

## PHILOSOPHY 161, SPRING 2014 (M. & W. 5:00-6:20, HSS1128A)

Professor Georgios Anagnostopoulos, Email: [ganagnostopoulos@ucsd.edu](mailto:ganagnostopoulos@ucsd.edu)

Office: H&SS 8034; Office Hours: F. 2:00-4:00, and by appointment.

### Texts:

Plato: FIVE DIALOGUES (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Meno*, *Phaedo*); Plato: LACHES

Plato: PROTAGORAS

### Readings:

1. Course Requirements; an overview of the materials to be covered; the influence of Socratic ethical views.

2. Read *Euthyphro* 2a-11b; R.E. Allen, "Plato's Earlier Theory of Forms"; R. Robinson, "Socratic Definitions".

Our sources about the historical Socrates and his views; the Platonic writings and Plato's Socrates; the practical problem of the *Euthyphro* & the pervasive disagreements about ethical judgments; the primacy of the "What is X?" question & Socratic definitions; the object of definitions & Socratic Forms; Socratic ethical realism; the uses of definitions (epistemic & pragmatic); definitions of Socratic Forms as a decision procedure for ethical judgments and resolution of disagreements.

3. Examination of the three definitions of piety proposed by Euthyphro; the Socratic elenchus and its nature; Socratic view of the nature of values vs. Divine Voluntarism; the Socratic view of values and Ethical Naturalism.

4. Read *Euthyphro* 11b-16a.

Examination of the definitions of piety in terms of genus and differentia or part to whole jointly proposed by Socrates and Euthyphro; piety (a virtue) defined as a kind of knowledge and the cognitivist conception of virtue; what is and is not refuted by the Socratic elenchus in the *Euthyphro*.

5. Read *Laches* 178a-190d.

The problem of how virtues are acquired; the question whether or not practicing a specific activity produces courage; the disagreement between alleged experts on military courage; Socrates' insistence that the question can only be answered by genuine experts; Socrates' insistence that we must have knowledge of the soul and of the nature of virtue prior to answering the question of how virtue is to be acquired.

6. Read *Laches* 190d-194c.

The first three definitions of courage and Socrates' examination of them.

7. Read *Laches* 194c-201c.

The final definition of courage as a kind of knowledge and its examination by Socrates; the difference between courage and similar psychic states and behavior—boldness, audacity, rashness; the reciprocity of virtue; the Unity and Reciprocity of Virtue Theses.

8. Assessment of the Socratic Practice.

The Socratic elenchus and its aims: the Constructive and Non-constructive interpretations of the elenchus; the question whether or not Socrates uses the elenchus as a constructive tool for discovering the nature of Forms; Plato's reflections in the *Meno* about the problems of the Socratic method; Socratic Forms—the ontic and epistemic conditions Socratic Forms must meet in order for their definitions to play the role of a decision procedure and resolve ethical disagreements; Socrates' response to the problem of disagreements about values vs. that of ethical relativism.

9. Read *Apology* 17a-28b

The two kinds of accusations against Socrates (early & late); his defense against the late accusations and his philosophical views on which it depends; Socratic wisdom and disavowal of knowledge.

10. Read *Apology* 28b-44a

Socrates on the most blameworthy ignorance; his mission as a service to the gods and the benefits he confers on the city; his lack of involvement on political affairs vs. his belief that he is the greatest good to the city; the question of whether or not he is a good citizen; his reflections on death, the basis of the fear of it, and the possibility of a better existence after death; death as a possible blessing.

11. Read *Crito* 43a-49e.

The basis of answering the question whether or not Socrates should escape from prison; the opinions of the many vs. those of the wise; the principles of not doing wrong and returning a wrong.

12. Read *Crito* 49e-54e.

Obligations from agreements; Socrates' alleged agreement with the city and its laws; asymmetry of rights between the city/laws and citizens; the principle of persuade or obey.

13. Socrates and democracy.

14. Read *Protagoras* 309a-320c.

Socrates' doubts about the sophists as teachers of virtue; his view that acquiring goods for the soul is different from procuring goods for the body; Protagoras' claim that he can make one more excellent than he is by teaching; Socrates' support of the position that excellence (virtue) cannot be taught and the evidence in support of it from the fact that excellent men are not able to make their children excellent and the practices of Athenian democracy.

15. Read *Protagoras* 320c-328d and *Meno* 89c-100b.

Protagoras' great speech in terms of myth and argument; the universality but non-innateness of virtue; a minimal level of virtue as a requirement of democracy; the teachability of virtue and the claim that laws and citizens teach virtue; the explanation why the children of excellent citizens do not necessarily become excellent; the comparison with Plato's account in the *Meno* of why excellent people are not teachers of virtue.

16. Read *Protagoras* 328d-335c.

Socrates' first discussion on the unity of virtue; the equivalence and identity interpretations.

17. Read *Protagoras* 335c-351b.

The dispute on how to proceed with the discussion; the words of Simonides on the good and their meaning.

18. Read *Protagoras* 351b-358e.

Socratic denial of the phenomena of akrasia; the good as pleasure (hedonism).

19. Read *Protagoras* 358e-362.

The unity of virtue again; virtue is knowledge and the implications of the cognitivist conception of virtue for its teachability; the reversal of the views of Socrates and Protagoras on whether or not virtue is teachable; the comparison with the Socratic position about the teachability of virtue at the end of the *Meno*.

**Requirements:** Attend lectures and participate in discussion. Two term papers of about ten pages each will be required for the class. The first will be due in class on Wednesday of the 6<sup>th</sup> week; the second on the last day of classes. A set of topics for each paper will be distributed two weeks before the papers are due.