

*Bless, O Lord, the fruit of our labors
we offer unto the praise and glory
of your name. Amen.*

PHL 010.01: Plato and Philosophical Inquiry

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Required texts:

Plato, *The Republic*

Course Requirements:

This course will be conducted in a manner similar to that of Collegiate Seminar. In other words, your careful preparation for and thoughtful participation in class discussion of the text is expected. Needless to say, this means that absence from class is not a good idea; nor, for that matter, is being late. Each class during the first week begins with a question or two from me to you, aimed at determining whether the assigned material was understood. For example, I might ask you to explain what Plato meant by a particular term, or in particular passage; or I may ask how (or whether) he explained adequately that something is true. Then, if things seem in good shape, we shall try to see the *significance* of what Plato has pointed out. This, by the way, is where the fun begins. After the first week the role of beginning and leading the discussion will be assigned by lottery.

The pace of study will be leisurely. This is because the material is difficult, and so it is necessary to be able to read each section many times, attending closely to the development of the discourse and contemplating the significance of the ideas. The reason there is no set schedule of readings attached to this syllabus is that the pace of reading is determined daily, according to the developing conversation on the text. If past years are any indication, we'll make it to the end of Book 10.

At midterm you will submit a draft of an essay in progress (details to follow), which then becomes the basis of a conversation with me, on how to clarify and respond to the questions raised by Plato. The amended draft will be resubmitted two weeks before the end of the semester, so that any final corrections/improvements can be identified. The finished paper is due on the day scheduled for final exams. There is no definite length requirement for the paper, but since the question inevitably comes up in class, I'll say this. It should be neither too long, nor too short. Most students figure about 10-12 pages is just right. Most of the time I agree.