Course Description

This course examines Plato’s political philosophy through a rigorous study of the *Republic*, his greatest and most influential work. We will discuss at length and hopefully in depth all of the central themes of the *Republic*. Among these themes are the question of justice, the nature and necessary limits of political life, and the relationship between philosophy and the political community. The course aims to develop the capacity of students for careful and concentrated study of Plato, who will be approached not just as important thinker in the history of political thought but as a philosopher from whom we can still learn.

Main Text

*The Republic of Plato*, translated by Allan Bloom (Basic Books)

If you are able to read the Greek, terrific, do so. I recommend using the OCT edition, not the Loeb.

Recommended Reading

There is an ocean of secondary literature on the *Republic*, and you are encouraged to swim in it. Below is a mere sample of some of the works you might read.


**Requirements and Grading**

**Seminar Paper:** 60%

This 12ish–15ish page analytical essay will be due on Monday, December 10. You should come up with your own topic, but I will be happy to discuss possible topics with you. Late papers will be marked down 10 points for initial lateness, and 5 points for each day of lateness beyond the first. Incompletes will not be granted.

**Three papers of 2-3 pages:** 20%

For these brief papers, I will offer topics at least seven times during the semester. You are required to write three of them. They will be due at the beginning of class one week after they are assigned. Late papers will not be accepted. I will write brief comments on these papers, but I will not grade them. The quality of these papers over the course of the semester will be considered, however, in determining your final grade.

**Class participation:** 20%

NOTE: Plus/minus grades will be used in final grading.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

**Course Plan**

This rough schedule is subject to revision as dictated by the pace of our discussions.
As announced, I will be holding an extra study group on Book I of the Republic, tentatively scheduled for Mondays at 2:00 in Batts 1.104. All are welcome to attend (whatever your knowledge of Greek), but attendance is not required.

All readings are from Plato’s Republic.

August 30  Introduction; Book II, beginning – 369a.
September 6  Book II, 369a – end.
September 13  Book III, beginning – to 403c.
September 20  Book III, 403c – end.
September 27  Book IV, beginning – 435a.
October 4  Book IV, 435a – end.
October 11  Book V, beginning – 466d.
October 18  Book V, 466d – end.
October 25  Book VI, beginning – 502d.
November 1  Book VI, 502d – end.
November 8  Book VII
November 15  Book VIII
November 29  Book IX
December 6  Book X