

Plato's *Republic*

Tutorial Scheme

HT18

Harry Alanen

§1 Practical Matters

We will meet eight times in Hilary, with a collection at the start of Trinity. The tutorials will be held in New College. Room and times will be agreed upon closer to the start of term. My email is harry.alanen@philosophy.ox.ac.uk; in urgent matters (say if you are going to be late to a tutorial) you can reach me on my cell: 07749714920.

Please send me your essays by 6pm the night before the tutorial. If you expect to miss this deadline by a few hours *please email me notifying me of this by 6pm.* If I know the essay will be coming in late, I can try and rework my schedule around that and still provide you with written feedback. I cannot guarantee that I will be able to comment on essays that arrive very late (e.g. on the morning of the tutorial). Also send the tutorial essay to the other student(s) in your group (if any). I expect you to read each other's essays; this should help us to have fruitful discussions during the tutorials. After tutorials, I will send you individual comments on your essay.

Essays should be between 1500 and 2000 words (discounting long quotes and references). In addition to essays I will set a gobbet question each week (or a comparable task). In the exam (and collections), one of the questions you *must* answer is analyzing three gobbets, i.e. three quotes from the *Republic*. This requires familiarity with the text, since a good gobbet answer should place the quote in its wider context, as well as discuss its contents critically. If requested, I can circulate some thoughts on answering gobbet questions at the start of term. *The gobbet answer should be around 500-750 words.* Where relevant, you can work the gobbet into your essay, but I will then expect your essay to be somewhat longer than usual (between 2000-2500 words). Note, however, that the gobbet may not be directly relevant to the essay topic – this is to ensure we cover as much ground as possible.

I strongly recommend you attend the *Republic* lectures. They will cover topics we will not be able to discuss in the tutorials; the *Republic* contains ten Books, and e.g. the faculty reading list notes 15 different topics – well beyond what can be covered in eight meetings. The lectures will not only help you give a good overview of the entire work, but also cover the main interpretations (and their problems) of the different topics. This should help you avoid obvious errors, and to write more detailed answers. Alas, I cannot guarantee that the lectures and the tutorial topics will match each week.

Failure to submit written work will be noted. If there is a compelling reason – e.g. illness or similar – for you to miss a tutorial, please let me know in advance so I can try and reschedule. Where illness is the reason, I will except a note from a doctor or college nurse. Repeated late submissions or arrivals to tutorials will also be noted.

§2 The Text and Introductory Reading

The set translation for 115 is *Plato Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, and revised by C.D.C. Reeve (Hackett 1992). *Please bring a copy of the text to the tutorials.* There are other translations available, and checking how different scholars have interpreted the text is sometimes helpful. You may find the line-by-line commentaries at times helpful in explicating difficult arguments or passages. For these, see the faculty reading list (under A). The reading list can be found on weblearn.

To get started, I ask you read the *Republic* alongside Julia Annas' helpful *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (OUP, 1981)¹ before the term starts. Dominic Scott's "The *Republic*" is a short, "birds-eye view", of the entire dialogue. It can be found in Gail Fine's edited volume *The Oxford Handbook of Plato* (OUP, 2008), and can be accessed electronically via Solo.

In case you are new to Plato and the *Republic* I recommend reading some of the following articles; this is to help you set Plato in his historical context and to get some familiarity with his style of writing. For Plato and his historical context read Malcolm Schofield's "Plato in his Time and Place" (in Fine's *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*), and/or Terence Irwin's "Plato: The Intellectual Background" (in Richard Kraut's (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, CUP, 1992). For articles discussing Plato's style, see e.g. M.M. McCabe's "Plato's Ways of Writing" (in Fine's *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*), and/or Christopher Rowe's "The Literary and Philosophical Style of the *Republic*" in G. Santas (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Blackwell, 2006). These should all be accessible electronically via Solo.²

Feel free to read any of the other major examinations of the dialogue (items (7)-(16) on the faculty reading list). The more reading you get done before the term starts, the more you will get out of the tutorials and lectures.

¹ Referred to hereafter as "Annas 1981".

² I've indicated book chapters that are accessible online via solo, but note that I have not done so for journal articles; since most journal articles are accessible electronically.

§3 Topics

Here is my suggestion for topics to be covered. I've indicated which articles or chapters from the faculty reading list (and some additional things) should be helpful for each week under "Reading", and some additional things that may also be helpful under "Additional Reading". I do not expect you to read everything, and *as a rule of thumb you should spend more time with the Republic* than the secondary literature. That said, for a good essay (and for the exam) you are expected to have a good grasp of different interpretations one can make of the *Republic*, and the secondary literature is helpful in laying out these and their associated problems. You should feel free to bring in any material you find relevant or helpful, including material outside the faculty reading list.

I've focused these tutorials more on writing than on reading. This is to get you to engage critically with the text. The writing is obviously done under time pressure, and handing in rough drafts (rather than polished essays) is fine, although I do expect the use of references to be clear (author, title/date, and page(s) when relevant). As preparation for the collection and the exam you can expand on your reading. The collection in Trinity will replicate an actual exam, covering the entire *Republic*.

For each week I've assigned a general essay topic, but you need not use that as your title. Coming up with your own essay questions is good practice, and I warmly recommend you do this, but I ask you stick broadly to the topic of the week (if the essay is way off topic, I may not have time to prepare relevant feedback). I've supplied some general questions with the essay topics, that should help you get started; *you need not answer all the questions*.

Note that for the gobbets I have not assigned any further reading. You should read the relevant passage as well as the context the passage occurs in. For in-depth analysis of what a particular passage is trying to establish, what problems it may relate to, or what problems the passage may contain, the line-by-line commentaries may provide useful.

As noted above, the *Republic* contains a whole range of topics we will not be able to cover. Have a look at the faculty reading list. If there are some topics you are particularly keen on covering, I'll be happy to make changes provided that (a) you and your tutorial partner(s) are in agreement that you want to cover this topic (and which topic to replace!), and (b) the proposed topic isn't closely related to another one (my interest is, after all, to try and give you as comprehensive an overview as possible so you'll be well prepared for the exam).³

³ Obviously if you the only student, then making changes is simpler.

§3.1 WEEK 1: The Challenge of the *Republic*

Reading:

- The *Republic* Book I and Book II (up to line 368a).⁴
- Chapter 3 in Annas 1981.
- Rachel Barney, "Socrates Refutation of Trasymachus" in Santas (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Blackwell, 2006) (available electronically via Solo).
- Roslyn Weiss, "Wise Guys and Smart Alecks in Republic 1 and 2" in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic* (CUP, 2007) (available electronically via Solo).

Additional Reading:

- Rachel Barney, "Calicles and Thrasymachus", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition),
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/calicles-thrasymachus/>.
- Heinaman, R., "Plato's Division of Goods in the Republic", in *Phronesis* 47 (2002), 309-35 (available electronically via Solo).
- Chapters 11 & 12 in Terence Irwin's *Plato's Ethics* (OUP, 1995).
- *Republic* 444e-445a, 612.
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.3 and 4. on the faculty reading list.

Task:

Instead of a gobbet, I'd like you to write a short summary of what each of the characters in Book I think justice is (Chapter 2 of Annas 1981 is helpful here, alternatively see Chapter 11 of Irwin 1995). Think about the following: In what way do the accounts differ? In what way are they similar? Pay attention to Trasymachus. Is he advancing one or two accounts of justice (compare 338c-341a and 343b-344d)? If one, is it consistent? If two, how do they differ?

⁴ N.B. References to Plato's works make use of Stephanus page, column (and line numbers added in Burnet's OCT edition). E.g. "*Republic* 327a1" refers to page 327, column a, line 1, which is the first line of Book I of the *Republic*. Good editions of the *Republic* (and Plato's work in general) will print these either in the margins, or place them in brackets in the text. You will get used to working with these, and I expect you to make use of them when citing or referring to Plato – this allows the reader to pinpoint what exact passage you have in mind. That said, you do not need to worry about the line numbers; it is generally sufficient to cite the page and column (e.g. 338c-341a).

Essay: How do Glaucon and Adeimantus “renew the argument of Trasymachus” (*Republic* II 358b-c)?

Some things to think about in connection with this: Why is Glaucon unhappy with Socrates response to Trasymachus? How does the approach of Glaucon and Adeimantus differ from Trasymachus? How does Glaucon classify different goods, and what does this add to the argument? What does Adeimantus speech (starting at 362d) add to the discussion (if anything)? Do Glaucon and Adeimantus offer the same challenge, or different challenges?

§3.2 WEEK 2: The Ideal City

Reading:

- The *Republic* Books II-IV (368a-427d, but focus on 368a-392d, and 412a-427d).
- Chapter 4 in Annas 1981.
- Donald Morrison, “The Utopian Character of Plato’s Ideal City” in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, (available electronically via Solo).
- Burnyeat, M.F.: 'Utopia and Fantasy: the practicability of Plato's ideal city', in J. Hopkins & A. Savile (eds.) *Psychoanalysis, Mind and Art* (Blackwell 1992), pp. 175—87 (reprinted in G. Fine (ed.) *Plato 2: ethics, politics, religion and the soul* (OUP 1999), pp. 297—308).

Additional Reading:

- Leslie Brown, “How Totalitarian is Plato's Republic?”, in Ostenfeld (ed.) *Essays on Plato's Republic* (Århus UP 1998), pp. 13—25.
- Chapter 4 & 6 of Karl Popper’s *The Open Society and its Enemies, volume i: the spell of Plato* (Routledge 1945, 3rd ed. 1957).
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.5. on the faculty reading list.

Essay: Is the *Kallipolis* (the Ideal City) intended as a thought experiment, or as a model for an actual society?

Think about the following: If the first, what can one learn from such a thought experiment? Why, if it is a thought experiment, does Plato go into detail about education and censorship? If a model for an actual society, is it a utopia? Is the society totalitarian? Is there a difference between the city being possible, and it being practicable?

Gobbet:

‘The investigation we’re undertaking is not an easy one but requires keen eyesight. Therefore, since we aren’t clever people, we should adopt the method of investigation that we’d use if, lacking keen eyesight, we were told to read small letters from a distance and then noticed that the same letters existed elsewhere in a larger size and on a larger surface. We’d consider it a godsend, I think, to be allowed to read the larger ones first and then to examine the smaller ones, to see whether they really are the same.’

‘That’s certainly true, said Adeimantus, but how is this case similar to our investigation of justice?’ (*Rep.* II 368c-e)

§3.3 WEEK 3: The Soul and its Parts

Reading:

- The *Republic* Book IV (esp. 435c-441c), Book VIII (580d-583b), Book X (602c-604e).
- Jessica Moss, “Appearances and Calculation: Plato’s Division of the Soul”, in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* Vol 34 (2008), pp. 35–68.
- Cooper, J.M.: 'Plato's Theory of Human Motivation', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* I (1984) pp. 3-21 (reprinted in G. Fine (ed.) *Plato 2: ethics, politics, religion and the soul*, OUP 1999, pp. 186—206).
- Hendrik Lorenz, Part 1 of *The Brute Within* (OUP 2006).

Additional Reading:

- Chapter 5 of Annas 1981.
- Chapters 13 and 14 in Irwin’s *Plato’s Ethics* (OUP, 1995).
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.6. on the faculty reading list.

Task:

No Gobbet this week. Instead write a short account of each the cardinal virtues (moderation, courage, wisdom, and justice) and how they manifest themselves in the individual, and in the city. (You’ll find the main discussion in Book IV, 427d-435c, 441c-444e.) In connection with this, think about how or if the virtues fit the account of the parts of the soul.

Essay: What, if anything, is problematic about Plato’s argument for dividing the soul into parts?

Think about: Do Plato's argument establish the soul has parts? What precisely, is a "part" of the soul? Sometimes Plato seems to argue as if the parts are autonomous agents (with independent powers), other times he seems talk of parts metaphorically.

§3.4 WEEK 4: Female Guardians in the *Kallipolis*

Reading:

- The *Republic* Book V (up to 471c).
- Annas, J.E.: 'Plato's Republic and Feminism', *Philosophy* II (1976) pp 307—21 (reprinted in Fine, G. (ed.) *Plato 2: ethics, politics, religion and the soul*, OUP 1999, pp. 265—79).
- Vlastos, G.: 'Was Plato a Feminist?', *Times Literary Supplement* 4485 (17 March 1989) 276, 288—9).
- Saxonhouse, A.W.: 'The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato', *Political Theory*, iv (1976) 195—212 (reprinted in R. Kraut (ed.) *Plato's Republic: critical essays*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997, pp. 95—113, available electronically via solo).

Additional Reading:

- Sampson, K.: "Identity and Gender in Plato", in L. Alanen & C. Witt (eds.), *Feminist Reflections on the History of Philosophy*, Synthese, 2004, pp.17-32, available online: https://ia600209.us.archive.org/12/items/springer_10.1007-1-4020-2489-4/10.1007-1-4020-2489-4.pdf
- For a general discussion on feminism and history of philosophy see C. Witt: "Feminist History of Philosophy", in *ibid.*
- Burche, M.: *Women in Plato's Political Theory*, Macmillan, 1999.
- For a review of Burche's book see A. Saxonhouse's review in *Hypatia*, Vol 17, 2002.
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.14. on the faculty reading list.
- See also the "Further reading" in Annas 1981, p 188-189.

Essay: Why does Plato include women among the guardians?

Think about: Does Plato offer a consistent argument for why women should be included as guardians? Is the argument convincing? Does this inclusion make Plato a feminist? What counts as a feminist argument – is it sufficient to recognize women are equally capable of ruling, or is that insufficient?

Gobbet:

All of you in the city are brothers [...] but the god who made you mixed some gold into those who are adequately equipped to rule, because they are most valuable. He put silver in those who are auxiliaries and iron and bronze in the farmers and other craftsmen. For the most part you will produce children like yourselves, but, because you are all related, a silver child will occasionally be born from a golden parent, and vice versa, and all the others from each other. (*Rep.* III 415a-b)

§3.5 WEEK 5: Knowledge, Opinion, and the real Philosophers

Reading:

- The *Republic* Books V – VI (471c-502c).
- Chapter 8 in Annas 1981.
- Lee, D.C.: 'Interpreting Plato's Republic: Knowledge and Belief', in *Philosophy Compass* 5/10 (2010) pp. 854–864.
- Fine, G.: 'Knowledge and Belief in Republic V—VII', in S. Everson (ed.), *Epistemology: Companions to Ancient Thought*, i., CUP, 1990, pp. 85—115; reprinted in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 1: metaphysics and epistemology*, OUP, 1999, pp. 215—46; and in G. Fine, *Plato on Knowledge and Forms*, OUP, 2003 (available electronically via solo).

Additional Reading:

- Fine, G.: 'Knowledge and Belief in Republic V', in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 55 (1978) pp. 121-39, reprinted in G. Fine, *Plato on Knowledge and Forms*, OUP, 2003 (available electronically via solo).
- Gonzalez, F.: 'Propositions or Objects? A Critique of Gail Fine', in *Phronesis*, 41 (1996) pp. 245–275.
- Brown, L.: "The verb 'to be' in Greek Philosophy", in S. Everson (ed.) *Language: Companions to ancient thought*, iii, CUP, 1994, pp. 212-236; reprinted in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 1: metaphysics and epistemology*, OUP, 1999; also available online:
http://media.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/assets/pdf_file/0005/16673/The_verb.pdf
- Chapter 9 in Annas 1981.
- Sedley, D.: "Philosophy, the Forms and the Art of Ruling", in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic*, CUP, 2007, pp. 256-283 (available electronically via Solo).

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.6 (987a32-988a18), in J. Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle : The Revised Oxford Translation*, Vol. 2 (Princeton, 1984).
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.8 on the faculty reading list.

Essay: Why is the distinction between Knowledge and Opinion important for Plato?

To think about: What does Plato mean when he says belief is of ‘what both is and is not’? Why does Plato think the Forms are important? Is knowledge a kind of belief? What would Plato say to a modern account of knowledge as ‘justified, true, belief’? Is Plato’s arguments for why the Philosophers should rule compelling?

Task:

Instead of a gobbet, write an essay outline for next week’s essay. Have a look at the reading, and think about what problems you want to address or raise in the essay. You can also use this as an opportunity to raise an unclarities you might have, prior to writing the essay. Writing outlines can be a helpful way to approach exam answers, giving you an opportunity to think briefly about the question, how you understand it, and how you would go about answering the question asked. If you would rather come up with your own essay topic for next week’s material that is also fine, and this is an opportunity for you to get some early feedback on any suggestions or thoughts I might have to your suggested approach before you write your essay.

§3.6 WEEK 6: The Forms, and the analogies of the Sun, the Line, and the Cave

Reading:

- The *Republic* Books VI-VII (502d-521b).
- Chapters 9 and 10 in Annas 1981.
- Sedley, D.: ”Philosophy, the Forms and the Art of Ruling”, in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic*, CUP, 2007, pp. 256-283 (available electronically via Solo).
- G. Santas "The Form of the Good in Plato's *Republic*" in *Philosophical Inquiry*, 1980, pp. 374—403, reprinted in G. Fine (ed.) *Plato 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology*, OUP, 1999, pp. 247-274.

Additional Reading:

- Smith, N.: ‘Plato’s Divided Line’, in *Ancient Philosophy*, 16 (1996), pp. 25–46.
- Barney, R.: “The Carpenter and the Good” in Cairns, Herrmann & Penner (eds.) *Pursuing the Good* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 293-319.⁵
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.9 on the faculty reading list.

Essay: Why is the Form of the Good ‘the most important subject’ (505a) in the Guardians’ education? (Exam TT 2015)

Note: I will give comments and further things to think about on the essay outline.

Gobbet:

‘If you look at a bed from the side or the front or from anywhere else is it a different bed each time? Or does it only appear different, without being at all different? And is that also the case with other things?’

‘That’s the way it is—it appears different without being so.’

‘Then consider this very point: What does painting do in each case? Does it imitate that which is as it is, or does it imitate that which appears as it appears? Is it an imitation of appearances or of truth?’

‘Of appearances.’ (Book X, 598a–b; Exam TT 2015)

§3.7 WEEK 7: Different constitutions of cities and rulers

Reading:

- The *Republic* Books VIII-IX (543a-580b).
- Chapter 12 in Annas 1981 (esp. 294-305).
- Hitz, Z.: “Degenerate regimes in Plato’s Republic”, in M. L. McPherran (ed.), *Plato’s ‘Republic’: A critical guide*, CUP, 2010 pp.103-131 (available online via solo).

⁵ N.B.: This focuses on Aristotle's criticism of Plato, but may be helpful in raising questions and problems about Plato's account.

- Santas, G.: “Plato’s criticism of democracy in the *Republic*”, in *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 2007, Vol.24, pp.70-89.

Additional Reading:

- Kraut, R.: “Reason and Justice in the *Republic*”, in E. Lee, A. Mourelatos, & R. Rorty (eds.), *Exegesis and Argument Studies in Greek Philosophy presented to Gregory*, Assen, 1973, pp. 207-224.
- Chapter 17 in Terence Irwin’s *Plato’s Ethics* (OUP, 1995).
- Chapter 3 in Malcom Schofield’s *Plato : Political Philosophy*, OUP, 2006 (available online via solo).
- Parry, D.: “The Unhappy Tyrant and the Craft of Inner Rule”, in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic* (CUP, 2007) (available electronically via Solo).
- Blössner, N.: “The City-Soul Analogy”, in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic* (CUP, 2007) (available electronically via Solo).

Essay: Would Plato look more favourably on modern British democracy than on Athenian democracy? (Exam TT 2017)

To think about: Are the descriptions of the cities and souls of the rulers apt or helpful? Why does Socrates think the *Kallipolis* will decline? What consequence, if any, does that have for his account of justice?

Gobbet:

Then education is the craft concerned with doing this very thing, this turning around, and with how the soul can most easily and effectively be made to do it. It isn’t the craft of putting sight into the soul. Education takes for granted that sight is there but that it isn’t turned the right way or looking where it ought to look, and it tries to redirect it appropriately. (Book VII, 518d; Exam TT 2015)

§3.8 WEEK 8: Justice and Happiness

Reading:

- The *Republic* Book IX (esp. 576-587), but also look at 443-5, 519-521.
- Chapter 12 in Annas 1981 (esp. 305-320).

- Sachs, D. “A Fallacy in Plato's Republic”, *Philosophical Review* lxxii (1963) 141—58, reprinted in Kraut, R. (ed.) *Plato's Republic: critical essays* (Rowman & Littlefield 1997) pp. 1—16 (available electronically via Solo).
- Kraut, R.: ‘The Defense of Justice in Plato’s Republic’, in R. Kraut (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992) Available electronically via Solo.
- N. Dahl ‘Plato’s Defence of Justice’, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, li (1991) pp. 809—834; reprinted in G. Fine (ed.) *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

Additional Reading:

- Chapter 15 in Terence Irwin’s *Plato’s Ethics* (OUP, 1995).
- Kraut, R.: “Return to the Cave: Republic 519-521”, in G. Fine (ed.), *Plato 2 Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul* (OUP 1999), pp. 235-254.
- Sedley, D.: ”Philosophy, the Forms and the Art of Ruling”, in Ferrari (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to Plato's Republic*, CUP, 2007, pp. 256-283 (available electronically via Solo).
- For more reading on this topic, see the entries under B.11 on the faculty reading list.

Essay: How do the three arguments provided in Book IX help Socrates answer Glaucon’s challenge (in Book II)?

To think about: In 519-521 we learn that the Philosophers must be “compelled” to return to the cave (and to rule), while Plato welcomes their reluctance to abandon their theoretical studies, doesn't this undermine Plato's aim to show that justice is compatible with self-interest and one's own happiness? Does Plato’s answer Glaucon’s challenge satisfactorily? What does the discussion in Books V-IX add that we didn’t know at the end of Book IV (445)?

Gobbet:

‘Then it isn’t right. But when the calm is next to the painful it appears pleasant, and when it is next to the pleasant it appears painful. However, there is nothing sound in these appearances as far as the truth about pleasure is concerned, only some kind of magic.’

‘That’s what the argument suggests, at any rate.’ (Book IX, 584a)