

## **Philosophy 465: Plato**

Professor Matt Strohl

Office: LA 147

Office hours: TR 9-9:30, 12:20-12:50

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### **Course description:**

This course will begin with Socrates' criticisms of the practice of rhetoric and sophistry, as depicted in Plato's *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*. We will then read selected middle and late dialogues, dividing our time between issues in ethics and politics on the one hand and metaphysics and epistemology on the other.

### **Required textbook:**

*Plato: Complete Works*. Ed. John M. Cooper, Hackett 1997.

I will distribute secondary literature by email, because historically I am a failure at using Blackboard (or whatever it's called now).

### **Grading and exams:**

There will be two exams and one ~6-8 page paper in two drafts. You can choose the topic of your paper, but I must approve it, and you must engage with both secondary and primary readings. You will not turn in anything late. You will not ask for extensions at the last minute.

*The quality of your writing matters to your grade.* We'll talk about what constitutes high quality philosophical writing in class. If you're not already familiar with it, Jim Pryor's online guide to writing a philosophy paper is the gold standard. Read it at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

I'm not taking attendance or formally measuring your participation, but with a class this small I will be very aware of who's coming to class prepared and who isn't. I will give you a participation grade. It will be a measure of my impression of how engaged you were with the course. (Basically this is a way for me to round your final grade up or down according to your effort level.)

The grading breakdown will be:

Exams: 50%

Participation: 10%

Paper: 40%

### **Academic misconduct:**

You are strictly held to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code (<http://www.umt.edu.SA>). The in-class exams are closed-note: you may not consult anything but your own mind in order to answer questions on the exam. You may not use cell-phones, or any electronic devices to aid you, nor fellow students, nor fellow students' answers on exams, etc. You will receive no credit for any exam that you cheat on. Your conduct will also be reported to the Dean.

### **Special needs:**

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at [www.umt.edu/dss/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/)

### **Schedule:**

Many of the dialogues we will read will include long stretches that are of minimal (or especially esoteric) philosophical interest. E.g., there might be a tangential retelling of a myth or a painstaking discussion of how many shoemakers would be too many. I think you should at least skim the entire dialogue in all cases, but you should read strategically. Don't focus on the less important parts at the expense of the more important parts. I'll try to announce clear cases where you can skim part of the reading.

### **Readings:**

8/31 Intro

9/5 Ion, Apology

9/7 Meno, Protagoras

9/12 cont.

9/14 cont.

9/19 Gorgias

9/21 cont.

9/26 cont.

9/28 out of town, no class

10/3 cont.

10/5 cont.

10/10 Exam 1

10/12 Rep 1

10/17 Rep 2-3

10/19 Rep 4

10/24 Rep 4

10/26 Rep 4

10/31 Rep 5-6

11/2 Rep 7

11/7 Rep 8

11/9 Rep 9

11/14 Rep 10

11/16 out of town, no class

11/21 TAKE HOME EXAM DUE , YOU SHOULD HAVE CLEARED YOUR PAPER TOPIC WITH ME BY THIS POINT AS WELL

11/23 Thanksgiving, no class

11/28 Phaedrus

11/30 cont.

12/5 Theaetetus

12/7 cont. PAPER DRAFT DUE

12/12 cont.

PAPER FINAL DRAFT DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> AT NOON. You can leave it in my mailbox or slide it under the door of my office, or if coming into campus would be inconvenient you can email it.