

PHIL 301: Socrates and Plato

James Doyle
Fall semester 2014-15
Monday & Thursday, 9.50 – 11.10 am
Bldg HH Rm A5

Course Description

The course concerns the philosophy of Socrates (c 470-399 BC), and of some 'early' and 'middle' dialogues of Plato (430-347 BC), which it treats in an introductory fashion. Four of the dialogues we will read (all except the *Meno*) are set in a clear chronological order, within the couple of weeks within which Socrates was tried, condemned and executed by the Athenians, although they were probably largely composed at different points in Plato's philosophical career. The focus will be on Plato's presentation of Socrates' personality, and of his philosophical views and methods; in particular: the logical structure of Socratic cross-examination, Socrates' 'intellectualist' psychology and its relation to his conception of philosophy (ie the investigation into how to live), his understanding of virtue and of happiness or 'doing well'. Some attention will be paid to new elements of philosophical doctrine, a new interest in metaphysics and epistemology, and certain changes in Socrates' philosophical procedure in the *Meno* and *Phaedo* and opposed to the other three, more properly 'Socratic' and probably earlier, dialogues.

Reading

The only required reading for the course are the five dialogues, which are all to be found in Plato, *Five Dialogues* trans G Grube.

Recommended further reading:

- Doyle, J, 'Plato: Moral Psychology' (up to, but not including, the discussion of the *Republic*) in Sheffield and Warren (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy*
_____, 'Socrates and the Oracle', *Ancient Philosophy* 24 (June 2004)
_____, 'The Socratic Elenchus: No Problem', in Jonathan Lear and Alex Oliver (eds) *The Force of Argument: Essays in Honour of Timothy Smiley* (Routledge, 2010)
_____, 'Socratic Methods', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 42 (July 2012)
Fine, G, (ed), *Plato I & II*
Gallop, D, *Plato's Phaedo*
Irwin, T, *Plato's Ethics*
Kraut, R (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*
Reeve, C D C, *Socrates in the Apology*
Vlastos, G, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher*
White, N, *Plato on Knowledge and Reality*

Assessment

There will be a term paper (6-8 pages), a midterm (October 16) and a final examination (December 11); and attendance and participation will be taken into account.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University's Absence Reporting Website to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Contact

My email address is JDoyle@ias.edu

Office hours: 11.30-12.30 Monday and Thursday in the café in Barnes and Noble. If this doesn't work for you, please email me or see me after class to make an appointment to see me in the PTL office in the philosophy department.

Tentative reading schedule

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| Sept 4 | Syllabus |
| 8, 11 | <i>Euthyphro</i> |
| 15, 18 | <i>Apology</i> 17-28a |
| 22, 25 | <i>Apology</i> 28b-42a |
| 29, Oct 2 | <i>Crito</i> |
| 6, 9 | <i>Meno</i> 70-85 |
| 13 | Review |
| 16 | Midterm |
| 20, 23 | <i>Meno</i> 86-100 |
| 27, 30 | <i>Phaedo</i> 57-69 |
| Nov 3, 6 | <i>Phaedo</i> 70-84c |
| 10, 13 | <i>Phaedo</i> 84d-95e |
| 17, 20 | <i>Phaedo</i> 96a-107d |
| 24, Dec 4 | <i>Phaedo</i> 107e-end |
| 9 | Review |
| 11 | Final exam |