

PHL 2005F - 2023

Plato's Metaphysics

Instructor: Lloyd P. Gerson (lloyd.gerson@utoronto.ca)

Office: JHB 423

Office Hours: MW 12-1 and by appointment

The course focuses on Plato's account of the intelligible world, which he calls the subject matter of philosophy, and which has come to be known as his metaphysics. The heart of this account is the so-called theory of Forms. But it also includes the unique superordinate Idea of the Good, which Plato calls the unhypothetical first principle of all. And it also includes intellects or intellectual souls. Although the central theme in this course is metaphysics, for Plato metaphysics is not separable from epistemology and ethics, and indeed much else. So, some attention will be paid to the epistemological and ethical implications of the metaphysical arguments. Our readings will be from those dialogues and portions of dialogues that give us the best picture of Plato's metaphysics. Time permitting, we will spend some time on Aristotle's extensive testimony regarding Plato's metaphysics.

The main requirement for the course is a final essay, the topic for which is to be discussed with the instructor. All enrolled class members are expected to attend every class and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts. All students should use *Plato. Complete Works*. Edited by John Cooper (Hackett, 1997).

Schedule of Readings

S 11 - Introduction to hermeneutical issues. *Euthyphro* as introduction to Platonism and Forms

S 18 - Socrates' "Autobiography" in *Phaedo* 95A4-102A9

S 25 - Continued discussion of *Phaedo* 95A4-102A9

O 2 - *Republic* Books 5-7 on the nature of philosophy, the Forms, and the Good

O 9 - Continued discussion of *Republic* Books 5-7

O 16 - *Parmenides*. A crisis in the theory of Forms? Beginning up to 155E

O 23 - Continued discussion of *Parmenides*

**N 6 – Reading Week**

N 13 - *Sophist* on being and truth and falsehood. 237B-259D

N 20 - Continued discussion of *Sophist*

N 27 - *Philebus* 14D-30E on the composition of reality

D 4 - *Philebus* 64C-end; *Timaeus* 29D-31B, 37C-38C, 51B-52D

D 11 - Aristotle's testimony, *Metaphysics* Books 1, c. 6; 12, c. 10.