Phil 301: Socrates and Plato

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Office hours: 1-2 Tuesday and Friday and by app’t. in Room 303, 3 Seminary Place

Books: Plato *Five Dialogues* (Hackett), *Republic* (Hackett), *Theaetetus* (Bibliobazaar)

This course will focus on Plato’s theory of knowledge and the theory of Forms. We will be reading a limited number of Platonic dialogues, but we will read them very closely. We will not be using any secondary materials, so your only task will be to figure from the text itself exact what Plato has in mind. *DO NOT TRY TO REPLACE CLOSE READING OF THE TEXT WITH SUMMARIES, CLIFF NOTES, ETC.* You will be required to have understood these texts in detail, and the exam will require you to identify and comment on particular passages. If you are unable to identify the passages, you will not be able to pass the exam. It is therefore also important that you use the particular translations chosen for the class.

The grading in the class will be based on several short expository papers (20%), two longer (8-10 page) papers (25% each), and a final exam (30%). The expository papers will be on set questions concerning the text we are reading. They are designed to focus your attention on particular passages in the readings. You are responsible for having them in on the day they are due, so should check if you mess any class whether one was assigned. The longer papers will allow you the chance to develop your own ideas, but the expository papers should be confined to answering the set question as clearly and concisely as possible. I will provide some topics for the longer papers. If you want to write on something else, you must get specific permission from me.

Sept.  1: Introduction
        4: *Apology*
        8: Change of designation, no class
       11: *Apology*
       15: *Euthyphro*
       18: *Euthyphro*
      22: *Crito*
      25: *Phaedo*
      29: *Phaedo*

Oct.  2: *Meno*, 70-81
       6: *Meno*, 81-87
       9: *Meno*, 87-end
      13: *Republic*, Book 1
      16: *Republic*, Book 2
First Short Paper (1-2 page), due Sept. 4 (this Friday)

Read through the Apology and list the charges that are brought against Socrates. Identify which charge you think is the strongest, that is, which one he has the hardest time defending himself against. Does he successfully defend himself against the charge? Why or why not?