

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
PHIL 1000
Introductory Philosophy

Instructor: K. Dorter

Extension: 53218

E-mail: kdorter@uoguelph.ca

Fall 2011

An introduction to philosophical questions and ways of dealing with them, by means of readings in Plato's *Republic* (Griffith translation, Cambridge ISBN 0-521-48443-X), David Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Hackett 0-87220-229-1), and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism* (Courselink).

ASSIGNMENTS: Three 1250 word essays (20% each) and a final exam (40%). **Also see "Seven Standard Statements" (Courselink).**

LECTURES: Discussion of Plato, Hume, and Sartre. **FINAL EXAM:** the exam will consist of essay questions about the material covered in the lectures, drawn from study questions given out at the last class. Attendance at lectures is not mandatory, but since the final exam will test your knowledge of the material discussed in class, obviously attendance will be an advantage.

TUTORIALS: To supplement and help assimilate the lectures on Plato's *Republic*, each week two students chosen in consultation with their tutorial leader will give seminars exploring material from the *Republic*, one defending the "a" side of that week's topic, the other defending the "b" side (see next page). A 1250 word seminar takes about eight minutes to read, so there should be about half an hour afterward for discussion. Depending on the tutorial enrollment, some of you may have to write essays that don't get presented as seminars, but are handed in to your tutorial leader. The essays are due at the **beginning** of the class in which the topic is discussed so that no one has an unfair advantage, and also because they're meant to prepare you to contribute to the class discussion. For those reasons **late essays can't be accepted**, so if you don't finish yours in time for the beginning of the class you'll have to switch to a later topic. **Attendance at tutorials is essential** because the later material often presupposes familiarity with the earlier material. So if you miss more than one tutorial (other than the ones assigned to you) you'll have to write an additional 1250 word essay explaining *both* sides of the issue. The grade will be averaged with your three normal tutorial assignments. This doesn't apply to absences that are excused on medical or compassionate grounds on the basis of a note from your doctor or academic counselor.

1. Week of	Sept 12	Organization	Explain Plato's position and the reasons he gives, then defend or criticize it in accordance with "a" or "b", as assigned in consultation with your tutorial leader (both sides should be represented). Don't assume that what you say is obvious and doesn't need to be argued. If it <i>is</i> obvious it will be trivial and not worth much. Show that you're aware of the possible objections to your claims (including the other side of the question itself, "a" or "b") and formulate arguments to meet them. Imagine how an unsympathetic but reasonable critic might respond. The essay should show an understanding of Plato, as well as arguments for or against.
2.	Sept 19	topic 1	
3.	Sept 26	topic 2	
4.	Oct 3	topic 3	
5.	Oct 10	topic 4	
6.	Oct 17	topic 5	
7.	Oct 24	topic 6	
8.	Oct 31	topic 7	
9.	Nov 7	topic 8	
10.	Nov 14	topic 9	
11.	Nov 21	topic 10	
12.	Nov 28	topic 11	

OFFICE HOURS: I'll be available in my office (MacKinnon 353) Tuesdays from 11 to 1 or by appointment, but you can talk to me any time I'm in my office except for the hour before class when I'm preparing (see the schedule on Courselink or next to my door). The tutorial leaders will give you their own office hours.

PHILOSOPHY 1000 TUTORIAL TOPICS

PLATO'S *REPUBLIC* BOOKS 2-3

- 1a. It's important to protect people from destructive influences, so there should be censorship.
- 1b. It's important to let all ideas be heard, so there should be no censorship.

- 2a. Beauty affects us so deeply because it signifies sensory perfection, and thereby resonates with moral goodness (behavioral perfection) and truth (cognitive perfection).
- 2b. Beauty has no deeper meaning than any other kind of pleasure. It's just a matter of taste.

BOOK 4

- 3a. We're conflicted between appetite, spiritedness, and reason, and must control ourselves by reason.
- 3b. Sometimes intuitions are more insightful than reason, so we should be guided by our feelings.

BOOKS 5-7

- 4a. Reality is only matter and chance. It has no meaning.
- 4b. There's a rational structure to the world which can't be explained by matter and chance.
- 5a. The basis of reality is "the good": our world exists because it's the best possible set of conditions.
- 5b. The basis of reality can't be something good because reality is full of evil.
- 6a. The highest kind of knowledge can't be put into words (533a).
- 6b. If something can't be put into words it isn't because it's "higher" but because we haven't clarified it.

BOOK 8

- 7a. Democracy is the best form of government because it has the most liberty and equality.
- 7b. Democracy is a poor form of government because it gives more power to uninformed easily manipulated people (since there are more of them) than to well informed people who examine issues carefully.

BOOK 9

- 8a. The happiest life is the life of reason.
- 8b. There's no such thing as the happiest life. Everyone is happy as long as they get what they want.
- 9a. If we could get away with it, an unjust (selfish) life would give us the most happiness.
- 9b. Even if we could get away with being unjust, the key to happiness is to be just (unselfish).

BOOK 10

- 10a. The arts are dangerous because they glamorize outward appearance and irresponsible behavior (597b-607a).
- 10b. "Art is for art's sake". It has nothing to do with morality and isn't responsible for its moral consequences.
- 11. Preface: *According to the myth of Er at the end of book 10, we choose our life in all its detail before birth. This can be demythologized to mean that once we're born (or even conceived) everything that will ever happen to us is already destined by the initial conditions and the laws of causality.*
- 11a. If free will means our choices are not completely determined by cause and effect, then free will is impossible because everything has a cause, even our choices.
- 11b. We do have free will because we can feel our freedom, and we feel responsible for what we do, but if everything were predetermined we wouldn't be responsible for our actions.