

## PHIL 4004 – Seminar in Philosophy before the Modern Period

Carleton University, fall 2013  
Mondays, 2:35-5:25pm, Seminar Room

Professor: Annie Larivée

Office hours: Mon. 1:15-2:00pm, Wed. 1:15-2:45pm, or by appointment

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### The Enigma of Plato's Socratic Dialogues

#### I – DESCRIPTION

The seminar will be devoted to the study of a selection of 'Socratic dialogues'. Despite their apparent simplicity, the aporetic nature of these dialogues makes them among the most perplexing and philosophically challenging texts of the platonic corpus. In the seminar, we will try to understand them separately and also together as a whole by asking questions such as: How are these early dialogues related to Plato's later dialogues such as the *Republic*? Do they really contain a specific type of moral psychology (referred to by interpreters as 'Socratic intellectualism') later rejected by Plato? Or is their function 'proleptic' as Charles Kahn has argued? We will also try to see how they contribute to Socrates' philosophical mission, i.e. to trigger in us a form of care for the self.

Interpreting any of Plato's dialogues is a somewhat destabilizing experience and an *art*. Hence the interest in dedicating a seminar to these challenging dialogues where the efforts of each participant will help to illuminate the texts. Our focus will not only be the arguments exchanged between the interlocutors but also the meaning they derive from the dramatic context in which the characters find themselves. We will also attempt to appreciate the significance of the dialectical method privileged by Socrates/Plato in the practice of philosophy.

Our work of interpretation will centre on the Platonic texts but we will also have recourse to critical studies to guide our understanding.

#### II – REQUIRED TEXTS

The following book is available at **Haven Books**

43 Seneca Street (at Sunnyside), tel: 613-730-9888, info@havenbooks.ca:

*Plato, Complete Works*, Edited by John. M. Cooper, Associate Editor, D.S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publisher, 1997, 1838p. 0-87220-349-2, 978-0-87220-349-5

(Amazon.ca sells this book (new) for less than \$60. It is thus less expensive to buy this edition than to purchase each dialogue individually. Besides, this complete edition of Plato's dialogues is a smart investment for any serious philosophy student)

#### III – OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

Students are expected to attend all classes and to do the readings in advance of class meetings.

- 1) 09/09 **Introduction to the seminar, to the Platonic *corpus* and to the 'Socratic' dialogues**
- 2) 09/16 ***Euthyphro, Hippias 1***
- 3) 09/23 ***Charmides***
- 4) 09/30 ***Laches, Crito***
- 5) 10/07 ***Lysis***
- 6) 10/21 ***Ion, Hippias 2***
- 7) 11/04 ***Meno***
- 8) 11/11 ***Euthydemus***

- 9) 11/18      **Protagoras part 1: 309a-338b**
- 10) 11/25     **Protagoras part 2: 338b-end**
- 11) 12/02     **Gorgias part 1: 447a-486d**
- 12) 12/09     **Gorgias part 2: 486d-end – Conclusion**

**IV – COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

- 1) Oral presentation.....:    20%
- 2) Discussion Prep. Sheets.....:    20%
- 3) Essay.....:    40%
- 4) Attendance and class participation.....:    20%

**1) Oral ‘presentation’:**

Each student will be in charge of the discussion for one of our weekly meetings. In order to give the discussion a certain structure, please follow these guidelines:

- 1- Identify the topic of the dialogue (what the ancient called its ‘*skopos*’). Be ready to justify your opinion.
- 2- Present two problems you were confronted with while reading this dialogue (either because some ideas were unclear or because you found them disputable)
- 3- Present two ideas that were of special interest *to you* and explain why you found them especially challenging/stimulating.

Please provide each member of the seminar with a copy of your Discussion Outline so that we can examine it together and discuss it critically.

**2) Seminar diary:**

In order to prepare for our weekly meeting, each of you is asked to write a *Discussion Preparation Sheet* on the text to be discussed that day. This sheet will be handed in at the end of the class.

This sheet shall include the same three items listed above. For point 2 and 3, you can, however, limit yourself to one problem and one idea of special interest (instead of two each).

No longer than a page!!!

**3) Essay:**

The essay (10-15 pages) is due on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. You are asked to write an in-depth analysis on one specific question raised in/by the dialogue you orally discussed in the seminar. This analysis will take the form of a critical discussion of a recent article written about this dialogue.

Instructions:

- a) Search for books/articles published on this dialogue in the last 10 years by using the *IPS Plato Bibliography* available online at:  
<http://www.platosociety.org/newbibliography.html>  
 Include ten sources in the research bibliography to be added at the end of your paper.
- b) Choose one article that seems especially interesting to you among the sources you found and read it very closely.
- c) Expose the main thesis defended in this article and discuss it *critically*.  
*(Needless to say, in order to discuss the article critically, you must have an excellent understanding of the dialogue as such!)*

**4) Attendance and class participation:**

In order for this kind of seminar to work, it is important that everyone reads the texts assigned before our weekly meeting and actively takes part in discussions. Hence the 20% devoted to attendance and class participation.

## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2013-14)

### **Assignments:**

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following in the lower right corner of the cover sheet:
  - student name
  - student number
  - course number and section
  - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

### **Deferrals for Term Work:**

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

### **Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://www4.carleton.ca/calendars//ugrad/current/regulations/acadregsuniv14.html#14.3>)

### **Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no

later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

### **Important Dates:**

Sept. 5	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 11	University Day – no undergraduate classes.
Oct. 14	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Oct. 28 – Nov. 1	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 9	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 9	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 11-22	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Dec. 22	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 17-21	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 25	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 8	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-26	Final Examinations. Exams will not be held Apr. 18-20.
Apr. 18	Good Friday – university closed.
Apr. 26	Take-home exams are due.

### **Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a> 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Library <a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/">http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/</a> 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	<a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a> 520-2735