

CC 348 (#32735) / PHL 329M (#43300): TuTh 3:30-5 in WAG 112

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Plato is a foundational philosopher, and to study his work is to study some of the basic questions that people still ponder today: questions about the meaning of life, the nature of the universe, and our prospects for attaining knowledge of either. This course will examine selected works by Plato, both some famous masterpieces and some less familiar works. Readings will include both Plato's own works and recent studies of his work. The main goals are two: to learn how Plato thinks and writes; and to improve your own ability to think, speak, and write clearly, articulately, and cogently. There will be a steady diet of reading and writing assignments, and everyone will be expected to contribute actively to discussion. The course has no formal prerequisites; but it is likely to be most useful for students who have some background in philosophy (especially PHL 329K / CC 348: History of Ancient Philosophy).

**Texts:** The following six books, all available at the COOP, will be the main focus of our study:

*Plato: Five Dialogues*, trans. Cooper (Hackett pb): contains *Euthyphro* and *Phaedo*

*Plato: Phaedrus*, trans. Rowe (Penguin pb)

*Plato: Republic*, trans. Griffith (Cambridge pb)

*Plato: Sophist*, trans. White (Hackett pb)

*Plato: Timaeus*, trans. Zeyl (Hackett pb)

*Reading Plato's Theaetetus*, Tim Chappell (Hackett pb)

For orientation, we'll also read this recent overview by a leading scholar:

*Plato: A Very Short Introduction*, Julia Annas (Oxford pb)

There are several advantages to using the translations listed above; but if you already own others, you're free to use those instead. Another option for Platophiles is a single volume containing all of the above and more:

*Plato: Complete Works*, ed. J. Cooper (Hackett hb)

**Requirements:** attendance, reading, writing, participation.

**ATTENDANCE:** We meet twice a week; attendance is mandatory and affects your grade. You may miss one class without question or penalty; any further absences reduce your final grade 3% each time, unless you give me a legitimate excuse, such as a medical or other emergency (documented if I ask) or a religious holiday (only with advance notice). *Word to the wise:* it's better to come unprepared than to skip class.

**READING:** Required reading is listed in the Syllabus. Assignments are always challenging but rarely long. I expect you to read them carefully before class; the value of class discussion depends on it.

**WRITING:** This counts as a "substantial writing" course, so writing assignments are substantial.

1. **RESPONSE PAPERS:** Weekly questions about current readings, usually focused on key ideas or arguments, but sometimes open for you to pursue a question of your own. Questions are posted every Thursday on Blackboard; papers (around 500 words) are due in or by class the next Tuesday. 6 required, the best 5 count for grades.
  2. **MIDTERM EXAM:** Both short answer and essay (March 6).
  - 3a. **RESEARCH PAPER:** Topics may be based on response papers, or any topic centered on Plato; each paper must address some additional critical reading not on the syllabus. Four deadlines: submit 1) a topic in writing by 3/20; 2) an outline by 4/3; 3) a draft by 4/17; and 4) the final paper (10-15 pp typed) by 5/1 (last class).
  - 3b. **FINAL EXAM:** Comprehensive, both short answer and essay (May 12).
  4. **CLASS NOTES:** Notes outlining and summarizing major issues and ideas discussed in class, posted on Blackboard. Everyone does this twice, in teams of two; from +2% if excellent to -2% if poor.
- PARTICIPATION:** Everyone is expected to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis. In addition, everyone will do at least 2 oral presentations, typically in teams of 2-4.

**GRADES** will be based mainly on writing assignments: 1) response papers 40%, 2) midterm exam 20%, 3) final exam OR research paper 20%, 4) class notes (+/-4%); 5) oral presentations and participation 20%.

**SYLLABUS**

Class discussion will be based on the assigned readings listed below, all in the texts listed on the reverse. Read them carefully before class. Study and re-reading will be essential to do well in this course. Supplementary material and some additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

1. Plato and Socratic dialogue: Who, what, and why?  
 1/15 Orientation  
 1/17: *Euthyphro* and Annas ch. 2-3
2. Life and death: Plato's *Phaedo* (weeks 2-3)  
 1/22: *Phaedo* 57-85  
 1/24: *Phaedo* 86-end  
 1/29: Annas ch. 1 and 6  
 1/31: Theory of forms
3. Justice and philosophy: Plato's *Republic* (weeks 4-6)  
 2/5: *Republic* 1-2  
 2/7: *Republic* 4 and Annas ch. 5  
 2/12: *Republic* 5  
 2/14: *Republic* 7  
 2/19: *Republic* 10  
 2/21: Presentations
4. Love and language: Plato's *Phaedrus* (weeks 7-8)  
 2/26: *Phaedrus* 227-241 and Annas ch. 4  
 2/28: *Phaedrus* 242-257  
 3/4: *Phaedrus* 258-79  
 3/6: **Midterm exam**

**Spring break**

5. Knowledge and perception: Plato's *Theaetetus* (weeks 9-10)  
 3/18: *Theaetetus* 142-160  
 3/20: *Theaetetus* 161-186  
 3/25: *Theaetetus* 187-200  
 3/27: *Theaetetus* 201-210
6. Division and dialectic: Plato's *Sophist* (week 11)  
 4/1: *Sophist* 216-241  
 4/3: *Sophist* 242-268
7. God and the universe: Plato's *Timaeus* (weeks 12-14)  
 4/8: *Timaeus* 17-34 and Annas ch. 7  
 4/10: *Timaeus* 35-47  
 4/15: *Timaeus* 48-68  
 4/17: *Timaeus* 69-92  
 4/22: Presentations  
 4/24: Presentations
8. Retrospective prospects: looking back and seeing ahead (week 15)  
 4/29: TBA  
 5/1: TBA

**Research papers:** topics due Th 3/20, outlines due Th 4/3, drafts due Th 4/17, final version due Th 5/1.

**Final exam:** Monday, May 12, 2–5 p.m.

**NOTE:** You will need to check Blackboard regularly for announcements and course materials, including handouts, class notes, writing assignments, and additions or changes to the schedule and syllabus. Doing this is your responsibility, and failure to check Blackboard is no excuse.

**Other policies**

*Writing advice:* For help with your writing, I encourage you to consult the Undergraduate Writing Center in FAC 211; information at <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/>

*Late work* is penalized 5% per day unless you give me a legitimate excuse. Better to be prompt than perfect.

*Academic Integrity:* All graded work must be your own. Scholastic dishonesty (any kind of copying or cheating) on graded assignments receives zero credit. Information at: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

*Special Accommodations:* UT Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Information at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>