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PHL 465.01: Plato

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Philosophy 465: Plato

Professor Matt Strohl

Office: LA 147

Office hours: TR 12:30-1:30

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Course description:

This course will begin with Socrates' criticisms of the practice of rhetoric and sophistry, as depicted in Platonic dialogues including the *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*. We will then read selected middle and late dialogues, dividing our time between issues in ethics and politics on the one hand and metaphysics and epistemology on the other.

Required textbook:

Plato: Complete Works. Ed. John M. Cooper, Hackett 1997.

I will distribute secondary literature by email, to your university email address.

Grading and exams:

Two short take-home exams and one paper in two drafts.

Students doing the advanced writing 1 credit course will have a separate set of requirements.

Paper guidelines: You can choose the topic of your paper, but I must approve it, and you must engage with both secondary and primary readings (I will provide you with at least one appropriate secondary reading). Please come talk to me as early in the term as you can and we figure out a topic that will work for you. If you don't have any ideas, that's fine, I can suggest some possibilities. The first draft of the paper should be about 5 pages long, and then the final draft should be about 6-8 pages long. I'm less worried about quantity than quality.

Some general guidance: You need a problem, a solution, an alternative to your solution, an argument that your solution is better than the alternative, and responses to objections. Explain clearly in your intro how your paper will be structured and then break the paper up into 3 or 4 sections to help make the structure and organization more transparent. Don't hesitate to come to my office hours for guidance.

COVID

Do not come to class if you have any symptoms at all. We will work it out. Please be in touch with me if you have concerns about missing class.

Academic misconduct:

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

Special needs:

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibility is to request them from me with sufficient advance notice. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

I am also happy to accommodate the needs of students who aren't officially registered with DSS. Don't hesitate to ask; I'll agree to anything reasonable. My goal is facilitate your success.

Schedule:

Many of the dialogues we will read will include long stretches that are of minimal (or especially esoteric) philosophical interest. E.g., there might be a tangential retelling of a myth or a painstaking discussion of how many shoemakers would be too many. I think you should at least skim the entire dialogue in all cases, but you should read strategically. Don't focus on the less important parts at the expense of the more important parts. I'll try to announce clear cases where you can skim part of the reading.

- 1/18 Intro
- 1/20 Beginning of the Apology, Ion
- 1/25 Meno
- 1/27 Protagoras
- 2/1 cont.
- 2/3 Gorgias
- 2/8 cont.
- 2/10 cont.
- 2/15 cont.
- 2/17 Exam 1 due, no class

- 2/23 Republic I
- 2/25 Republic II-III
- 3/1 Republic IV
- 3/3 cont.
- 3/8 cont.
- 3/10 Republic V
- 3/15 Republic VI
- 3/17 Republic VII
- 3/22-3/24 spring break
- 3/29 Republic VIII
- 3/31 Republic IX
- 4/5 Republic X
- 4/7 spillover
- 4/12 **Exam due, no class**
- 4/14 Theaetetus
- 4/19 cont.
- 4/21 **No class, write your Rough draft!**
- 4/26 **Rough Draft due**, start Philebus or continue Theaetetus (it will be a game time decision, depending on how things are going)
- 4/28 (it really depends!)
- 5/3 Movie: Rossellini's *Socrates*
- 5/5 cont.

Final paper draft due by the end of the day on Thursday, May 12th, uploaded on Moodle