

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
Department of Philosophy  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2025-26

**PHILOSOP 4017F**  
Advanced study of Plato's *Republic*

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

**PREREQUISITE CHECKING**

See course calendar.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. [Student Responsibility for Course Selection](#)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers an advanced examination of Plato's *Republic*, with a focus on close textual analysis and critical engagement with its central philosophical arguments. While the ostensible question of the *Republic* is, 'What is Justice?', the dialogue explores a whole host of related philosophical issues, ranging from tough ethical questions (Why should I be moral?), to metaphysical questions about the nature of reality (Can we trust our senses?), to questions about education (Should the State be in the business of moral development?), to aesthetic questions (What grounds our judgements about beauty?).

Students who have previously encountered the *Republic* in an introductory setting will find that this course deepens their understanding, revealing new layers of complexity in Plato's arguments and interpretive possibilities. However, no prior knowledge of the *Republic* is required. Students new to the text will be guided through the major ideas and will develop the skills necessary to engage rigorously with the material. All participants will be expected to contribute to discussion, analyze difficult passages, and reflect on Plato's continuing influence on philosophical thought.

Overview of Plato's *Republic*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-ethics-politics/>

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course has two learning outcomes. First, students will acquire introductory knowledge of the origins and foundations of philosophy, including the problems that define it. Second, students will develop their ability to read and understand difficult philosophical texts and to reflect on the ideas and arguments they offer us. These are basic skills that every well-rounded philosopher should have.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Information about the readings and weekly schedule can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

## **TEXTS**

**Required:** You will need a copy of Plato's *Republic*. There are several good translations available. The only qualification is that it should include Stephanus pagination (<https://bit.ly/3iB0WLg>). This is essential for following textual references used throughout the course, including assignments. Most online translations do NOT have these, so I would avoid them except in a pinch.

The UWO Bookstore stocks *Plato: Complete Works*, which is the translation I will be using in class (\$92.25 for hardcopy, \$63.00 for e-copy). The e-version should also be accessible for free through the UWO library website.

**Suggested:** Students who want more out of the course may wish to consult the *Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* and the *Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*. They contain scholarly articles that will help guide you through the dialogue.

## **METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Class participation	5%	Weekly
Class Attendance	5%	Weekly
Forum Posts	10%	Weekly
Exegetical Assignments	80% (4 x 20%)	Assignments due by the Friday of: 1. Week 3 2. Week 6 3. Week 10 4. Week 13

**Policy on Academic Consideration** – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs  
[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

## **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first

week of classes.

### **USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

*No aids are permitted for the final exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.*

### **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

The use of generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT) is prohibited for all assignments in this course. Students are expected to submit their own original work based on their engagement with the course materials (readings and lecture material). If plagiarism or AI use is suspected, the instructor may ask for research notes, rough drafts, and other materials used in preparing assignments as evidence of the work done. **Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered.** An inability to produce these materials may weigh heavily against them. In some extreme cases the instructor may also request an interview with the student, and the final evaluation of the assignment may be based in whole or in part on the outcome of that interview.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION**

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.” <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

### **SPECIAL EXAMINATIONS**

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

### **ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION**

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
  - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
  - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
  - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

### **Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs**

#### **RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf).

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be “given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test”.

#### **COURSE ASSIGNMENT**

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

#### **SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

#### **Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software**

This course uses [turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) for assignments. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

#### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: [https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty\\_academic\\_counselling.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html)

#### **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends (24/7 availability).

## **GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).