

Oran Magal

Lectures: Tuesdays & Thursdays 16:05-17:25, Leacock 15

Office hours: Wednesdays & Fridays 12:30–13:30, Leacock 941

Course overview

This course is a survey of Plato's philosophical work. It will be roughly divided into 4 units:

1. The 'Socratic' dialogues: What is the purpose of dialogues that end in *aporia* (perplexity)?
Main readings: *Euthyphro*, *Charmides*, *Meno*; G. Vlastos, "The Socratic Elenchus".
2. Ethics and politics: The connection between virtue and knowledge; the 'good life' (*eudaimonia*); the nature of justice and the just society.
Main readings: *The Republic*, selections from other dialogues; secondary literature TBD.
3. On the soul: its parts and their respective rôles and and moral psychology.
Main readings: selections from *Phaedo*, *The Republic*; secondary literature TBA.
4. Metaphysics and epistemology: the 'forms', their nature, and their rôle in Plato's system.
Main readings: selections from *Phaedo*, *The Republic*, *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*; time permitting: Plato's theory of knowledge in *Theaetetus*. Secondary literature TBA.

Required background:

It is assumed that students have already had some experience with writing philosophy essays. For this reason, *students are required to have taken at least one philosophy class previously* (other than logic), such as Introduction to Philosophy (200/201).

Required reading material:

There is no textbook, but students must have access to Plato's complete works, either in printed or in electronic format. It is recommended to purchase *Plato's Complete Works*, ed. J. M. Cooper, Hackett Publishing; in support of local bookstores, copies will be available at The Word bookstore (469 Milton). NB: The Word accepts cash and cheques only, no debit or credit.

All required secondary literature will be provided online through the course website.

Marking and Assessment:

The final mark is composed of weekly reading assignments (20%), one short essay with one round of revisions (30% total), and a final paper (50%). Full details will be given in class and on the course website.

Policy regarding laptops & tablets in class:

Students who would like to use laptops or tablets in class must give their word that they will only be used for taking notes and viewing course reading materials.

Policy for Late Work: Extensions to deadlines set will be granted only in **exceptional** circumstances, usually only for medical reasons and with a medical note or other, similar emergencies, appropriately documented. Late work will be penalized at the rate of 3 percentage points per day overdue.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

Methods of evaluation in detail:

1. General logistical note: all assignments will be distributed through the course website, and are to be submitted electronically through it as well. Please upload files only in one of the following file formats: PDF, DOC, DOCX, RTF. (Please do not submit *Pages* or *Open Office* format files.)
2. Weekly reading assignments (20%): Each week you will be asked to submit a brief reply (a few sentences at most) to one or more of the readings assigned for that week, based on a question or prompt that will be provided. These will be due the afternoon prior to each class, and will be graded as follows: 2/2 for excellent work, 1.5/2 for adequate work, 0/2 for inadequate or missing work. 11 assignments will be given, out of which 10 are to be submitted (you may skip one week of your choice).
3. Short paper: 30% total, in two parts:
 - (a) First, submit a paper, as usual, through the class website. Topics and instructions will be given with the assignment. The expected essay length is up to 750 words. (25%)
 - (b) Within approximately two weeks, you will receive a grade as well as comments on your paper. Revise your paper so as to address the comments, and submit it again through the class website. (5%)
4. Final paper: an essay of approximately 2000 words, and no longer than 2500 words. A list of possible topics will be assigned; however, students who wish to do so may come up with their own essay topics, subject to instructor's approval no later than the final week of classes.
5. For all written work, both accuracy of content and clarity of writing will be evaluated.