

PHIL 451/551: VIRTUE, JUSTICE, AND THE
GOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Making Good People: Education in Plato's Republic

DAMIEN STOREY | SPRING 2019 | VERSION 0.65

Important: *this is a beta version of the syllabus, which means:
(a) there are many gaps (e.g. much of the reading hasn't been
added yet) and (b) some aspects of the course might change, such as the
assessment methods. Be sure that you always have the latest version of this
document (check the version number above).*

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COURSE PARTICULARS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Education is at most a periphery topic in contemporary philosophy. And yet perhaps the most celebrated philosophical metaphor, Plato's Cave allegory, is a metaphor for education (though this is rarely acknowledged). It begins 'compare the effect on our nature of education, and the lack of it, to this image ...'. Why might education be especially important to Plato? One answer is that, unlike in contemporary philosophy, Plato thinks some philosophical questions cannot be answered directly, so, instead, he tries to discover what kind of people would be best able to answer such questions and, then, what kind of education would bring such people about. Rather than find the right answer, he tries to find the right answerer.

Plato adopts this strategy because he thinks certain questions are so challenging that they could not be answered by any ordinarily intelligent person, perhaps even himself. They are challenging not simply because they are intellectually difficult, but because they demand more than the intellectual skills associated with academic excellence. As Plato puts it, education must 'turn the whole soul': it must shape a person's whole personality, imparting the full range of human excellences, both rational and non-rational. For Plato, becoming a good knower is inseparable from becoming a good person.

This course examines this view of education in, especially, Plato's *Republic*. The aim is to address a number of unresolved questions about his views that are currently debated among commentators, and a number of which I have an active research interest in. Thus, we will be reading Plato and his modern commentators side-by-side. Our aim will be to judge the merit of various commentators' interpretations of Plato, and if no commentator's view seems satisfactory, to find our own interpretation.

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Office hours: MON. & WED. 14.00–15.00 | *Office:* SOS 162 | *Email:* dstorey@ku.edu.tr

I'm always happy to answer questions by email. And I can usually make time to see students outside of my office hours—drop by my office or arrange a time via email.

Please always refer to me as 'Damien', whether in person or by email. Please never call me Dr. Storey, and certainly not Mr. Storey.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a 400/500-level course that is closer to a research seminar than a lecture. Every student must do the weekly reading carefully. I will ensure that the reading is both interesting and

not too burdensome. On average, each week I expect there to be chunk of Plato to study (e.g. one or two books of the *Republic*) and one quite challenging article. If this sounds like too much, this course is not for you.

Students are expected to practice independent research skills. Minimally, this means that you can find an article (i.e. you don't need me to spoon feed all the reading to you by putting it on Blackboard). More substantially, this means being able to find relevant and high quality research articles without a reading list from me (as you'll be expected to for certain weeks).

ASSESSMENT METHODS

For *undergraduates*, the course is assessed by:

1. (25%) *Paper prep*. In the last few weeks of the class, students will (either individually or in a group) choose a relevant scholarly article, give a 10–15 minute presentation to the class, and answer questions on it. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.)
2. (25%) *Essay 1*. Between 1000–1500 words, on a topic you choose after discussion with me. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.)
3. (50%) *Essay 2*. Between 1500–2000 words, on a topic you choose after discussion with me. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.) The second essay can be a *substantial* rewrite of the first essay, but only if the grade improves by at least one full letter grade.
4. *Reading skills*. Full marks require decent comprehension of most week's reading. This means that for *each week* you must: (a) attend at least one lecture, (b) have done the reading, and (c) have a reasonable understanding of the reading (even if it is difficult). You can fail reading comprehension in three weeks; after that, you lose 1/3 of your overall letter grade per failure. (Note that this applies per *week*: you still pass, then, if you fail to understand the reading in the first lecture, but have a better understanding in the second.)

For *graduates*, the course is assessed by:

1. (25%) *Paper prep*. You will each choose a relevant scholarly article, give a 10–15 minute presentation to the class, and answer questions on it. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.)
2. (25%) *Essay 1*. Between 3000 and 5000 words, on a topic you choose after discussion with me. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.)
3. (50%) *Essay 2*. Between 4500 and 6500 words, on a topic you choose after discussion with me. (*Grading*. Letter grade, F to A+.) The second essay can be a *substantial* rewrite of the first essay, but only if the grade improves by at least one full letter grade.

A+	—	Exceptional
A	4.00	Superior
A-	3.70	Above Average
B+	3.30	Above Average
B	3.00	Average
B-	2.70	Average
C+	2.30	Below Average
C	2.00	Below Average
C-	1.70	Borderline
D+	1.30	Deficient
D	1.00	Deficient
F	0.00	Failing

COURSE POLICIES

Course material. All required reading will be on Blackboard at least a week prior to the relevant lecture. Optional reading will not usually be on BB, but both the library and the internet exist. Except in exceptional circumstances, slides and handouts will not be on BB.

Late work. Late essays will lose marks at the rate of one full letter grade per week (e.g. a B- essay will get a C- if it is two days late and a D- if it is ten days late). Tasks will be marked as failed if they are later than the lecture for which they are due.

Extensions and exemptions. Extensions and exemptions are possible (though not guaranteed) if *both* of two conditions are met: (a) they are for official academic or medical reasons (with appropriate documentation) and (b) I am made aware of the request *before* the due date.

Assessments and grades. All students have the opportunity to attempt the same work load and their final grade reflects the academic merit of the work they produce. Students cannot achieve grades in any other way.

Referencing and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work without acknowledgement, such that someone might reasonably mistake it for your own work. The university's guidelines are [here](#). Plagiarism is a *very* serious offence even if it is just a couple of lines and *even if it is accidental*: it is entirely *your* responsibility to learn what plagiarism is. If you are caught plagiarising, the minimum you can expect, in mild cases, is failing the plagiarised component, but in most cases you will receive an F for the entire course and be reported for academic misconduct. If you're in any way unsure about plagiarism, please ask me.

GENERAL READING

First and foremost, read the *Republic*. Good translations include Grube (revised by Reeve) (Hackett); Reeve (Hackett); Plato's *Republic* (Hackett); and Rowe (Penguin). There are plenty of copies in the campus bookshop.

N.B. I strongly advise you to read Plato's *Republic* at least once—ideally, multiple times—before the first lecture.

Some general introductions or collections on Plato's *Republic* include:

- J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: OUP, 1981)
- G. R. F. Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (CUP, 2007)
- M. L. Mcpherran (ed.) *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide* (CUP, 2010)
- G. Santas (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)

LECTURE OUTLINE

FROM SOCRATIC TO PLATONIC EDUCATION

Some of the questions we'll try to answer in this section are:

- What was the view of education in the early dialogues and how should we understand the transition to the view of the *Republic*.
- Is Socratic intellectualism desire-deep?
- In the *Gorgias*, does Plato consistently defend an intellectualist psychology?
- Does Plato believe in 'incurable souls' in the *Gorgias* or *Republic*?

1.1 Introduction

Week 1: Lecture 1

- Read the syllabus fully and carefully.
- Prepare the reading for lecture 1.2.

1.2 Education in the *Meno*

Week 1: Lecture 2

- Plato's *Meno*
- D. Devereux 'Nature and Teaching in Plato's *Meno*' *Phronesis* 23 (1978) 118–126
- Whether from the *Meno* or from a secondary source, it will be helpful to get some understanding of Socratic psychology.

1.3 Can we change Callicles' mind?

Week 2: Lecture 3 & 4

- Optional: Plato's *Gorgias* (It's not short, but try give it a quick read)
- Plato's *Republic*, books 1 and 2
- D. Scott 'Platonic Pessimism and Moral Education' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1999) 15–36

Optional reading:

- T. Brickhouse and N. Smith 'Incurable Souls in Socratic Psychology' *Ancient Philosophy* 22 (2002) 21–36

THE POWER OF MUSIC: EDUCATION IN *REPUBLIC* BOOKS 2–6

Some of the questions we'll try to answer in this section are:

- Do members of the productive class receive an education in music and gymnastics?
- Which part of the soul does an education in music and gymnastics educate?
- How exactly do the effects of music and gymnastics differ?
- Is the effect of an education in music and gymnastics motivational, cognitive, or both?
- What is the role of the content—e.g. the words of a poem—in music's education?

2.1 Education in books 2 and 3.

Week 3: Lecture 5 & 6

Your primary aim is to try to understand the view of education in books 2 and 3. Your secondary (but not optional) aim is to understand and assess the views expressed in Gill's article; focus in particular on his discussions of passages from books 2 and 3.

- *Republic*, books 2 and 3
- Gill, Christopher (1985) 'Plato and the Education of Character' *Archiv Für Geschichte Der Philosophie* 67/1, 1–26

2.2 Music in book 10.

Week 4: Lecture 7 & 8

- *Republic* books 4 and 10 (you might also quickly browse books 8 and 9)
- Jessica Moss (2007) 'What is Imitative Poetry and Why is it Bad?' in G.R.F. Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*
- Use [this](#) handout to get a sense of the structure of the argument in book 10.

2.3 How does music educate?

Week 5: Lecture 9 & 10

- Read again: *Republic*, book 3
- Plato *Laws*, book 2 (and the definition of education at book 1 643d ff.)
- Optionally: *Republic* books 5 and 6.
- Woerther (2008) 'Music and Education of the Soul in Plato and Aristotle' *Classical Quarterly* 58/1, 89–103
- Optional, to browse (or read the intro): Francesco Pelosi (2010) *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* (CUP: Cambridge)

2.4 Which part of the soul is educated?

Week 6: Lecture 11 & 12

- Read again:
- *Republic*, books 2 and 3
- Also read *Republic* 8 and 9, paying attention to the psychology behind the corruption of the vicious souls.
- Wilberding, J. (2012) 'Curbing One's Appetites in Plato's *Republic*' in Barney et. al. *Plato and the Divided Self*, 128–149.
- Wilburn, J. (2014) 'Is Appetite Ever 'Persuaded'? An Alternative Reading of *Republic* 554c–d' *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 31/3, 195–208.

EMERGING FROM THE CAVE: EDUCATION IN BOOKS 6 AND 7

Some of the questions we'll try to answer in this section are:

- What is the 'lack of education' represented by life in the cave?

- What do the puppets and the puppeteers represent?
- Why is a mathematical education so important in the guardians' education?
- Is practical experience a prerequisite for knowledge of the Form of the Good?
- WTF is the Form of the Good?

3.1 Understanding the Sun, Line, and Cave.

Week 7: Lecture 13 & 14

- *Republic* books 6–7
- Cross and Woosely, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (Plagrave, London: 1964), Ch. 9 'Sun, Line, and Cave'

3.2 The soul-turning metaphor for education.

Week 8: Lecture 15 & 16

- Reread: *Republic* books 6–7
- My draft paper: 'The Soul-Turning Metaphor in *Republic* Book 7'

3.3 Outside the cave: what is the role of experience?

Week 9: Lecture 17 & 18

- Reread: *Republic* books 6–7
- TBD

STUDENT-FOUND PAPERS

4.1 Paper 1

Week 10: Lecture 19 & 20

4.2 Paper 2

Week 11: Lecture 21 & 22

4.3 Paper 3

Week 12: Lecture 23 & 24

4.4 Paper4

Week 13: Lecture 25 & 26

SOME ESSAY & WRITING ADVICE

WRITING PHILOSOPHY

Please pay close attention to the following advice, especially 1 and 2. They try to cater for the most common and most easily solved problems I find in students' writing. Please take them seriously.

1. *Explain.* In short: explain *everything*. It should be possible for an intelligent peer who hasn't studied philosophy to *fully* understand your essay without needing to read the authors you're writing about. For example: if you use a technical term that has particular significance for an author, make sure you clearly define it. Similarly, for any argument or position you discuss, you must clearly and fully explain it to your reader. This is partly because good academic writing should be explicit and easily understood, but it is also because your ability to explain the ideas you're discussing—clearly, precisely, and succinctly—is what you're being assessed on. Your readers, including your grader, know that you understand something only if, and to the extent that, you've successfully explained it. Don't expect anyone to just assume you understand something that you've failed to explain. You might well know, for example, what a categorical imperative is, but you need to *show* that you know it and how precisely you know it. Explaining even small, simple ideas well is a lot harder than you might think; don't underestimate how important it is, and how much work it takes.
2. *Justify.* Assume that for every claim you make, the reader is asking 'why on earth should I believe that?' In a philosophy essay, there should always be an excellent answer to this question. You should consider this to be, above all else, your aim when writing an essay. The worst thing you can do is to make bold assertions without defending them, and the second worst is to make bold assertions and defend them weakly. Note that this includes interpretive claims: if you write 'Plato believes that p', you need to show your reader, perhaps by giving a supporting quote, that this is indeed something Plato believes.

A bad essay: 'p!'

A good essay: 'For reasons x, y, and z, it seems that p.'

An excellent essay: 'Reasons x, y, and z give us good grounds for thinking that p, although someone might offer an objection along the following lines ... However, I think there is a promising response to this objection ...'

3. *Use headings.* Before you start writing, sketch a structure for your essay. When writing, use headings that reflect this structure. A typical essay might have 2–4 headings.
4. *First understand, then assess.* Be careful not to rush into criticisms of what you read before you've fully understood it. Approach everything you read with charity. That is, assume that the author has thought intelligently and carefully about what they've written, so is unlikely to have made obvious mistakes. For example, if you notice a *prima facie* objection to something you're reading, read it again carefully to see if there's a way

to understand it that avoids the objection or try to think of a plausible implicit assumption the author might have made that caters for the objection.

5. *Be sufficiently detailed.* The topics you'll consider are broad. Someone could spend years writing hundreds of pages about them, but you have at most a few pages and a few weeks. This presents a challenge: on the one hand, you want to show that you're familiar with the whole topic; on the other hand, you want to do more than simply scratch the surface, never looking at any one issue in detail. This can be a difficult balance to achieve, but in general it is much better to *err on the side of detail*. One approach might be to devote about the first third of your essay to a more general introduction of the topic and then use the last two-thirds to examine one or two smaller points in much greater detail—you might, for example, focus on *one* argument, premise, or objection that you think is especially important or interesting.
6. *Ensure your conclusions reflect your arguments.* You might have been taught that strong, persuasive prose requires confident assertions, rather than hesitant, qualified ones. But in philosophy your assertions should reflect the actual degree of confidence that is warranted by the evidence you've provided. Decisive arguments are rare—even rarer are decisive arguments in just a few lines of a student's essay. So be careful not to mistake considerations that give us a good reason for believing that p for an argument that shows conclusively that p. A good essay is likely to have a large range of (appropriate) qualifying phrases: 'this shows decisively that p'; 'this is a strong reason to believe that p'; 'this suggests that p'; 'this makes it less implausible that p'; and so forth. Be especially careful with strong success verbs like 'refutes,' 'proves,' or 'shows'.
7. *Show 'independence of thought' rather than 'originality.'* You might think that philosophy encourages you to express your own unique opinions, ones different from those of the authors you read. But originality—the simple fact that an idea is new—has little value by itself and it should not be your aim. After all, an idea can be both original and obviously false. What *has* value is independence of thought. For example, if you agree with the conclusions of a certain author because you fully understand them, have thought critically about their arguments, and carefully assessed alternative possibilities, then you believe nothing original, but you are showing admirable independence of thought.
8. *Use quotes correctly.* Especially in historical subjects, including quotes from relevant primary texts can be an excellent way to illustrate, justify, and give some focus to your discussion. One way (of many) to use a quote is the following: make a claim; present a quote that supports the claim; and then explain and interpret the text of the quote in order to *show* that and why it supports your claim. But two cautions: first, quotes from secondary sources are rarely useful; second, never use a quote as a way of *saying* something—rather, a quote should be presented as evidence *about which* you have something to say.

For more guides to essay writing, see Jim Pryor, [Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Essay](#), and James Lenman, [How to Write A Crap Philosophy Essay](#).

SOME BASICS OF TYPOGRAPHY

The following are a few typographic conventions worth learning.

1. *Indent paragraphs.* But do not indent the opening paragraph of the document or the first paragraph after a section heading. You may instead—not in addition—separate paragraphs with a blank line, although this is better suited to list-like texts, such as legal documents, than continuous prose.
2. *Use single line spacing.* It's easier to read. Double spacing is only necessary when a printed copy of your work will be annotated.
3. *A footnote mark is always placed after punctuation.*¹ It is almost always best to place a footnote at the end of the sentence, *after* the sentence-ending full stop, even if you are referring to something earlier in the sentence. Avoid consecutive footnotes; instead, place all information in one footnote if possible.
4. *Indicate quotes with either quotation marks or by using a block quote.* Extra flourishes, such as italicising, are unnecessary. And never place a block quote within quotation marks.
5. *Learn the difference between a hyphen (-), en-dash (–), and em-dash (—).* Use an en-dash like 'to' in ranges of dates or numbers (e.g. 87–142) and to express certain relationships between words: for example, an 'on–off switch' or 'Irish–American relations'. Either an en- or em-dash can be used to indicate a parenthetical phrase. If you use an en-dash, add a space either side – like so – but em-dashes are always unspaced—like so.
6. *Make ellipses with three full stops separated by spaces.* Like this . . . , with a space either side. You will most commonly use an ellipsis to indicate portions of text that you've omitted from quotes. Don't omit any sentence-ending full stops that precede an ellipsis (i.e. together they make four stops). For example:

[P]articular care needs to be exercised when eliding text to ensure that the sense of the original is not lost . . . A deletion must not result in a statement alien to the original material. . . . Accuracy of sense and emphasis must accompany accuracy of transcription. (CMS, 16th, 13.49)

7. *Use a single space after full-stops.* A double space, once common, is now rightly recognised as unnecessary.

REFERENCING

In your essays you should reference both quotes and claims or arguments that originate from one of the authors you've been reading. You should also have a bibliography of all the works you've referred to in the text.

You can use whatever bibliographical style you choose, so long as it's consistent. The following is an example of a typical author–year referencing style, starting with what the bibliography will look like:

Book: Author (Year) *Title*, Place: Publisher.

1. This includes full stops, commas, colons, semi-colons, and quotations marks.

Fine, G. (1993) *On Ideas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freeman, S. (ed.) (2003) *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Article: Author (Year) 'Title', *Journal*, Volume, pp. Pages.

Irwin, T.H. (1977) 'Plato's Heracleiteanism', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 27, pp. 1–13.

Article in book: Author (Year) 'Article Title' in Editor(s) (ed(s).) *Book Title*, Place: Publisher.

Scanlon, T.M. (2003) 'Rawls on Justification' in S. Freeman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

In-text citation: (Author, Year, Page(s))

It has been argued that the charge of conservatism laid against Rawls' idea of reflective equilibrium is unsound (Scanlon, 2003, pp. 150–151).

Scanlon argues that the charge of conservatism laid against Rawls' reflective equilibrium is unsound (2003, pp. 150–151).