STRUCTURED LIBERAL EDUCATION

SYLLABUS

AUTUMN QUARTER 1976-77

COURSE TITLE: SLE SEMINAR
DEPARTMENT CODE: 999
COURSE NUMBER: 91
UNITS: 9
INTRODUCTION

This syllabus serves many purposes. It contains the academic calendar of the Program in Structured Liberal Education, the weekly reading assignments, lectures, discussions, films, etc. In this way it can guide you in preparing for the work of the program. By studying it earlier rather than later, you can pace yourself and your work in such a way that you can prepare for participation in the seminar well in advance of the week in which a particular problem and text are going to be discussed.

The syllabus also contains another feature which deserves your particular attention: the "Topic Questions" and "Textual Questions" listed under each week. These questions are intended to stimulate your thinking about the topic or the text which they concern. They are not specific questions requiring specific answers, or questions that will appear on an examination or that necessarily will be used in a discussion. They are meant, rather, to illustrate the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself about the topics and the texts. Therefore, they should be used not only because they may be valuable and relevant in and of themselves; they should also be used as a means to study how to generate questions. After all, a question that is asked, and the way in which it is asked, is as important as the answer that may be given to it.
REQUIRED TEXTS


Hesiod, Theogony, N.O. Brown (tr.), New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1953.


RECOMMENDED TEXTS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to participation in scheduled SLE activities, the formal requirements of the program include four written papers and a final examination.

Paper Assignments

PAPER TOPIC #1 -- Due Monday, October 11 at 5:00 p.m. (Week I)
What is education? Choose one of the authors read in the first week, and contrast your own ideas of what a good education ought to be with his ideas on education. You might organize your essay around the relationship of education to desire, will, pain, discipline, experience, or some other central theme. Consult the topic questions for Week I for further suggestions.

(4-5 pages)

PAPER TOPIC #2 -- Due Monday, October 25 at 5:00 p.m. (Week V)
What are the purposes of a myth? How does a myth differ from a more conventional narrative? Take a mythical story from the reading (Odyssey, Hesiod, Oresteia, Medea, or Oedipus), and analyze how the specifically mythical components of the story (the gods, supernatural events, magic coincidences, etc.) provide it with meaning. Consult the topic questions for Week III.

(4-6 pages)

PAPER TOPIC #3 -- Due Monday, November 15 at 5:00 p.m. (Week VIII)
Is it possible to be both a good person and a good citizen? Do you think that private codes of morality inevitably conflict with the laws of the state or the common welfare? Write an essay giving your own ideas on this subject as a response to Antigone and the position of Socrates in the Apology and the Crito.

(5-6 pages)

PAPER TOPIC #4 -- Due Monday, December 6 at 5:00 p.m. (Week V)
Which is more attractive to you -- the Platonic view of the world or the Aristotelian? Contrast the two philosophies in one area: politics, justice, art, beauty, love, education, etc., and write an essay justifying your choice. Be sure to state what makes your point of view more satisfactory; be careful not to caricature the view that you criticize.

(6-7 pages)
WEEK I: 27 September to 1 October

TOPIC: What is Education?

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Mark Mancall

SCHEDULE:

3:15  Plenary Session - "Education"
7:00  Film: Black Orpheus
3:15  Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING:


Hamilton, Edith, Greek Mythology - Story of Orpheus. (copied selections)

TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. What is the social structure of the act of educating and learning?

II. What is the psychological structure of the act of educating and learning? What are the respective roles of the teacher and the student? Are there limits to what the teacher does or can do? What is required of each?

What is the structure of the process of educating and learning? Whence the discipline that education and learning require? What is the nature of the discipline implied by the process of educating and learning?

What is being "taught" in the process of educating and learning?

V. Does the process of educating-learning have an "objective?"

VI. What is the difference between educating and training?

VII. What is the relationship between education and training?

VIII. What is the function of language in the process of educating and learning?

IX. What is the function of "sight" or "vision" in the process?
X. Is any and all "experience" part of the process of education?

XI. At what point in the biography of an individual does "education," as opposed to "training," begin?

XII. Are education and socialization different?

XIII. Does education depend on buildings, courses, a curriculum, a major?

In light of these questions, what is "peer teaching" and how does it relate to education? Are there really any "peers" in the process? Doesn't the act of educating imply inequality of some sort? Must one know something that the other doesn't in order for education to take place?

What is the function of "the will to learn" in the process?
WEEK II: 4 to 8 October

TOPIC: Early Greek Views of Man and the Cosmos

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Mark Mancall and Gregson Davis

SCHEDULE:

3:15  Plenary Session--Mark Mancall - "Myth"
7:00  Plenary Session--Jon Reider - "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Greek History, but Were Afraid to Ask"

3:15  Plenary Session--Gregson Davis - "Hesiod"
4:15  Discussion Sections

3:15  Discussion Sections
7:00  Plenary Session--Professor Zubrow - "Archaeology: The Structure of Inference"

REQUIRED READING:

Hesiod, Theogony.

Homer, The Odyssey, (begin reading The Odyssey; it will be discussed during Week III).

Orwell, G., "Politics and the English Language" (copied selections).

RECOMMENDED READING:


Jaeger, W., Paideia, Book I, Chs. 1 - 4.

TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. What is it like to live in a "mythic" world? Does it mean that man is always controlled by supernatural forces? What does it mean to be free or responsible in such a world?

In a world dominated by myth, what does it mean to be rational or reasonable? Is there a distinction between rational and irrational behavior?

III. What is the relationship of nature to culture? How is the real "physical" world portrayed in Homer and Hesiod? How does this differ from other (modern, later Greek) ideas about nature? Is it proper to call this view scientific in any sense?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

HESIOD

I. How does Hesiod relate human nature and physical nature? Why is the development of the universe described in terms of human generations?

What is the significance of Zeus' victory? What kind of ruler is he? What does the world of gods tell us about the world of men?

III. What is the significance of the male-female polarities in Hesiod's cosmology? What different roles do the female gods play?

What is the logic of Hesiod's cosmology? Is his thought "rational" in some sense? How does he think?
WEEK III: 11 to 15 October

TOPIC: Myth versus Philosophy

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Helene Foley and John Goheen

SCHEDULE

5:00 Papers Due
3:15 Plenary Session--Helene Foley - "The Odyssey"
4:15 Plenary Session--John Goheen - "Heraclitus and Xenophanes"
7:00 The Trojan Women (Film)
Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections
3:15 Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING:

Homer, The Odyssey.


Nahm, M.C., Selections from Early Greek Philosophy, read copied selections: Ch. 3, "Heraclitus" and from Ch. 4, "I. Xenophanes."

RECOMMENDED READING:

Jaeger, W., Paideia, Book I, Ch. 9

TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. How does philosophy develop? What are its initial questions? Is it related to religion? If so, how? Is it trying to answer religious questions in a different way?

II. Are myth and reason opposed to each other in this period? Is this opposition necessary? Could myth and reason be reconciled?

III. Does philosophy at this stage have any political implications? Why do social life and politics seem to be secondary subjects at this point?

IV. Does one read "myth" and philosophy differently?

V. What do you imagine would be the social conditions that would lead someone to begin to think philosophically? Why did this phenomenon develop where and when it did?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

What kind of literature is The Odyssey? How is epic poetry different from other kinds? Why would this kind of poetry develop earlier than other kinds?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

THE ODYSSEY

I. What is education in The Odyssey? How do Telemachus and Odysseus learn? Why are journeys so important to both of them? How are the differences in their journeys related to the differences in what they learn?

II. What is the significance of each of the unusual adventures—Lotus Eaters, Scylla and Charybdis, Sirens, Circe, etc.—Odysseus has? What does each of these show about the development of character?

What is the nature of justice in The Odyssey? Why is revenge so important? What does this say about social values? Where do these values derive from?

What kind of society is depicted in The Odyssey? What are this culture's ideas about wealth, social class, family, the individual, government?

V. How do people think in The Odyssey? Why are dreams so important?

What kind of hero is Odysseus? Should heroes lie?

VII. How are the gods important in this world? To what extent do they control or influence human destiny? How can a man be a hero in a world run by gods?

VIII. Is The Odyssey meant to be realistic? How believable are the characters and situations?

Why did Homer become the Greek national poet, and his poems the basis for Greek education for several centuries, despite the fact that both the feudal warrior culture and the traditional belief in the Olympian Gods had largely disappeared?
XENOPHANES

I. How does Xenophanes attack Homer's and Hesiod's anthropomorphic conception of the gods? How does his conception of the gods differ?

II. How does Xenophanes' view of man and material processes differ from Hesiod's? In what sense is he more scientific? What are the limits of physical perception for him?

HERACLITUS

I. How does Heraclitus distinguish his thought from Homer's and Hesiod's?

Why did early Greek science start from cosmology and not direct observation? Why do both Xenophanes and Heraclitus combine scientific theories with religious and ethical ones?

How does Heraclitus' concept of law or logic (Logos) differ from the traditional idea of fate? How does his idea of justice relate to the natural order?

Is "fire" natural or divine for Heraclitus? How far is he really separated from Hesiod's thinking?

V. Compare Heraclitus' view of opposites with Hesiod's. Why is everything based on change and contradiction for him? Does he find this principle to be a source of social criticism?

What does "the way up and the way down are one and the same" mean?
WEEK IV: 18 to 22 October

TOPIC: Myth in Drama and the Search for Justice and Truth

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Helene Foley

SCHEDULE:

3:15  Plenary Session--Helene Foley - "Aeschylus"
7:00  Plenary Session--Helene Foley - "Greek Theatre Production"
3:15  Discussion Sections
3:15  Discussion Sections
7:00  Film: Electra

REQUIRED READING:

Aeschylus, Oresteia, in Aeschylus, I.
Euripides, Electra.
Lloyd, G.E.R., Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle, Ch. 3
Nahm, M.C., Selections from Early Greek Philosophy, read copied selection from Ch. 4, "II, Parmenides."
Pollitt, J.J., Art and Experience in Classical Greece, Chs. 1 & 2

RECOMMENDED READING:

Jaeger, W., Paideia, Book II, Ch. 1

TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. Why is drama, not epic, the "literature" of the new democratic society?

What is the artist's relation to his material and to his audience?

Why do the dramatists use mythology as a subject matter? Why not plays about everyday life? How much of the mythology is original? Does it matter if the playwright changes something in the original story?

Why the trilogy form? What kind of overall shape does it provide? For example, what is the logic of the plot of the Oresteia? Is suspense important?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

Does a modern audience respond to the "tragedy" the way a classical Athenian audience would? What parts of the story retain their impact even if one doesn't believe in the gods?

What kind of vehicle for the expression of ideas is drama? Is it a suitable way to present philosophical truths, make political propaganda, inspire religious devotion? Could it be dangerous in any way?

VII. How important are the implied religious surroundings of the drama, the festivals at which they were presented? How does this differ from the view of drama as either entertainment or cultural enrichment?

VIII. Why should anyone be led to believe that change is unreal? Is there anything in Greek drama which would lead to this view?

Is what is "real" something man can know?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

AESCHYLUS

I. How much of human action is meaningful in Aeschylus? Compare Aeschylus with Homer. How do men make choices? How rational are they? Why must they suffer in order to learn?

II. What is Zeus' justice? How does he differ from Hesiod's Zeus? Is justice an abstract law or a god? Compare Aeschylus with Heraclitus. How would Aeschylus criticize Homer's conception of justice as revenge?

III. How does the possibility for justice change in the second play? Why is the third play a trial? What kind of trial is it? Is the "just" solution in the Oresteia preferable to that in The Odyssey? What has changed?

IV. How has the portrayal of the gods changed? Why are the gods involved in the solution? Why is Athena's solution better than Apollo's? How does it reflect the relationship of human society to nature?

V. How has the concept of the hero changed? Why is Orestes so unimportant in the last play? Why is it set in Athens?

VI. How do the images of light and darkness, snakes, nets, etc. change throughout the three plays? Is there an aesthetic logic to these changes?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS (cont.):

PARMENIDES

I. How does Parmenides continue the attack on the traditional myth and cosmology? Why do the early theories not explain change? How does he disagree with Heraclitus' explanation?

What is the "way of opinion?"

Why does he write poetry? Is his goddess different from a muse?

IV. Is sense perception a source of knowledge for Parmenides? Why is it misleading? What is real? Why must the real be single, immovable, and unchanging, and also intelligible?

V. What does "what is, is" mean? Why is the real identical with itself?

POLLITT

I. How can a work of art be said to impose an "order on chaos?" According to Pollitt, what are the values embodied in Archaic sculpture, and how are these evident? Why should an event such as the Persian Wars alter the style of artistic production? How does a change in style indicate a shifting concern with more general issues?

What was the "oriental" influence on classical sculpture and design? How did the Greeks react to this influence? What is "mannerism?" What social conditions might motivate such a return to an earlier style?
WEEK V: 25 to 29 October

TOPIC: The Search for Justice and Truth in the High Classical Period

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Helene Foley

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 Papers Due
Tue 3:15 Plenary Session--Helene Foley - "Euripides & Sophocles"
    4:15 Plenary Session--John Goheen - "Democritus"
    7:00 Film: Medea
Wed 3:15 Plenary Session--Professor A. Raubitschek, "Greeks versus Barbarians"
    4:15 Discussion Sections
Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections
    7:00 Film: Antigone

REQUIRED READING:

Euripides, The Bacchants and Medea

Sophocles, Oedipus and Antigone, in The Complete Plays of Sophocles

Nahm, M.C., Selections from Early Greek Philosophy, read copied selections from Ch. 5, "III. Leucippus" and "IV. Democritus."

Lloyd, G.E.R., Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle, Ch. 4.

Pollitt, J.J., Art and Experience in Classical Greece, Chs. 3 and 4.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Dodds, E.R., The Greeks and the Irrational, Ch. 3 and "Appendix, I, Maenadism."

Jaeger, W., Paideia, Book II, Ch. 2
TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. What has changed in the ways Sophocles and Euripides present myth, the gods, the chorus, and human psychology? What has happened to the old concept of the hero? (Compare Oedipus and Odysseus.) Why are there fewer characters?

What are the limiting conditions that support the possibility of tragedy? When does tragedy become impossible? What conditions in Athens brought this about?

What parallels can you draw between classical tragedy and pre-Socratic philosophy? Could one argue that they show a similar development away from the Homeric tradition? What differences are there?

How do the plastic arts (architecture and sculpture) reflect some of the same social changes that tragedy and philosophy reflect?

V. Is there anything in Sophocles and Euripides that might be taken as critical of contemporary Athenian society? How does Democritus focus the tendency in the dramatists towards a materialistic view of man and society?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

SOPHOCLES AND EURIPIDES

I. What difference has resulted from the abandonment of the trilogy form?

Are the characters portrayed more realistically than in Aeschylus and Homer? How is their human aspect affected by actions of the gods, fate, etc.? What is the new relationship between men and gods?

III. Are these tragedies more "tragic" than Aeschylus? Do they seem more modern? What makes them so? What are the elements of tragedy?

IV. How is society conceived in these plays? How are the society and its ruler related? What do the plague and the exodus of the women represent? How stable is normal society? What can disturb it and how can this be overcome?

V. How do characters know things in these plays? Why do the blind see more clearly than the sighted? Why do men have to understand Dionysus through irrational means? Why is reason limited?

How do men act when they have incomplete knowledge? Why are Oedipus and Pentheus destroyed? What kind of heroes are they? Compare them with Orestes and Odysseus.
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS (cont.):

Is Oedipus really destroyed? Why are Sophocles and Euripides less confident about human nature than Aeschylus?

VII. Are the gods just? Is this a relevant question any more? How much of human action is reasonable, subject to choice? If man can't be fully rational, how can he be good? Who is responsible for justice, men or gods?

VIII. What kind of gods are Apollo and Dionysus? What kind of religion is Dionysian? Are there modern equivalents? Are Sophocles and Euripides attacking the traditional anthropomorphic belief in the Homeric gods? How is their critique different from that of the pre-Socratic philosophers?

How does Pasolini change the Medea myth? What do you think he is trying to say about the nature of myth? Is it relevant to the modern world?

DEMOCRITUS

I. How does Democritus criticize Parmenides? What does he use from him?

How do atoms and the void work? What causes motion and changes? How does the universe come into being? Why does nothing occur at random?

How accurate is sense perception? What can be substituted for it?

What kind of ethics and what concept of human nature comes out of materialistic theory? Where are the gods now?

V. What kinds of modern philosophical and political thought might have been influenced by Democritus?

POLLITT

I. How important are the religious surroundings of pediment sculpture? What was the intended effect of richly adorned civic buildings? How did Pericles (and others) use myth and legend on the Acropolis? Why should heritage be so important?

How can the axiom of Protagoras, "man is the measure of all things," be used to explain the subtle variations in the design of the Parthenon? Why was proportion of utmost importance?
WEEK VI: 1 to 5 November

TOPIC: Rational Man and Universal Order

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: John Goheen

SCHEDULE

3:15  Plenary Session--John Goheen - "Introduction to Plato"
7:00  Films: The Death of Socrates and The Drinking Party

Wed  3:15  Discussion Sections
6:15  Discussion Sections
7:00  Plenary Session--Dr. Norman Reider, Psychoanalyst, "Greek Sex"

REQUIRED READING:

Plato, Republic, Books I-V; Crito; Apology; Timaeus, 27c-53c; and review The Symposium.

Webster, T.B.L., Athenian Culture and Society, Ch. 6 (copied selection)

RECOMMENDED READING:

Dodds, E.R., The Greeks and the Irrational, Ch. 7

Jaeger, W., Paideia, Book I, Ch. 6
Book II, Ch. 3

TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. What is the function of dialogue in the process of education?

II. What assumptions are necessary for the criticism of established institutions and practice?

III. Does a majority vote establish what is right?

IV. Is the individual ever above the law?

V. Is justice a matter of convention and established practice or is there a "higher" justice? If there is, how can it be known?

VI. Must laws and social institutions depend on theological beliefs?

VII. Can human institutions be made wholly "rational?" And, if so, what would this mean for human feeling, criticism and love?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

VIII. How does mythological thinking enter human affairs? Are there contemporary myths which justify institutions and ways of life?

What is the function of a "creation myth" in the attempt to "rationalize" human life and institutions?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

PLATO AND SOCRATES

What has happened in Athens to make Socrates' philosophy possible? How do his works reflect this?

What makes his thought more "dangerous" to Athens than that of the pre-Socratics?

III. Without having read any more of Plato, can you imagine what his idea of a good state would be?

How has Plato used ideas from earlier writers? Has Homer influenced him? Has drama?

V. Does Plato seem interested in the physical world?
Is his thought conducive to the development of some kind of science?

APOLOGY

Is Socrates' defense a good one? Is he being honest? If you were his defense lawyer, would you change anything? Does his ironic tone help?

II. Did Socrates really do anything wrong? Did he disobey the gods or corrupt the young? What would he consider a just solution?

Is Socrates what you expect a philosopher to be? Does a city (or state) have any legitimate reasons for wanting to silence a philosopher?

IV. How does Socrates see death? Is this different from earlier views, such as Homer's or the dramatists'? What cultural changes do these differences reveal?

V. What does Socrates think about the gods and their role in human lives?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS (cont.)

CRITO

I. What is the ideal relationship between the individual and the state? How can Socrates justify himself in the Apology and yet insist on obeying the laws in the Crito? Is he inconsistent? How does Socrates see the law?
What rights and obligations does a citizen have? How does this differ from a modern American conception? What would Socrates think of the Bill of Rights, or a civil rights demonstration?

What is Socrates' view of the relationship between thought and action? Once you really know something, don't you have to act on it? What keeps Socrates from escaping? Would he escape if he were younger?

How would you construct a counter-argument to Socrates, to convince him to flee? Can you accept his premises about not doing evil to protect yourself from it and still justify escaping?

Is Crito just a yes-man? Does he have any role? How does this work as an example of the dialogue form? What does the dialogue do that a straight expository piece does not?

SYMPOSIUM

I. What is the relationship between each speaker's ideas and his social role? Why are Socrates' ideas those of a philosopher?

II. What is the significance of the sequence of speeches? How do they build on each other? How does Socrates use the ideas presented earlier? What does this show about his philosophical method? Is this consistent with his thinking elsewhere?

Why does Socrates alone attribute his ideas to someone else? Why to Diotima? Who is she? Why not pick a "conventional" god?

IV. How does Socrates relate beauty and love? How does he know them? Do we accept this pairing automatically today?

V. Why does this dialogue occur at a symposium or banquet? Is this a usual place for men to discuss love? Why love instead of courage, reason, or justice? Does it matter that some of the guests are lovers of Socrates?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS (cont.)

Why does Socrates end by discussing drama? Is the Symposium a drama? What dramatic elements are present and absent?

VII. Why does Alcibiades stumble in at the end? How does the final "scene" relate to the elevated speeches preceding it?

VIII. Is Socrates a good teacher or a good lover? Is he the same kind of man portrayed in the Apology and the Crito?

IX. How are the rational and the irrational related to education? Does this conflict with the image of Plato as a defender of "reason?" Compare with the Bacchae.

TIMAEUS

I. What distinguishes Plato's theory of creation from a materialistic one such as Democritus'? Is Plato's account a myth?

Why is the Demiourgos a limited god? Does he create out of nothing? Is the product "the best of all possible worlds?"

How does Plato distinguish between the "visible" world of experience and the "really real?" Why is the world of "becoming" or change less real than the world of ideas? Is the "real" the same as it is for Parmenides (what is, is one)?

What is the soul? How does it move the universe and man? How is the world's body different from its soul?

V. What is the state of the universe when "God is absent?" What role does the third "kind of being" play? Does it represent an irrational element in nature? Is the Timaeus a myth, a likely story?

Is Plato's doctrine of the world of Ideas compatible with his ideas on personal conduct? How does one live a life of ideas?
WEEK VII: 8 to 12 November

TOPIC: Man, Society, and the Use of Argument

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Bernie Cohen and Jon Reider

SCHEDULE:

3:15  Plenary Session--Bernie Cohen and Jon Reider - "A Debate on the Republic"
7:00  Plenary Session--Peter Pesic - "The Concept of Nature"
3:15  Plenary Session--Halsey Royden - "Greek Mathematics"
4:15  Discussion Sections
3:15  Discussion Sections
7:00  Dramatic Reading: Lysistrata

REQUIRED READING


Euclid, copied selections from Euclid's Elements


TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. Are we free to define political terms, such as justice, as we choose?

II. Is it possible to prove that a political theory is true?

III. How can one apply causal explanation (e.g., the "four causes") to social and political events?

IV. What political principles, if any could be advocated as self-evident, are intuitively true?

V. How does one construct a good political argument? Are there examples in The Republic?

VI. Has education any connection with politics? with indoctrination? with myth?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

What assumptions underlie Plato's arguments for communism? Are these assumptions valid?

VIII. In what way are the state of the human soul and the state of human society related? In what ways do knowledge of society, scientific knowledge, and mathematical knowledge differ?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS: (Note: these questions are divided into Part A and Part B. They indicate different ways of asking questions about a complex text like The Republic.)

PART A

REPUBLIC, BOOK I

I. What is Socrates' criticism of Cephalus and Polymarchus? Is he convincing? How is Thrasymachus' argument more sophisticated? How does Socrates argue that the "stronger" can err in judgment? What role does the analogy of the ruler and the skilled craftsman play? What does this say about the "stronger?"

II. Why does Plato hint that Socrates is descending into the Underworld at the very beginning? Is The Republic a journey? To where?

III. What is the dramatic structure of Book I? Why these characters speaking in this order? Is Socrates convincing? Does he "win?"

BOOK II

I. How is Book II the real beginning of the defense of justice by Socrates? What is essential to justice? How do man's basic needs justify this view? How do Glaucon and Adimantus develop the earlier arguments of Thrasymachus?

II. Why does society need a new kind of man, a just man? Why is justice not natural, but has to be taught and learned?

III. What does "founding a city in speech" mean? Is The Republic only the second best society? Why does Socrates take so much trouble to describe only the second best?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS (cont.)

BOOK III

I. What is wrong with traditional education? Why does it cause injustice?

II. Why does Socrates criticize Homer and Hesiod? Is he right that the gods sometimes provide bad examples and should not be used as models in education? Doesn't Odysseus, for example, lie for good reasons?

Why does Socrates condemn laughter, art, and poetry? Does this conflict with his appreciation for beauty expressed in the Symposium? Why is "imitation" bad?

What is "music?" Why is it good while poetry is bad?

BOOK IV

I. What are the three basic virtues? Is wisdom confined to one class? If so, how can it characterize a whole society?

II. Does this complete the idea of justice? What is still missing?

III. Is this a new view compared with ideas of justice already treated in this course?

BOOK V

I. Why does Socrates want women to be educated? How does this differ from traditional Greek practice?

II. How would society survive if the family were destroyed? Is Socrates radical in his views by the standards of Athenian society?

BOOKS VI-VII

I. What is Plato's purpose in the first part of Book VI? Who are the Sophists? If they were philosophers, why does Plato relate them to the "multitude?" What was their role in Greek political life in the 5th Century? Review Socrates' defense against the charge of corrupting the young in the Apology. How does this relate to his view of the Sophists?

How does Plato distinguish between opinion and knowledge? How was this explained in the Timaeus? How does the "divided line" clarify this in terms of the objects of knowledge? What is dialectic for? What is the purpose of the cave allegory? In what sense could this be taken as the center of The Republic? Is it a myth?
BOOK VIII

I. How do good states differ from bad ones? What causes good ones to degenerate? Why can't bad ones improve just as easily?

How does Socrates' description of democracy differ from the standard one? Why is tyranny even worse? How does his view of democracy reflect recent Athenian history?

BOOK IX

I. What does tyranny depend on?

What aspects of man are irrational? Is the irrational evil? Can it be eradicated? If it is so durable, how can Socrates be serious about thinking about an ideal state?

BOOK X

I. Why does The Republic end with a myth? Why is Plato so critical of many traditional myths? What is different about this one? How can myth express "truth?" Is his rejection of imitation a basis for criticizing poetry? Is it acceptable? How does it compare with his argument in Book III?

What is the structure of The Republic as a complete work? Why is it framed by the argument of Book I and the myth of Book X? Why is Book VI in the middle? Is the rest symmetrical? How? What purpose does it serve?

III. Is The Republic really a description of an ideal government, or is it something else?

PART B

MAN AND SOCIETY

I. What makes the "Republic" good? What values does it attempt to realize?

II. From whose point of view is it good? the guardians? the warriors? the artisans? the slaves?

III. Is the good society a stable society, or does the good society necessarily entail change?
HUMAN NATURE

I. Is human nature fixed or variable? Is Plato consistent on this point?

II. How does Plato argue that riches and poverty corrupt and produce bad workmen?

III. What assumptions about human motivation underlie the community of women and children? What motivational factors does Plato fail to consider?

Is Plato consistent in the view that competence is hereditary?

KNOWLEDGE

I. Is Socrates' view of wisdom in The Republic the same as in the Apology?

What makes a city wise? How is knowledge of guarding different from knowledge of carpentry?

Why does the ideal city need legislation of commerce? What is assumed in saying that wise men will easily find for themselves most of the legislation required?

JUSTICE

I. What is Plato's conception of justice? How does "minding one's own business" relate to this concept?

What are the implications of the idea that injustice is a kind of quarrel among the three elements of the soul, a rebellion of the lower against the highest?

III. What are some alternative conceptions of justice? Why doesn't Plato deal with an egalitarian conception of justice?

EDUCATION

I. Why is education so important in The Republic? Is myth part of it, or is it completely "rational"?

II. How is it determined that "the use of falsehood and deception is for the benefit of the ruled?" Can a lover of truth tell noble lies?

What is the difference between indoctrination and education? Between education and training? Is some freedom necessary for education?
I. What is Aristotle's conception of the relation of thought to reality? Why does he think that scientific knowledge must be expressed as a logical deduction? What is the role of a syllogism? What is the importance of the "middle term?"

What is Aristotle's distinction between definition and demonstration? Why is a demonstration necessary to show that a definition is true? Can definitions be true?

What are the difference types of causes? On what analogy is the "four causes" doctrine based? How do the causes function in knowing something? Which, if any, of these causes make scientific sense? How would you rephrase them?

IV. What is intuitive reason for Aristotle? How does it differ from the other kinds of knowledge? Why must one intuit first principles? Why cannot experience give rise to first principles? Why is there not one unified science for Aristotle? Is there for Plato? Is Aristotle's appeal to intuition any different from Plato's way of knowing the Ideas?
TOPIC: Philosophy and Physical Science

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: John Goheen and Mason Yearian

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 Papers Due
3:15 Plenary Session--John Goheen - "Introduction to Aristotle"
7:00 Plenary Session--Professor Moravscik - "Scientific Method - I"

Wed. 3:15 Plenary Session--Mason Yearian
4:15 Discussion Sections

Thu 3:15 Plenary Session--Professor Moravscik - "Scientific Method - II"
4:15 Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING:

Aristotle, Concerning the Heavens, Bk. II.
, Physics, Bk. II; Bk. III, Chs. I, II, III.

RECOMMENDED READING:


TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. Are causal connections in physical matters also operative in social events? Are social "laws" similar to natural laws?

III. How do economic and other "material" factors function in the explanation of social and political events?

IV. How does the "ideal state" relate to nature's ends?

V. Are all natural and political events causally determined?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

VI. Why are sciences distinct one from the other?

VII. What is wrong with a "materialistic" explanation of events?

VIII. What empirical evidence could one cite to prove that the earth is the center of the universe?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

CONCERNING THE HEAVENS, BOOK II

I. Why does Aristotle think that the earth is at the center of the cosmos? What basic principle supports this claim? How does his conception of the four elements enter this argument?

Why does he argue that the earth is stationary and spherical? How do his conceptions of natural motion and the four causes enter this argument?

III. Does Aristotle offer any empirical evidence that the earth is spherical, i.e., evidence that is independent of his basic assumed principle? What does he mean by "constrained" or "unnatural" motion?

IV. What does Aristotle's theory of the universe show about his reasoning process? Is it consistent with the theory of deductive reasoning? Is his theory an advance on earlier cosmological theories?

PHYSICS, BOOK II

I. What does Aristotle mean by nature? How does he distinguish between products of art and products of nature? Why is it that things that have a nature are "substances?" Is the "material substrate" the nature of a thing or substance? Which has the more important function in a substance, matter or form? How does Aristotle's account of nature differ from that in the Timaeus?

How does mathematics differ from physics? What is the difference between studying a curve and a "snub nose?" How does Aristotle's idea that geometrical forms are related to physical bodies differ from Plato's concept of Forms (and geometry)?
III. What are the four causes, and how does Aristotle account for chance? Is everything in nature causally determined? How does he distinguish simple necessity (mechanical cause and effect) from the type of causation usually found in nature?

IV. How does the notion of final cause differ from Plato's forms and the source of motion? Does the final cause have a soul-like function? Why is the material cause not always a sufficient explanation? What kind of evidence does Aristotle cite to reject material cause as an explanation for a typical natural event?
TOPIC: Foundations of Knowledge

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: John Goheen and Bernie Cohen

SCHEDULE:

WEEK IX:

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session--John Goheen  "Aristotle's Psychology"
No Meetings

WEEK X:

Tue 3:15 Plenary Session--Bernie Cohen  "Aristotle's Politics"
7:00 Plenary Session--"The Artistic Structure of the Republic," Helene Foley

Wed 3:15 Discussion Sections
Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections
7:00 Plenary Session--"Greek Music," Michael Saffle

REQUIRED READING:

Aristotle, On the Soul, Bk. III
Politics, Bk. II, Chs. 1-6; Bks. IV-V.
Plato, review Republic, Bk. X

RECOMMENDED READING:


TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. Is sense perception a source of knowledge?
What is the function of myth in social and political life?

III. Does theory (science) attain absolute truth?
TOPIC QUESTIONS (cont.):

IV. Is all knowledge relative to time and place?

V. Why is the "soul" important in knowing truth? For Plato? For Aristotle?

VI. Is "dialectice" a useful method for attaining knowledge?

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

ON THE SOUL, BOOK III

I. How does Aristotle relate perception to knowledge, in contrast to Plato's view? Why is Aristotle considered more empirical than Plato? How does Aristotle relate abstract knowledge to perception of particular things? How does this relate to his theory of constitutions or drama? Are the "Forms" in these various areas of thought strictly theoretical or scientific?

How does Aristotle view the relation of the soul to the body? Are they completely interdependent? Compare Aristotle's view with Plato's.

POLITICS, BOOK II, Ch. 1-6

I. How does Aristotle study states?

II. Why is unity of a state not a desirable aim? Why does he reject Plato's communism of wives and children? Of property? Is he correct in saying that Plato denies happiness even to the guardians? How is his concept of happiness different from Plato's? How would Plato respond to these criticisms?

BOOK IV


II. What is "constitutional government?" Is this an ideal government? If not, why does he espouse it?

How important are economic conditions for government? How did Plato treat these? Is it fair to call Aristotle an economic determinist?

What are the three parts of government, and how do they function in different forms of states? How does tyranny differ from aristocratic government?
BOOK V

I. How do revolutions come about? Could a good government be overthrown by revolution?

II. What function does the "middle class" serve? Is it different from our own idea of middle class?

III. Can a state be preserved against revolution? How can a tyrant preserve his tyranny? Must he appear virtuous? Why are tyrannies so unstable? Compare Aristotle's conception of tyranny with Plato's. What is Aristotle's criticism of Plato's theory of revolution? Is his account of Plato's ideas fair?
WEEK XI: 6 to 10 December

TOPIC: Metaphysics and Poetry

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: Gregson Davis and John Goheen

SCHEDULE:

Mon 5:00 Papers Due
Tue 3:15 Plenary Session--Gregson Davis - "Aristotle's Poetics"
Wed 3:15 Plenary Session--John Goheen - "Metaphysics"
4:15 Discussion Sections
Thu 3:15 Discussion Sections

REQUIRED READING:

Aristotle, Metaphysics, Bk. XII.
, Poetics.


TOPIC QUESTIONS:

I. What is the function of "form" in nature?

II. Why must there be a final cause of all material motion? How can what is "unmoved" move?

III. What analogy underlies the idea that the universe has a purpose?

IV. How can a theory of art be interpreted in terms of a thinker's more general views?

V. How is art related to a notion of the "good?"

VI. Is metaphysics poetry? Is poetry metaphysics?

VII. What is the meaning of imitation? What does the artist imitate?

VIII. How is artistic endeavor distinguished from science and ethics?

IX. What is the function of "form" in art?
TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

POETICS

I. How do Aristotle and Plato differ in their use of the word imitation, specifically in "art imitates nature?" Why would Aristotle reject Plato's idea that art is "twice removed" from reality? Are Plato's and Aristotle's evaluations of art related to their conceptions of the emotions' place in human behavior? How is the effect of poetry in purging the emotions related to the understanding of poetry?

In Aristotle's view, what distinguishes a work of art from ethical or scientific endeavors? Why does Aristotle say that poetry is more philosophical than history? What does Aristotle mean by his notion that drama expresses a "probable universal?"

III. To what does Aristotle attribute the origin of poetry? How is drama related to learning? Does Aristotle consider that art is primarily concerned with the teaching of truths? How would Plato feel about this? Why does Aristotle use his general distinctions between matter and form, body and soul as a basis for his conception of art?

How does Aristotle distinguish between epic, tragedy, and comedy? Why does Aristotle consider tragedy superior to both comedy and epic? Is Aristotle's ethical doctrine of the "mean" involved in the delineation of the noble character in tragedy? in comedy? What is the function of "reversal" and "recognition" in tragedy? What forms of plot in tragedy should be avoided, and why? How, together with other forms of the drama, is the purging of the emotions accomplished?

V. To what extent are Aristotle's views of tragedy applicable to the plays studied earlier in this course? Are Aristotle's comments on the "discoveries" in The Odyssey, Libation Bearers, and Oedipus Rex convincing to you?

When the hero is led to disaster by some hereditary flaw does this violate a sense of justice and equity in the world? Or, does tragedy present some "higher order" of justice in portraying the "consequences, necessary or probable, of the antecedents?"

METAPHYSICS, BOOK XII

I. How does Aristotle complete his metaphysical system? How does the "unmoved mover" explain various types of motion, from the spheres to human action? How does "form" function in these processes? What function did it serve in other areas of his thought?
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for SLE Greek Period

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*Finley, J. H., Four Stages of Greek Thought, Stanford: Stanford U Pr 1966
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