

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-3**

**Philosophy Course Number: 9043B
Plato on Knowledge and Justice**

**Winter 2022
In-person lectures
Tuesday 11:30-5:30pm
Room STVH 1145**

**Instructor: Devin Henry
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Office Hours: By Appointment
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DESCRIPTION

This course is a tale of two great works of philosophy: Plato's *Republic* and *Theaetetus*. The first is at once a work of political philosophy, moral psychology, and normative ethics. Its central aim is to answer the immoralist's challenge and show why it is always better to be just than unjust. The latter is a work of epistemology that investigates the nature and limitations of human knowledge. While many believe Plato's *Republic* to be among the greatest works of philosophy, the *Theaetetus* is by far one of the most influential. The famous Early Modern philosopher Berkeley found in its pages the central tenets of his own system of idealism, while the eighteenth-century moral theorist Richard Price lauded the *Theaetetus* for its refutation of the empiricist theories of knowledge of the Early Modern period. Wittgenstein found in it an expression of his own theory of Logical Atomism, once espoused by Bertrand Russell. The list of philosophers influenced by the *Theaetetus* goes on and on. The reason (as Myles Burnyeat puts it) is that, of all Plato's works, the *Theaetetus* has been the one that speaks most directly to the concerns of working philosophers throughout history.

TEXTS

Required: Any translation of Plato's *Republic* and *Theaetetus* as long as it contains Stephanus pagination (<http://bitly.ws/x5vS>). Below is my recommendation.

Plato's *Republic*. Reeve translation (<http://bitly.ws/x5xa>).

Plato's *Theaetetus*. Burnyete edition (<http://bitly.ws/x5xm>).

If you would prefer, you could just get Plato, *Complete Works* (<http://bitly.ws/x5xM>). This is the main collection of Plato's dialogues used by scholars that contains excellent translations of all his works. The UWO Bookstore may have hard copies, and I believe there is an electronic versions available through the UWO library.

OBJECTIVES

This course has two objectives. The first is to give students of philosophy an introduction to the origins and foundations of their discipline, including the problems that define it. The second is to help students develop their ability to read and understand difficult philosophical texts and to reflect on the ideas and arguments they offer us. These are basic skills that every well-rounded philosopher should have.

REQUIREMENTS

Short Exegetical Assignments	15% x 3
Term paper (three parts)	
• Outline	10%
• Abstract (500 words)	5%
• Final paper	40%

*See OWL for instructions.

Due dates for graduate student assignments are at your discretion. Part of your development as a professional philosopher is learning how to plan out a writing project and manage your time in order to meet publisher's or conference deadlines. I am not going to do that for you. That said, there are a few general guidelines. The **paper outline** is supposed to provide an outline of your project and specify how you envision your argument proceeding. So you should be submitting that at least two to three weeks before the final paper. This will give me time to comment and provide some guidance regarding your project. Before writing the outline, you also should be fairly far along in the research and planning phase: you should have a concrete idea of what you will argue and how the paper will be structured; and you may have written (or at least planned out) a rough draft. And so plan your time accordingly. If you have done the outline correctly, then writing your **final paper** should simply be a matter of fleshing that out (putting 'meat on the bones' as it were). Finally, the **abstract** should be handed in along with your final paper. Many journals require an abstract along with your submission that goes at the start of the published article. Its purpose is to give the reader a quick synopsis of the main thesis of the paper and the arguments that support it. To that end, you should be writing the abstract after you have completed your final paper. (There are plenty of examples in journals for you to consult, if you are unfamiliar with scholarly abstracts.)

I need to stress that to be successful it is imperative that you **plan ahead**. In the past students have simply handed in all three parts of the assignment at the end of the course, which defeats the whole aim which is **learning to write in stages**: reading and research; planning an outline; writing and polishing drafts; composing an abstract. Again, you should aim to complete your research and outline several weeks before you begin writing the first draft of your paper. An out-

line that is done after the paper will inevitably just be a summary of your paper, which is not an acceptable way of doing the assignment.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.