

**PHIL 4351: Great Philosophers - Plato's Republic (CRN 16062)**

**PHIL 5351: World Historical Philosophers - Plato's Republic (CRN 16119)**

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## **DESCRIPTION**

Alfred North Whitehead once quipped, "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." Whitehead's point was that Plato was the first systematic Western philosopher who laid out detailed theories on virtually all major topics. Having done this, philosophers after him have largely developed their own views as in response to the framework he laid out. The *Republic* is arguably the greatest work of Western philosophy. Students familiar from other classes with Plato's earlier, Socratic dialogs will find a different and more philosophically sustained exposition here. Despite being over 2,000 years old, this work deserves and will repay a close reading. That is what we will give it!

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## **COURSE OBJECTIVES, MATERIALS & EVALUATION**

**Objectives:** In order to fully appreciate Plato's work, it will be important to read it carefully and to try to understand why Plato argues as he does. This is no small task given the vast differences in language and culture that separate us. Indeed, as you will see in the secondary readings, there are important interpretive differences between various scholars. Thus, apart from providing you with an understanding of a philosophical masterpiece, this course will help you learn to read and reason with far greater care.

**Materials Required:** With the exception of the inexpensive translation of the *Republic*, I have tried to provide you with material for this course at no expense. Please take the time to read all required material!

- Plato. *Republic*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Please note you MAY use a different translation. If you do, I would recommend either C. D. C. Reeves' translation or the older Grube translation (particularly the version updated by Reeve).
- Online course packet of required and optional readings. Most of these will be included in the modules, however, some readings are available only through the Secondary Resources tab near the top of the sidebar.
- Strongly Suggested Resource: Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Available as pdf in the Secondary Resources tab

### **Evaluation:**

**Three Short 1-2 Page Interpretive Essays (100 points each; 300 points total):** These essays will be based on the readings. You may choose to write on any topic covered in the course material, though I will post some general ideas for you to work on.

**One Research Essay (500 points):** Undergraduates: At least 6 pages; Graduates: At least 10 pages.

- Note: All essays should have 10-12 point font and 1" margins. You will need cite your sources. Please use APA style.
- Essay assignments can be submitted via the Assignments tab on the left sidebar.

**Discussion Board Participation (200 points total):** One post consisting of at least five full sentences. Two responses to fellow students consisting of at least two full sentences. 25 points overall per discussion board participation. There will be 10 discussion boards but you may skip two DBs over the course of the semester. Consequently, you will only be graded on 8 of the 10 DBs. You MAY post more than eight DBs, but I will only give you credit for the first eight.

- NOTE: Discussion board content must be substantive and address the material being covered in the module. Merely quoting or summarizing course content will not get you full points. Similarly, comments that merely agree with another person's post will not be counted. I particularly encourage thoughtful (and respectful) argumentation, analysis and critical discussion. Please see the Netiquette section below for appropriate discussion board behavior. I will, at my discretion, give **extra credit** points for particularly good posts and/or comments.
- Discussion board comments and responses for each module must be completed by the date given in the course calendar at 11:59 pm.

**Total Possible Points for Course: 1000**

**Grading scale**

A	B	C	D	F
≥89.5%	≥79.5%	≥69.5%	≥59.5%	<59.5% (percentages)
≥900	899-700	799-700	699-600	≤599 (points)

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND NETTIQUETTE

**Academic Integrity:** Integrity is a concern for everyone. By joining the UTEP community every student agrees to abide by the scholastic dishonesty policy ([available here](#)). Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable to another person.

### Cheating:

- Copying from the test paper of another student
- Communicating with another student during a test
- Giving or seeking aid from another student during a test

- Possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during tests (i.e. Crib notes, class notes, books, etc)
- Substituting for another person to take a test  
Falsifying research data, reports, academic work offered for credit

### **Plagiarism**

- Using someone's work in your assignments without the proper citations
- Submitting the same paper or assignment from a different course, without direct permission of instructors

### **Collusion**

- Unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments

### **Netiquette**

- Always consider audience.
- Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times.
- No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a F2F situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

## Plato, *The Republic*

[Book I](#); [Book II](#); [Book III](#); [Book IV](#); [Book V](#); [Book VI](#); [Book VII](#); [Book VIII](#); [Book IX](#); [Book X](#)

Note that the calendar is roughly set up to correspond to a M-W-F course schedule. The course is, of necessity, reading heavy so don't procrastinate.

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### Book I

(Dates: Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book I (327a - 354c)
- Plato, *Gorgias* 482d–484c (Callicles' speech)
- Rachel Barney, "[Callicles and Thrasymachus](#)", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Ch. 2

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #1 (Due 09/02, 11:59 pm)
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### Book II

(Dates: Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book II (357a - 383c)
- Christopher Shields, "Plato's challenge: The case against justice in *Republic* II"
- Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Ch. 3

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #2 (Due 09/13, 11:59 pm)
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### Book III

(Dates: Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book III (386a - 417b)
- Jonathan Lear, "Allegory and myth in Plato's *Republic*"

- Malcolm Schofield, "The noble lie"

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #3 (Due 09/23, 11:59 pm)
  - First Short Essay (Due 09/25, 11:59 pm)
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#### **Book IV**

(Dates: Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book IV (419a - 445e)
- J. M. Cooper, 'Plato's Theory of Human Motivation'
- Aryeh Kosman: 'Justice and Virtue: The Republic's Inquiry into Proper Difference'

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #4 (Due 10/02, 11:59 pm)
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#### **Book V**

(Dates: Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book V (449a - 480a)
- Plato, *Meno* 97a–98b
- Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, chs. 6-9
- Julia Annas, "Plato and feminism"
- Gregory Vlastos, 'Was Plato a Feminist?'

#### Readings

- Discussion Board #5 (Due 10/11, 11:59 pm)
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#### **Book VI**

(Dates: Oct. 12<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book VI (484a - 511e)

- Myles Burnyeat, 'Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City'
- David Lee, 'Interpreting Plato's Republic: Knowledge and belief'

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #6 (Due 10/21, 11:59 pm)
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### **Book VII**

(Dates: Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book VII (514a - 541b)
- Richard Kraut, 'Return to the Cave: Republic 519—521'
- J. C. B. Gosling, 'Mathematics and Goodness'

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #7 (Due 10/30, 11:59 pm)
  - Second Short Essay (Due 11/03, 11:59 pm)
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### **Book VIII**

(Dates: Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> - Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book VIII (543a - 569c)
- Bernard Williams, 'The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's Republic'
- Jonathan Lear, 'Inside and Outside the Republic'

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #8 (Due 11/08, 11:59 pm)
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### **Book IX**

(Dates: Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book IX (571a - 592b)
- Richard Parry, 'The unhappy tyrant and the craft of inner rule'

- Geraldine Ferrari, 'The three part soul'

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #9 (Due 11/18, 11:59 pm)
  - Third Short Essay (Due 11/18, 11:59 pm)
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#### **Book X**

(Dates: Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>)

#### Readings

- Plato, *Republic* Book X (595a - 621d)
- Alexander Nehamas, 'Plato and the Mass Media'
- Myles Burnyeat: 'Culture and Society in Plato's Republic', Lectures 1-2

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board #10 (Due 11/27, 11:59 pm)
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#### **Research Time**

(Dates: Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> - Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>)

#### Assignments

- Final Essay (Due 12/08, 11:59 pm)