

Philosophy 3003F: Plato
The University of Western Ontario
Department of Philosophy

Instructor: Devin Henry
Phone: 661-2111 ext. 85876
Email: dhenry3@uwo.ca
Office: StH 4150

Class Time: M 10:30-12:30, W 10:30-11:30
Room: University Community Centre (UCC) 67
Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a critical examination of the philosophy of Plato and (Plato's) Socrates. Plato is agreed to be one of the most dazzling writers in the Western literary tradition and one of the most engaging and influential philosophers in the history of Western thought. The course will cover representative dialogues from each of the three traditional periods of Plato thought: the early "Socratic" dialogues; the so-called middle dialogues; and his late period. Throughout these dialogues we find the character of Socrates engaged in conversation with various Athenians on a whole range of philosophical issues: What is philosophical inquiry and how should it be conducted? Can rational arguments be used to convince people to follow their best interests or does philosophy need to rely on the art of persuasion (rhetoric)? Does knowledge require an unchanging world of Forms or can it be grounded in our immediate sensations of the things around us? Is it more shameful to commit injustice or to suffer injustice? Is the life devoted to the pursuit of pleasure philosophically defensible? If not, what role does pleasure occupy in the good life? Students will engage original texts in translation. Although the course is intended for students who wish to examine the philosophy of Plato and Socrates, it will also be suited for those with a general interest in the history of philosophy, ethics, and metaphysics.

COURSE 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. Class discussions and writing assignments are the vehicles for assessing a student's success in these areas.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Plato: Complete Works, ed. John Cooper (Hackett Publishing), ISBN: 0872203492. *Available at the UWO Book Store*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Textual Analysis*	30% (6 x 5% each)
Annotated Bibliography**	10%
Term paper***	25%
Final exam****	25%
Attendance & Participation	10%

*For these short take-home assignments students will be asked to provide a 1-page analysis of a key passage from the reading for the following class. There is a *hard cap* on the 1-page. Marks may be deducted for falling short or going over the limit.

**For help on annotated bibliographies see:

- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography>

- <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/annotated-bibliography>
- http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/writing_services/resources/components/documents/writing_an_annotated_bibliography.pdf

***Essay will be 8-10 pages (double-spaced, Times Roman Numeral, 12 pt font). This word limit is a *hard cap*. Papers that fall short of the minimum or exceed the maximum may be penalized accordingly. Good scholarship includes being able to make your case in the space allotted. Late papers will be deducted 3% per day. Papers that are more than 5 days late (including week ends) will not be accepted. All papers must be submitted through [Turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) on our website before being graded.

****The final exam will be cumulative. The date of the exam will be set by the Registrar.

AUDIT

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

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.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.