

PHIL 500 A01 (22305) – Plato's *Republic*

Spring 2021, University of Victoria

Department of Philosophy

Course website: available at <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/51737>

Instructor & Contact Information

Dr. Clifford Roberts (cliffordroberts@uvic.ca)

Office hours: Mon-Tue 3-4pm (or by appt.; sign-up is required)

Meeting times: T-W-F 11:30am-12:20pm

Course Description

Plato's *Republic* is one of the most imaginative, influential, controversial, and rich works in the history of Western philosophical reflection. It covers a dizzying variety of topics: the ideal political system, the best form of education, the nature and value of art, the correct analysis of belief and knowledge, the nature of virtue and happiness, the structure and constitution of the mind, the list could go on. All of these topics are tied together in an outrageous conceit: an analogy between political and psychic structure. The *Republic* also offers us Plato's sustained thinking on topics central to his philosophical outlook, among which: the Theory of Forms, the relation between the sensible and intelligible worlds, the place of mathematics in cognition, and the role of reason in a virtuous and happy life. In this course, we will read through the entirety of the *Republic* together with contemporary scholarly material; our goal is to deploy contemporary concepts, methods of analysis and reasoning in order to develop a deeper, richer and more precise understanding of the text while avoiding the dangers of anachronism or literalness.

Course Texts

Required: Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett, 1992)

All other readings for the course will be made available on Brightspace

Course Logistics

This will be a fully *synchronous* online seminar centered on student discussion rather than lectures by the instructor. This means the course will be held weekly via Zoom at the meeting times indicated above. These meetings will not be recorded.

Course Evaluation

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

(1) **Explain & Critique**

Value: 6% per assignment, 5 assignments in total (total value = 30%)

Assignment: In ≤ 500 words, students will i) briefly summarize one of the week's articles and ii) raise one substantive critique of the article with regard to how it reads or understands the course text. There are articles assigned in the course and students have the choice to comment on any 5 of them, but cannot comment on > 1 article per week. The assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Due dates: the Monday evening of the week when the article will be discussed.

(2) **Short Essay**

Value: 30%

Length: ≥1500 words (per assignment)

Assignment: Students will complete an essay of the relevant length either i) on one of a set of assigned topics or ii) on a topic of their choosing in consultation with the instructor. Topics will be handed out 2 weeks in advance.

Due dates: *see course schedule.*

(3) **Long Essay**

Value: 40%

Length: ≥2500 words

Assignment: Students will complete a paper of the relevant length either i) on one of a set of assigned topics, ii) on a topic of their choosing in consultation with the instructor or iii) by revising and developing their short essay. Topics will be handed out 3 weeks in advance.

Due dates: *see course schedule.*

Course Grading

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description	Achievement of Assignment Objectives
A+	9	90 - 100	Exceptional Work	Technically flawless and original work demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations; often publishable.
A	8	85 - 89	Outstanding Work	Demonstrates a very high level of integration of material demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations.
A-	7	80 - 84	Excellent Work	Represents a high level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity, as well as mastery of relevant techniques/concepts.
B+	6	77 - 79	Very good work	Represents a satisfactory level of integration, comprehensiveness, and complexity; demonstrates a sound level of analysis with no major weaknesses.
B	5	73 - 76	Acceptable work that fulfills the expectations of the course	Represents a satisfactory level of integration of key concepts/procedures. However, comprehensiveness or technical skills may be lacking.
B-	4	70 - 72	Unacceptable work revealing some deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques	Represents an unacceptable level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity. Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking. Every grade of 4.0 (B-) or lower in a course taken for credit in the Faculty of Graduate Studies must be reviewed by the supervisory committee of the student and a recommendation made to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such students will not be allowed to register in the next session until approved to do so by the Dean.
C+	3	65 - 69		
C	2	60-64		
D	1	50-59		

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 most recent 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.

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. For the policy, see the most recent edition of the academic calendar (online here: [University of Victoria 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

With the exception of the Explain & Critique, all assignments submitted **on** or **before** the specified due dates will be adjudicated and returned with written comments. Any assignment submitted **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.

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/services/cal/>

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://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>

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
<p><u>Week 1:</u> Jan 11-15</p>	<p><i>A Brief History of 5th-4th Century Athens</i> <u>Readings:</u> G. R. F. Ferrari, “Introduction” Malcolm Schofield, “Approaching the Republic”</p>
<p><u>Week 2:</u> Jan 18-22</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u> Bk. I; Julia Annas, “Cephalus & Polemarchus” Rachel Barney, “Socrates’ Refutation of Thrasymachus”</p>
<p><u>Week 3:</u> Jan 25-29</p>	<p><u>Readings:</u> Bk. II.357a-376d Nicholas White, “The Classification of Goods in Plato’s <i>Republic</i>” Rachel Barney, “Platonism, Moral Nostalgia, and the ‘City of Pigs’” Angela Hobbs, “The Origin of War”</p>

<u>Week 4:</u> Feb 1-5	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. II.376d – III Malcolm Schofield, “Music all pow’rful” §§1-4 Elizabeth Belfiore, “Lies Unlike the Truth”
<u>Week 5:</u> Feb 8-12	<u>Readings:</u> <same as previous week> Christopher Gill, “Plato on the Education of Character” James Wilberding, “Curbing One’s Appetites in Plato’s <i>Republic</i> ”
<u>Week 6:</u> Feb 15-19	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. IV Hendrik Lorenz, “The Analysis of the Soul in Plato’s <i>Republic</i> ” Rachel Singpurwalla, “Why Spirit is the Natural Ally of Reason” Short Essay Due February 21st
<u>Week 7:</u> Feb 22-26	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. V Cinzia Arruzza, “The Private & the Common in Plato’s <i>Republic</i> ” Dirk Baltzly, “Knowledge & Belief in <i>Republic V</i> ”
<u>Week 8:</u> Mar 1-5	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. VI David Keyt, “Plato & the Ship of State” Nicholas Denyer, “Sun & Line: The Role of the Good”
<u>Week 9:</u> Mar 8-12	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. VII Malcolm Schofield, “Metaspeleology” Allan Silverman, “Book VII”
<u>Week 10:</u> Mar 15-19	<u>Readings:</u> <same as previous week> Christopher Gill, “The Good & Mathematics” Terry Penner, “The Forms in the <i>Republic</i> ” C. D. C. Reeve, “Blindness & Reorientation: Education & the Acquisition of Knowledge in the <i>Republic</i> ”
<u>Week 11:</u> Mar 22-26	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. VIII-IX.579e Zena Hitz, “Degenerate Regimes in Plato’s <i>Republic</i> ” Cinzia Arruzza, “‘Cleaning the City’: Plato & Popper on Political Change” Richard Parry, “The Unhappy Tyrant & the Craft of Inner Rule”
<u>Week 12:</u> Mar 29-Apr 2	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. IX.580a-592b James Warren, “Socrates & the Patients: <i>Republic IX</i> , 583c-585a” David Wolfsdorf, “Pleasure & Truth in <i>Republic IX</i> ”
<u>Week 13:</u> Apr 5-12	<u>Readings:</u> Bk. X Jessica Moss, “What Is Imitative Poetry & Why Is It Bad?” Stephen Halliwell, “The Life-and-Death Journey of the Soul” Long Essay Due April 12th