 198b-223d <b>**Final Essay Due Dec 6 (Assigned Nov 13)**</b>