

Class	
Recordings	
Articles	
Instructor	Howard Curzer
Email	<a href="mailto:howard.curzer@ttu.edu">howard.curzer@ttu.edu</a>
Office Hours	TTR 2:00-3:30 and by appointment
Office Link	
TA	
Email	
Office Hours	
Office Link	

### TEXTBOOKS

	REQUIRED			
Author/Editor	Title	Translator	Publisher	ISBN
Plato	<i>Meno</i>	Grube		article folder
Plato	<i>Protagoras</i>	Lombardo and Bell	Hackett	9780872200944
Plato	<i>Laches and Charmides</i>	Sprague	Hackett	9780872201347
Sophocles	<i>Oedipus and Philoctetes</i>	Grene		article folder
Mengzi	<i>Mengzi</i>	Van Norden	Hackett	9780872209138
Aristotle	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	Ross	Oxford	9780199213610
	RECOMMENDED			
various	Articles			article folder
M. Renault	<i>The Last of the Wine</i>		Vintage	9780375726811
J. Boardman J. Griffin O. Murray	<i>Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World</i>		Oxford	9780192801371
J. Cooper	<i>Plato: Complete Works</i>		Hackett	9780872203495

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a character trait a virtue? Which character traits qualify as virtues? How are these virtues acquired? How can they be instilled in recalcitrant people? How are the virtues related to each other, and to other character traits (including vices)? These questions are addressed in Plato's dialogues *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, *Meno* and *Protagoras*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Sophocles plays *Oedipus Rex* and *Philoctetes*, and the ancient Confucian work entitled *The Mengzi*. We will compare and contrast the answers found in these texts. We will also explore the differing formats in which these answers are presented. Like playwrights, Plato expresses his philosophy indirectly. His dialogues star Socrates, but the character of Socrates is not

Plato's mouthpiece. Is *The Mengzi* also a work of indirect discourse? Is the *Nicomachean Ethics*? How can readers uncover the philosophy of authors employing indirect discourse?

## REQUIREMENTS

- Enormous amounts of delightful, but difficult **reading** will be assigned each week. Try to get the reading for each week done before the week begins. Advice: Read everything twice. Get the big picture first and the details on the second reading.
- Class **attendance** is required. After the first 5 absences, students will be penalized 3.33% of their final grade for each absence. (This is 1/3 of a letter grade the difference between a B+ and an A- for example.) Officially approved trips and religious holidays are the only excused absences. All absences for other reasons after the first 5 will be penalized, even if they are due to hospitalization, incarceration, or death of family members. (Students with long-term problems should discuss exceptions with me.) Is my absence policy too severe? The course will meet on 43 occasions, but I won't take attendance for the first three meetings. Thus, a student may miss one of every 8 days without penalty, but after that the penalty is very great. This is a generous version of the policy of "paid time off" used by many businesses. Employees who miss work once every 8 days are generally fired. Advice: Do not use up your absences casually; save them for emergencies.
- Class **participation** is required. Each member of the class has a responsibility to the others to contribute to the learning project. Advice: When I write you a letter of recommendation, or even just report on you at a department meeting, do you want me to state that you typically have nothing useful to say in class? Impress me; come to every class armed with interesting comments and questions.
- Each student will submit **three 1-page homework assignments** designed to improve reading and writing skills. Each of these homework assignments will be worth 7% of the final grade. Late submissions will be accepted without penalty.
- Each student will submit **three 5-7-page papers**. Each of these papers will be worth 20% of the final grade. Late submissions will be accepted. After the first 5 late days throughout the semester (not 5 days per paper), papers will be penalized 1/3 letter grade for every day late (including weekend days). Advice: Your first thoughts are unlikely to be your best thoughts; start early and write at least two drafts. Don't be late.
- Each student will submit **one video of a dialogue** (3-5 minutes), accompanied by a written description of what the dialogue was intend to convey. This dialogue may be with a classmate or a friend. Late submissions will be accepted. After the first 5 late days throughout the semester (not 5 days per paper), dialogues will be penalized 1/3 letter grade for every day late (including weekend days). Advice: Don't rehearse endlessly, or read from a script; this destroys spontaneity. Instead, rehearse once or twice, and then record.
- This will be an online class taught via Zoom. Students will keep their **video on** unless they have permission from me to turn their video off. Permission will be granted automatically, no questions asked. Zoom classes work better when students are visible to each other and to me, but some students have good reasons to keep their video off. My policy makes "video on" the default, but allows students with good reasons to opt out upon request. Students whose video is off without permission will be considered absent.
- **Disruptive, distracting, or offensive behavior** will not be tolerated. (e.g. social media, emailing, gaming, and web-surfing during class are unacceptable.) Cell phones should be

put in silent mode during class. Civility in spoken and written discourse is required. Repeated violations will result in dismissal from the course.

## HELP

- If you were **unable to attend class**, please do not ask me what we covered in class. A recording of the class will be available for viewing.
- General free **learning support** is available from the Writing Center: <http://uwc.ttu.edu/> and the Learning Center: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/soar/LC/>.
- Many students feel extremely overwhelmed, depressed, anxious, enraged, and/or confused at some points in their college career. There is no shame in seeking professional help. Free **psychological support** is available from the Student Counseling Center: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/>.
- Accurate, sophisticated **information** about philosophical topics is available from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>. Avoid CliffsNotes, Monarch Notes, Spark Notes, and so on. These are filled with inaccuracies.
- My class is open to **guests**. In particular, since childcare is sometimes an issue, **children** (including babies) are welcome. Please don't overdo it, and try to minimize disruption of the class.
- Hunger on campus is an issue these days. TTU has taken some steps to address the problem: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/foodpantry.php>.

## GRADING RUBRIC

Category	Grade
mastery of material	
reasoning, creativity, clarity	
<b>Average</b>	

## MEANING OF GRADES

A	100-90	adequate essay + pizzazz		D	69-60	on the wrong track, but gets some things right
B	89-80	adequate essay		F	59-51	gets almost nothing right
C	79-70	on the right track, but with a major error		F-	50	assignment not complete



## **COVID-19**

TTU strongly recommends students adhere to CDC guidelines on COVID-19, including obtaining COVID-19 vaccinations. The COVID-19 vaccine is available at student health services by appointment. A video debunking myths about COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.ttu.edu/commitment/covid-19-vaccine/index.php>

## **ADA STATEMENT**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers.

## **RELIGIOUS HOLY DAY STATEMENT**

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

"In practice people who study philosophy too long...become very odd birds, not to say thoroughly vicious; while even those who are the best of them are reduced by ... [philosophy] to complete uselessness as members of society." - Socrates, Republic (487c-d) by Plato

## WEEKLY READING

Week	Dates	Reading	Assignments
1	8/25	No reading (introduction to ancient Greece)	
<b>Plato</b>			
2	8/30 & 9/1	<i>Laches</i>	
3	9/6 & 9/8	<i>Laches</i>	HOMEWORK
4	9/13 & 9/15	<i>Protagoras</i>	
5	9/20 & 9/22	<i>Protagoras</i>	PAPER
6	9/27 & 9/29	<i>Meno</i>	
7	10/4 & 10/6	<i>Meno</i>	HOMEWORK
<b>Mengzi</b>			
8	10/11 & 10/13	<i>Mengzi</i> 1A1-7, 1B1-11, 2B2, 2B9, 5B9, 4B3	
9	10/18 & 10/20	<i>Mengzi</i> 2A2, 6A1-20	PAPER
<b>Sophocles</b>			
10	10/25 & 10/27	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	
11	11/1 & 11/3	<i>Philoctetes</i>	HOMEWORK
<b>Aristotle</b>			
12	11/8 & 11/10	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I and X.6-9	
13	11/15 & 11/17	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> II and III.1-5	VIDEO
14	11/22	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III.6-12 and IV	
15	11/29 & 12/1	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VII.1-4	
16	12/6	No reading (last class)	
	12/9		PAPER

# WEEKLY READING WITH RECOMMENDED READING

Week	Dates	Reading	
1	8/25	No reading (introduction to ancient Greece)	
2	8/30 & 9/1	Plato, <i>Laches</i> Santos, "Socrates at Work on Virtue and Knowledge in Plato's <i>Laches</i> "	
3	9/6 & 9/8	Plato, <i>Laches</i> Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III.6-9 Nussbaum, "Plato's Anti-Tragic Theater"	HOME WORK
4	9/13 & 9/15	Plato, <i>Protagoras</i> Devereux, "The Unity of the Virtues in Plato's Protagoras and Laches"	
5	9/20 & 9/22	Plato, <i>Protagoras</i> Curzer, " <i>Akrasia</i> and Courage in the <i>Protagoras</i> "	PAPER
6	9/27 & 9/29	Plato, <i>Meno</i> Nehamas, "Meno's Paradox and Socrates as a Teacher"	
7	10/4 & 10/6	Plato, <i>Meno</i> Weiss, "The Road to Larisa"	HOME WORK
<b>Mengzi</b>			
8	10/11 & 10/13	Mengzi, <i>Mengzi</i> 1A1-7, 1B1-11, 2B2, 2B9, 5B9, 4B3 Curzer, "Stingy King Meets Savvy Sage"	
9	10/18 & 10/20	Mengzi, <i>Mengzi</i> 2A2, 6A1-20 Bloom, "Mencian Arguments on Human Nature"	PAPER
<b>Sophocles</b>			
10	10/25 & 10/27	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> Knox, "Introduction to <i>Oedipus the King</i> "	
11	11/1 & 11/3	Sophocles, <i>Philoctetes</i> Fulkerson, "Neoptolemus Grows Up: 'Moral Development' and the Interpretation of the Philoctetes"	HOME WORK
<b>Aristotle</b>			
12	11/8 & 11/10	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.1-5, I.7-8, II.8-9, IV.9, and X.7-9 Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good"	
13	11/15 & 11/17	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> I.13, II.1-7, and III.1-5 Bostock, "The Virtues of Character"	VIDEO
14	11/22	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> III.6-12 and IV.1-8 paper on the virtue of your choice	
15	11/29 & 12/1	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VII.1-4 Robinson, "Aristotle on <i>Akrasia</i> "	
16	12/6	No reading (last class)	
			PAPER

