

Talk title: Civic Friendship in Plato's Republic

Abstract:

In the *Republic*, Socrates stresses that the citizens in his ideal city, Kallipolis, are bound together by bonds of love and friendship; indeed, the friendship between the citizens is central to his political ideal. In this paper, I reveal the notion of civic friendship at play in Plato's political ideal. While several commentators have argued that the friendship between the citizens is wholly based on the fact that they see one another as useful or beneficial for achieving their own happiness, I argue instead that it is also based on the fact that the citizens view one another as kin and as one another's own (*oikeion*). I argue further that the citizens are correct to view one another this way, for they are *akin*: they all share a feature that is central to who they are and that they value, a feature which enables them to belong to one another and to live a shared life. More specifically, all of the citizens have a commitment to the ideal of civic justice, where this shared commitment shapes their character and makes the citizens alike and so friendly. Thus, my investigation not only illuminates a key feature of Plato's political philosophy – his conception of the bonds that ought to exist between the citizens of a well-run society – but challenges a standard interpretation of the *Republic*, according to which the rulers and non-rulers have radically different characters.