

Syllabus
Ethics/Politics
1st Year Tutorials in Philosophy

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Meeting Time:

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Aims of these tutorials:

These tutorials aim to introduce students to ethics and political philosophy. These by no means provide a full survey of the course, but are only meant as a stepping stone from which one may approach the subject. In the five scheduled tutorial meetings, the students should see the interrelations between these two subjects. The first four meetings will focus on some of the basic traditions to western political philosophy by critical reflection on the works of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, and John Rawls. The fifth tutorial will reflect back on the theories encountered in the first four. Students will be given required reading, which must be read before each tutorial. Along with this, students will also be provided a list of optional reading, which should assist the student with any questions that might arise in the required reading. Further, students will be provided with two essay questions of which one must be chosen. There will also be further questions to help the student stay focused on the issues that will arise in the required reading.

Overall questions to think about:

1. How have these various societies attempted to reconcile honouring the 'rights' of their citizens as individuals, on the one hand, with demanding from individuals the performance of their obligations as citizens, on the other hand?
2. How have these societies balanced, or not balanced, a respect for human diversity with the fashioning of a common experience in which all could participate as equals?
3. What are the tensions between conscience and power; and between private life and public participation?

Requirements:

1. To do all assigned reading for each class.
2. To participate actively: to be prepared to ask questions, to think about and discuss the issues raised by the reading.
3. An essay of not more than 1000 words to be turned in at the start of each tutorial. Late essays will be marked zero, but will still be commented on and returned to the student.
4. All essays must either be emailed or turned in on floppy disk.

Schedule of readings:

All assigned reading will be available either at the end of the previous tutorial, online, or in the Xerox Library.

First Week:

Required reading: Book I of Plato, *Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube (Hackett Publishing Company, 1992)

Optional readings:

1. Allan Bloom's interpretive essay on Plato's *Republic*, to be found in
2. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu>) article 'Plato: Ethics and Politics in the Republic' by Eric Brown

Essay questions: pick one of two and write an essay of not more than 1000 words:

1. Analyse Justice in Book I of Plato's *Republic*. Or
2. Explain the 'craft argument' in Book I of Plato's *Republic*.

Questions to think about:

1. What is Cleitophon's point (340b)? Why isn't it picked up? How might have Socrates argued against it?
2. Who are the major characters and what stance does each take regarding justice?
3. Why don't they end up going to the festival?
4. What place does liberty seem to have here?
5. After reading the first Book, what impression do you get of philosophy?

2nd – 5th week assignments will be provided later – copies of the syllabus can be obtained from the Xerox library.

Academic accommodation:

Please let me know if you are a student who needs academic accommodation because of a documented disability. You should present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible.

Academic integrity:

You are here as a student to learn, to the best of your ability, philosophy. This is not an easy task, but you are capable of it. Undermining your potential by passing another's work as your own is not only malicious to the person whose work it is, but is detrimental to your own academic growth. The only way to learn philosophy is to do it. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to me.

See §59 of the Department of Philosophy: Undergraduate Handbook 2003 - 2004 for a definition of plagiarism.

Another good source for this is the University of London study guide for Philosophy. It should also be noted that this is an excellent study guide and will be of great use to your years of study in philosophy.