

GREEK CIVILIZATION

CMHI 106
WINTER 2009

JOHN COLE (email: jcole)
111 PETTENGILL (x6076)

The twelve weeks of reading, writing, informal lectures, and discussions on Greek civilization from Homer to Aristotle consider a few of the most celebrated works in translation, read in conjunction with supporting documentation drawn from less familiar sources and ordered and interpreted in light of the following dialectical scheme:

Homeric Poetry and Archaic Aristocracy (Jan. 12 - 29)

Introduction to Homer, a poet who celebrated the heroes of a society in which the patrilineal family and aristocratic friendships were most powerful. The imperative was to strive to be recognized and remembered as the best. Justice was to give each man his due, no more, no less; it was to help friends and harm enemies, to return good-for-good and hurt-for-hurt.

Citizen-Poets and Democratic Athens (Feb. 02 - Mar. 18)

Introduction to the Athenian constitution and to Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, dramatists for a community that was radically democratic in institutional forms but, at least among elites, stubbornly aristocratic in values. What now was justice: the sovereign will of the People (the Demos) or what it always had been under the aegis of the gods and the greats?

A Maverick Athenian and His Aristocratic Follower (Mar. 23 - Apr. 08)

Introduction to Plato and his hero, Socrates, both Athenians but also, apparently, both anti-democrats. Socrates, a paragon of virtue, was convicted and sentenced to death by a democratic jury; where did that leave justice? Plato redefined the concept, while rehabilitating hero-Socrates as a new Achilles and challenging the ideas and values of both archaic aristocracy and Athenian democracy.

This course is based on the conviction that there is an identifiable canon of classic texts that merit continued study as monuments in their own right and reference points for later western civilization. The principal objective is to increase critical understanding of these works, read together as products of a coherent ancient culture. They might well be studied severally in the academic disciplines for which they are variously foundational, not only the Greek language and literature, but also politics, theater, art, and philosophy. Homer's *Iliad* and Aristotle's *Poetics*, for instance, begin grand traditions of western literature and critical theory. Similarly, Athenians began grand traditions of democratic government and reflections on it. Aeschylus and Plato begin equally great traditions in drama and philosophy. Thus, as we approach the ancient monuments, we could look forward toward modernity, ever forward.

We won't: The past *is* past. Anachronism is the great stumbling block for modern students of ancient cultures, and we must try to approach Greeks on their own terms. Their poetry, drama, and philosophy were very different from ours, as were their political and religious institutions. Paradoxically, even the most creative minds worked within traditions, and the Athenians who dominate the Classical Period as we know it were also fully engaged in the life of the civic community. This gives special claims to the historian, while imposing two perspectives. First, 'looking backward,' ever backward, we will try to respect the force of traditions that conditioned even innovative intellectuals. Second, 'looking around,' we will also pay particular attention to political contexts, insofar as they are knowable, trying to reconstruct the historical circumstances that posed problems that engaged citizens tried to solve for their contemporaries.

TEXTS FOR PURCHASE (photocopied Documentary HandOuts = 'DHOs' on schedule below)

Homer, <i>The Iliad</i> . Trans. Lattimore. Chicago	ISBN-13 978-02264 69409
Aristotle, <i>The Poetics</i> . Trans. Butcher. Dover	978-04862 95770
Aristotle, <i>The Athenian Constitution</i> . Trans. Rhodes. Penguin	978-01404 44315
Plutarch, <i>The Rise and Fall of Athens</i> . Trans. Scott-Kilvert. Penguin	978-01404 401024
Aeschylus, <i>The Oresteia</i> . Trans. Fagles. Penguin	978-01404 43332
Sophocles, <i>Three Theban Plays</i> . Trans. Fagles. Penguin	978-01404 44254
Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata and Other Plays</i> . Trans. Sommerstein. Penguin	978-01404 48146
Plato, <i>The Trial and Death of Socrates</i> . Trans. Grube. Hackett	978-08722 05543
Plato, <i>The Republic</i> . Trans. Reeve. Hackett	978-08722 07363

Please bring the assigned texts and DHOs to relevant classes and examinations. I like to work from open books, making frequent references to specific passages. I like it even more when you take such initiatives yourselves. In order to give my pedagogy –or your active participation– a chance, you've got to have the texts in hand, and, to avoid confusions due to differences in translation, line-numbering, and pagination, it's best to have them in the specified editions. Furthermore, if you don't own the books, you can't highlight, annotate, or appropriate the texts. You have committed some \$5000 in tuition and fees for this one course; why squander those thousands by nickel-and-dime economies on the materials that are the whole point of the course?

Reference Librarians can be very helpful, given a chance; Thomas Hayward is a classicist. The following reference works can help you to answer many of your own factual questions:

- The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Ref. DE5.09
- The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. Ref. DE5.H37
- Atlas of the Greek World*. Ref. G2000.L48

PART ONE: AN ARCHAIC POET AND HIS ARISTOCRATIC HEROES

Week #1 Introduction to the *Iliad*: Homer as an Oral Poet and His Wrathful Hero

Read Homer, *Iliad*, Bks. 1-6; Aristotle, *Poetics* 6-15. DHO #1: Proverbs; Matthew 5-7.

Jan. 12 The Poet as Maker: Homer's Blindness and Our Deafness

Jan. 14 The Quarrel with Agamemnon, Achilles' Wrath, and the Heroic Code

Thursday sections, Temptations of Anachronism and Lattimore's Judgment on Achilles:
The Good Book on Pride and Anger and Post-Aristotelian 'Tragic Flaw'

Most of us approach the *Iliad* with our minds already made up on certain fundamental moral values that are broadly Judaeo-Christian and not Homeric or even Hellenic. Our retrospect is conditioned and perhaps distorted by the uniquely privileged place of the Bible in our culture. The Good Book has taught our teachers and our teachers' teachers that 'pride' and 'anger' are offenses in the eyes of the all-seeing God, and we good pupils are all-too-ready to judge Achilles' conduct by these alien and anachronistic standards. More insidiously, we may defer to Aristotle, as if he were an authority on epic poetry. His critical theory has been enormously influential. But he lived three or four long centuries after Homer; he was a philosopher, not a poet; and his critical theory concerns tragic drama, not the epic. Study Lattimore's Introduction, pp. 14-17, 30-33, 45-52, read in light both of the *Poetics*, especially, Ch. 13 on tragic plots and Ch. 15 on characters, and of DHO excerpts from the Bible, particularly the moral maxims or proverbs traditionally attributed to the wise Solomon and the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus.

Week #2 The Passionate Hero Refuses to Relent from Wrath and Suffers the Consequences
Read *Iliad*, Books 7-19.

Jan. 19 MLK. No class.

Jan. 21 Men and Gods, Mortals and Immortals

Thursday sections, Book 9: Agamemnon's Embassy and Achilles' Obstinacy.

Book 9 is pivotal: Achilles' withdrawal from Agamemnon's camp was justifiable, perhaps even obligatory, but when he fails to accept the king's compensatory offers and his closer friends' appeals he puts himself in the wrong. The dramatic narrative consists almost entirely of a series of great speeches, those of Agamemnon's three emissaries, representing his offers and making their own appeals, and Achilles' several responses. What are the emissaries' arguments and how do they present them? And what are the hero's counter-arguments? How persuasive are they? Does he begin to relent from wrath?

Week #3 Heroic Fierceness and Human Compassion

Read *Iliad*, Books 20-24. **Optional essay due Friday** (for topic, see p. 4; for option, p. 8)

Jan. 26 Books 20-22: Achilles in Action: Admire and Cringe; Cringe and Admire

Jan. 28 Books 23-24: Achilles' Magnanimity with Friends, Compassion for the Enemy

Thursday sections, Hektor and the Trojans.

It is curious that, without living up either to the poet's own high standards for warrior-heroes (the Heroic Code) or to what we in our democratic republic might expect from defenders-of-the-nation, Hektor should win his way into our hearts as modern readers and command such respect from even well-qualified scholarly specialists. Let's reconsider.

Optional 4-6 page documented essay due Friday, Jan. 30 (grace period until Monday class, Feb. 02; later papers will not be accepted). All text must be double-spaced, with standard fonts (12 pt.) and margins (1.25"). Number pages. No electronic submissions.
Specified topic: Homer's attitude to war as shown in Books 11-18.

Specified topic: While we wait and wait and wait for Achilles to return to fight, lesser men struggle in a Great Day's Battle. One day begins with the dawn of *Iliad* 11.1 and the next with that of 19.1, and the very absence of the problematical hero from the fighting may simplify to some degree the task of determining **whether the epic poet of the Trojan War himself can be labeled either 'pro-war' or, perhaps paradoxically, 'anti-war.'** **Construct an argument either way, focusing sharply on Homer's account of this one day in this one war and demonstrating a grasp of relevant material in Books 11-18.**

PART TWO: THE ATHENIANS AND THE DEMOCRATIC POLIS

Week #4 Democratic Institutions and Political Ideals, Ancient and Modern

Read Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, Ch. 4, 29-33, 42-69. DHO #4: Demosthenes vs Aristocrates (23.65-79) and Drakon's Law on Homicide (*IG I² 115 = 1³ 104*).

Recommended reserve: J. A. C. T. [= Joint Association of Classical Teachers], *World of Athens*, 196-243 [= Ch. 5, "Athenian Democracy and Imperialism"].

Feb. 02 The Athenians' Democracy I: Elections, Allotments, and 'Executive Office'

Feb. 04 The Athenians' Democracy II: Jury Courts and Homicide Courts

Thursday sections, Draco's Historical Homicide Law and an Unhistorical 'Constitution.'

Most historical evidence on ancient Athens is literary, preserved in the surviving texts of classical authors. Some is archaeological, material remains at or from ancient sites; this includes inscribed stone tablets that preserve or purport to preserve ancient laws, oaths, treaties, and the like, often only partially, on mutilated fragments. How can we verify the historicity of a damaged inscription like 'Drakon's Homicide Law,' which scholars accept as the later copy of an archaic statute? Contrarily, how can we demonstrate the spuriousness of the supposed 'Constitution of Draco,' which scholars reject as an interpolation into *The Athenian Constitution* meant to provide 'historical foundations' for oligarchical conceptions? By the way, Draco = Drakon = Δρακων = snake, serpent!

Week #5 Solon as Culture-Hero and Historical Figure

Read Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 1-28, 34-40; Plutarch, *Solon* (in *Rise and Fall*).
 DHO #5: Herodotus 1.28-33, 3.80-88; Pindar *Pythia* 10 and 3

Feb. 09 Solon I: Herodotus' Citizen-Sage and Pindar's Lessons on Life and Death

Feb. 11 Solon II: Ps.-Aristotle's Moderate Lawgiver

Thursday sections, Solon III: Plutarch's Belated Attempt to Construct a Coherent 'Life.'

Plutarch inherited various materials on Solon, some more historical than others, but most beyond any possible verification. Although most of his sources have been lost, we can study his use of the Herodotus and the ps.-Aristotle that do survive. He was a good and learned man, but much more a moralistic antiquarian than a critical historian.

Week #6 A Citizen-Poet Instructs His Community

Read Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, **not** the Introduction other than pp. 14-16; Plutarch, *Cimon*, esp. 4, 12-18. DHO #6: excerpts from Homer *Odyssey* 3 and 11; *Life of Aeschylus*.

Feb. 23 *Agamemnon*: The Victim's Wrongdoing and the Killer's Righteousness-I

Feb. 25 *Libation Bearers*: The Victim's Wrongdoing and the Killer's Righteousness-II

Thursday sections, The *Oresteia* (458 BC) and Athenian History.

A tentative historical interpretation: Aeschylus was a citizen-poet with a proud war-record and, at the end of his life, an expatriate who died in Sicily, perhaps merely as the honored guest of the wealthy Syracusan tyrant but perhaps, less happily, as a political refugee. Aristotle says that Athenian populists had staged some sort of coup in 462 BC and that their leader, Ephialtes, had then been assassinated. At the next opportunity, the People had ostracized the aristocratic Cimon, a wealthy magnate, friend to conservative Sparta, and the Athenians' greatest general. This bitter factional conflict, tit-for-tat at home, was greatly complicated by foreign wars against both the Persians and other Greeks, including the fearsome Spartans. In this emergency, there is evidence of pro-Cimonian recall movements and abortive conspiracies against the democracy, presumably involving proponents of an 'Ancestral Constitution' in alliance with the Spartans (Thuc. 1.107; Plut. *Cimon* 17). This is the historical context for the *Oresteia*.

Week #7 Misreading and Rereading the Most Celebrated Greek Tragedy, the *Oedipus Tyrannus*

Read Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*; Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6-15; Plutarch, *Pericles*. DHO #7: *Life of Sophocles*; Thucydides 1.118, 126-27; 2.13-17, 34-56, 65; Lincoln, Gettysburg Address. **Optional essay due Friday (for prescribed topic, see p. 6; for option, p. 8).**

Mar. 02 Smart Guys and Bad Theories: Aristotle's Rationalism and Freud's Irrationalism

Mar. 04 Strong Guys and Bad Theater: Professional Wrestlers and Oedipus' Heroism

Thursday sections, An Interpretation of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* as an Anti-Pericles Play.

With apologies to the Bard: "The plague's the thing, wherein you'll catch the conscience of the king." Pericles' policies in the Peloponnesian War doubly defied Apollo's oracles; the Athenian Plague and horrifying mortality followed. Cause and effect? The regulative historical account, Thucydides', is resolutely pro-Periclean on those policies and as resolutely secular and quasi-clinical on the Plague. Plutarch was his respectful reader. But Sophocles, what about Sophocles? Fellow-citizen, sometime colleague, and loyal friend of Pericles? Or old believer in the superior wisdom and power of the gods, willing to censure a self-confident knower who did not sufficiently respect that superiority?

Optional 4-6 page documented essay due Friday, March 6 (grace until Monday class, March 9, then whole-grade lateness penalty). Double-space; standard fonts (12 pt.) and margins (1.25"). Number pages. No electronic submissions.

Specified topic: **Funeral Orations, Ancient and Modern, and Ideals of Democracy.**

Pericles' Funeral Oration is the most celebrated speech from Greek antiquity. A measure of its resonance and, hypothetically, its relevance even for us might be apparent echoes in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the most celebrated speech from our own political history. I introduced this course with a warning against the dubious attractions of anachronistic readings of the Greek classics (syllabus, p. 2). Here's a possible case in point: **Putting the two speeches side by side, are the political ideals of Pericles and Lincoln more nearly alike or more different in their conceptions of 'democracy' as an ideal and in their visions of their states as proper objects of patriotic devotion and martial sacrifice? What, if any, are the significant likenesses, and what, if any, the differences?**

Week #8 Sophoclean Tragedy and Aristophanic Comedy

Read Sophocles *Antigone*; Aristophanes, *Clouds*. DHO #9: Sophists.

Mar. 09 The *Antigone*, the Two Laws, and Sophocles as a Pious Patriot

Mar. 11 The *Clouds*: The Happy Idea of a Citizen-Poet Angered by Sophistic Impiety .

Thursday sections: Review session.

PART THREE: PLATO AND SOCRATES

Week #9 Your Knowledge and Your Wisdom; Plato's Hero-Worship and My History

Read Plato, *Apology*.

Mar. 16 **Midsemester exam.** All essay; open book and blue DHOs; no oranges.

Mar. 18 The *Apology*: Plato Defends Hero-Socrates and Attacks Democratic 'Injustice'

Thursday sections, Plato's Testimony, Questions of Historicity, a Defense of Athens.

Grube's prefatory remarks represent a scholarly consensus on Plato's *Apology* as the regulative historical source on Socrates' trial: Plato says that he "was present at the trial," and, if he wrote "not long after the event" for others who "would [also have] remember[ed] the actual speech," wouldn't he have had to remain faithful to "the main arguments and the general tone of the defense" (p. 20)? Let's reconsider. Of course, more or less everybody familiar with Plato now supposes that Socrates must have been innocent of the charges against him; that makes his Athenian judges guilty of a grave injustice. More or less everybody. I'm an exception; I'll try to defend the Athenians.

Week #10 Socratic Dialogue

Read Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Crito*, and *Republic* through Stephanus 367e (marginal numbers).

Mar. 23 The *Euthyphro* and the Definition of Piety

Mar. 25 The *Crito* and the Wise Few, the Foolish Many, and the Authority of the Law

Thursday sections, *Republic*, Book 1: Another Defense in the Form of Other Attacks?

Considered as philosophy, Book 1 of the *Republic* makes frustrating reading. Socrates easily bests both Cephalus (a wealthy old alien who had made his money as a shield-maker and whose very name seems ironic in light of an evident unwillingness or inability to think: κεφαλη = 'head') and his son, Polemarchus (another ironic name, in that the polemarchy was an honorable but relatively powerless magistracy reserved for citizens and awarded by allotment). Socrates does engage the latter in the dialogue, easily demonstrating the inadequacy of the poetic maxims of a traditional morality. He has to work harder to pin down Thrasymachus but wrestles this aggressive Sophist, too, to the ground (θρασυς = 'bold, spirited' or, pejoratively, 'rash, presumptuous' and μαχη = 'battle, fight, quarrel, contest'). Yet Socrates' victory is hollow, a triumph of verbal gamesmanship or, in a word, sophistry. Thrasymachus sounds churlish when he concedes defeat, but he is right that Socrates has failed to establish his own truths, and Glaucon and Adeimantus then challenge the philosopher to respond more substantively not just to the amoral Thrasymachus but also to those who hold more conventional opinions.

Week #11 Plato's Vision of the Just City and the Just Man and Woman

Read Plato, *Republic* 367e-471e.

Mar. 30 The *Republic* 367e-427c: Plato's Hard-Headed Utopianism and the Just City

Apr. 02 The *Republic* 427d-445e: Plato's Ethical Principles and the Just Man

Thursday sections, 449a-471e: Equality of Women and Abolition of Family (*Greeks?!).*

The home stretch: After you stretch for another couple of weeks, you can go back home. You will have in hand final exam questions by this point. The early distribution is meant to lessen exam-room anxieties and to allow more thoughtful preparation, specifically including student-student collaborative study outside the classroom, so as to improve the quality of work done at the end. You are free to discuss related issues between or among yourselves without me. We are social animals, and our world 'idiot' comes directly from the Greek adjective for 'one's own, personal, private, peculiar, separate,' etc.

Week #12 Philosophy and Politics

Complete Plato, *Republic*. No sections this week.

Apr. 06 The *Republic* 472a-541b: Plato's Metaphysical Idealism

Apr. 08 The *Republic* 543a-592b: The Hierarchy of Constitutional Types

EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADING

Expectations

You can expect to find in me a reader who loves this material, who wants to have fun teaching it, and who knows that our forefathers considered it fundamental to Western Civilization. I will try to convince you that, while many of its presuppositions are alien and archaic, it remains truly great and that you can both understand it and learn from it. I have probably done my best teaching as an informal lecturer, but, if you take the initiative, I will happily put the brakes on Motormouth, slip into neutral, and listen. Call me on that. For ‘Socratic Method,’ see Plato’s artfully composed ‘dialogues.’ You tell me: What are the legendary teacher’s pedagogical principles and methods, his assumptions about truth and value, *and* his students’ responsibilities?

I expect more from you than I will require: “For the free man, there should be no element of slavery in learning” (Plato *Rep.* 536e, Cornford translation). What do I expect? Prepared attendance and engagement in class, your best effort on papers and exams, and a willingness to bring any problems to me. It’s about that simple. 25% course grade is to be ‘perceived effort.’ Show me! If you can’t imagine how to do that, I may help you by occasional reading quizzes.

Requirements

One documented essay (January 30 or March 6, your choice*): 25% of course grade. See above at Weeks #3 and 7 for prescribed topics. Papers are nominally due on the Friday, but a penalty-free grace period extends until the following Monday at class; for the first essay, I will not accept papers later than that; for the second, I will penalize further lateness by a full grade (A to B, B to C, etc.). Of course, I’d rather raise grades than depress them. I will comment promptly on any draft pre-submitted by the Thursday section meeting. I also strongly recommend the Peer Writing Assistants in Ladd (Sun.-Thurs. Evenings). Why would any mature student procrastinate so long that real reconsideration and revision is impossible? Why would anyone smart enough to complete an ‘early’ draft not want someone’s else’s constructive, non-judgmental reactions to it? Beats me. In any case, I require parenthetical documentation from the primary texts and will severely penalize the lack of it. A modest Library Reserve will facilitate access to scholarly commentary, but I don’t require that you use it. If you do, acknowledge indebtedness formally with Chicago-style foot- or endnotes in good form. The essays are to be 4-6 pages each; double-space; standard fonts (12 pt.) and margins (1.25"). Number pages. I do not accept electronic submissions, and I will not accept late work after the last class without the formal approval of a dean. *If you are not satisfied by your grade on the first essay –*or if you want to show me effort at the A-level– you may submit both optional papers and I will calculate only the higher grade.

Midsemester exam (March 16): 25% of course grade. The midsemester exam will consist of two open-book essays chosen from three or four questions. In any case, an unexcused absence would risk a zero-grade failure for the exam; that in itself can be a course-killer.

Final exam (as scheduled by Registrar): 25% of course grade. The citizen-sage Solon tells the haughty despot Croesus that he, too, must to ‘look to the end,’ meaning that until his life itself ends in death even he will be exposed to the virtual inevitability of unforeseen misfortunes. There is still a sort of ‘wisdom’ in this grim counsel, but at least this course can have a happy ending: I will distribute questions well in advance. They will start at the end, with Plato, and look backward at prior Greek culture. On exam day, you may have full access to books and DHOs, including any marginal annotations, but not to any other notes, outlines, or drafts. No use of oranges. An unexcused absence would risk a zero-grade failure for the exam. Not many elements of slavery . . .

Grading Philosophy and Standards

The Bates degree means something, because we are known to be highly selective and thought to be intellectually demanding. Yet grades here and at all comparable schools have inflated markedly within the past generation or more. Although I am still responsible for submitting course grades on a scale from A = 4 to F = 0, the bottom of the scale has virtually dropped out. In most Humanities and History courses like this one, the nominal A to F has become an actual A to C, with lots of As (ca. 40%), lots of Bs (ca. 45-50%), relatively few Cs, and almost no Ds or Fs for those students who make any attempt to do the work. We rarely pause to reflect on the pedagogical premises of the grading system, but they are worth considering, and I think that it is only candid for me to tell you at the beginning how I understand them.

First, nobody likes to be judged by anyone else. And I don’t know anyone who really enjoys judging others’ work. I don’t. But I will never fail you or even judge *you*. Promise. I will try to assess fairly particular pieces of written work. Because you know that I will do so, you will work to improve them. Anyone who submits work for someone else’s critical commentary and formal evaluation is apt to put more thought and care into the exercise and, thus, to get more out of it. That matters most. You should probably be more severe in your own self-evaluations than I will be in my grading. You can ‘*fail yourself*’ if you don’t read, don’t think, don’t write, don’t speak, don’t dare, or just don’t care. Hypothetically, I could also ‘fail you’ in any of these ways, but I won’t. I will do my best, and I want to help you to succeed, too. Let me know how. Please note, once again, that I will not ‘*grade you,*’ your mind, or your promise; I can only assess pieces of your written work and toss on top what I hope will be a generous bonus for perceived effort.

Second, to be instructive, professorial commentary and evaluation must be prompt, sensitive, and candid, all three. *It fails*, if it is too late, too censorious, *or* too generous. I am apt to grade less generously in the course of the semester, for you, than at its end, for the Registrar and the readers of your transcript, because it seems pedagogically counterproductive and intellectually dishonest to communicate only in terms of the good, the better, and the best. No one’s work is ever ‘best’ in every way, and almost no one’s is always better than ‘good.’ You ought to know when I think that yours is not. You also have the right to expect that course grades will reflect institutional norms. I tend to grade most generously at the end, when it counts most. “Look to the end.”

Third, there are gradations of worth in all work, yours and mine alike. While standards differ, grader to grader, and the same evaluator may see different things in the same piece of work, reading to reading, such differences are not merely arbitrary. Provided that we don't make too much of spuriously precise numbers, transcript truth *is* a sort of truth, reflecting a complex series of professional judgments on the written traces left by an intelligence that has been disciplined and applied. The ancient Greek wouldn't have been content to 'be the best that he could be,' a modern phrase that can too easily excuse limited achievement, devalue others' acknowledgment, and rule out comparative assessment. Democracy triumphant! The Greek aristocrat wanted to be *the best* without qualification and to be acknowledged as such. Show me your best; I'll do my poor best (the best I can do . . .) to recognize it and to reward it.

One professor's attempt to articulate his grading standards:

- A Clear focus on question posed, responding to all aspects. Well informed, familiar with texts and judicious in their interpretation. Perspective on the question posed and the response offered, with appropriate attention to complications, qualifications, and possible counter-arguments. Coherent conceptual structure. Vigorous and persuasive.
- B Some vagueness or omission. Less firm grasp of the texts and perhaps minor factual errors. Less evident critical reflexivity, less perspective on issues and argument. Looser, less conceptual, more descriptive, perhaps some irrelevancy. Less thoughtful, more conventional recourse to commonplaces. Not as well argued or presented –but not bad.
- C More serious vagueness, omission, or error with respect to texts. Meets most demands of question, but not all. Little or no critical perspective, as defined above. Little or no conceptual structure, often limited to a rehearsal of commonplaces that are illustrated by passages discussed in class.
- D This is a sign of real trouble, an indication of deficiencies considered serious enough to verge on failure. Let a couple of days pass for the psychic wounds to scab over, then be sure to do two things. First, reconsider your own work in light of any comments; second, be sure to talk with the professor, being confident that he wants you to succeed.
- F This is trouble itself.

CMHI 106 FINAL EXAM

On exam day, answer both parts of three questions; the fourth is a sort of wild card that requires extra reading but may be substituted for any of the other three. Equal time (40 min.) and credit (33%). Open books and blue DHO's but *no use of drafts, outlines, or notes other than marginal notes and cross-references in texts*, a practice that I favor as generally useful. *This means no orange class notes.* Sophocles teaches that Time is a powerful and pitiless enemy: Don't waste what little you have by trying to tell me all you know. You couldn't succeed in that ambition or win favor by any such hypothetical accomplishment. Do show that your familiarity with the assigned texts and your understanding of the issues involved in answering the questions posed.

1. PLATO'S ETHICS AND HOMER'S MORALS

Any reader of Plato's *Republic* can see the philosopher's criticisms of Homer's *Iliad*, particularly the poet's representations of the gods and of men's attitudes toward death; all this is explicit. However, the more thoughtful reader may be more interested in subtler questions raised by the ambiguous relationship between Plato's ethical ideals and Homer's apparent moral presuppositions; this is merely implicit. The philosopher implicitly rejects the moral imperatives of the heroic code and faults the moral examples of even Achilles and Hektor--yet in his political and ethical thought he, too, implicitly endorses the most fundamental presuppositions of a martial aristocracy.

- 1a) Explain how the Cardinal Virtues of the *Republic* are both 'more philosophical' and 'more political' than anything in the *Iliad*;
- 1b) then explore the hypothesis that, despite these fundamental differences, Plato follows Homer by formalizing the ascendancy of a warrior elite.

2. PLATO'S 'ABOLITION OF FAMILY' AND DRAMATISTS ON SONS AND FATHERS

The modern reader of Plato's argument for the abolition of the family among the governing elite is apt to be struck by its anticipation of some of the best and some of the worst in the social thought of our own century, insofar as it is the logical complement of associated arguments for both the equality of women ('a self-evident Good Thing') and the selective breeding of human beings as if they were horses or dogs ('a self-evident Bad Thing'). But to an ancient reader, the most radical feature of all this may well have been the deliberate effacement of the lines that in all Greek tradition had identified sons by their paternity and obligated them to their fathers. This traditional consensus is best represented in drama, both tragedy and comedy.

- 2a) Reconstruct Plato's philosophical argument for the abolition of the family, relating it to his arguments for the equality of elite women and for eugenicist mating patterns;
- 2b) then illustrate the rightful primacy of father-son relationships in the assigned plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes.

3. PHILOSOPHICAL ARISTOCRACY IN A WORLD OF DEMOCRATS AND OLIGARCHS

Among Plato's Athenian contemporaries, there seem to have been only two important sets of opinions on constitutional questions, those of democrats and those of oligarchs. A great majority of the Many apparently preferred government by themselves, the People, with citizen parentage the necessary but sufficient qualification for the enjoyment of political rights by all adult males; this was democracy. At least some of the Few, the wealthy Few, would have preferred a more restrictive government, with political rights reserved for the smaller number who could meet property qualifications of one sort or another; this would have been oligarchy. Although Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution* had yet to be written at the time of Plato's death, its descriptive second half (Ch. 42-69) provides invaluable evidence on the Athenian democracy of his time, and the author's particular interest in and sympathy with the oligarchical movements that tried and ultimately failed to displace the fifth-century democracy is also quite instructive (Ch. 29-40). Self-conscious democrats in the modern world are more apt to notice and regret Plato's opposition to the radical democracy of his own day, but it is only just for us to note that this democracy was very different from ours and that Plato was hardly less critical of the oligarchical alternative.

- 3a) Relate the political thought of Plato's *Republic* to the constitutional principles of Athenian democrats. To do this, first, define the principles that are implied by the institutional details in Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution* (Ch. 42-69). Second, offer brief Platonic responses to these implicit democratic principles.
- 3b) Relate the political thought of Plato's *Republic* to the constitutional principles of Athenian oligarchs. To do this, first define the principles that are implied by the institutional reforms made by oligarchs in 411 BC (Ch. 29-33). Second, show how Plato treats property, the propertied, and oligarchy in the *Republic*.

WILD CARD: PLATO'S REAL OR APPARENT PHILO-LACONISM (= LOVE-OF-SPARTA)

Informed and impassioned readers who think that Plato 'hated Athens' often suppose that he must have 'loved Sparta.' Perhaps so, perhaps not. Perhaps, alas, we would have to think about it systematically and to qualify our own assessments of both this love and this hatred. Test these two propositions, allowing for these purposes the Periclean "Funeral Oration" to stand as the standard for Athenian patriotism and Xenophon and Plutarch to represent the rather uncritical admiration of Spartans and things Spartan that characterized some philo-laconian foreigners.

- 4a) What does the Pericles of the "Funeral Oration" ask fellow Athenians to revere, even to love about their city and the qualities that it has called forth from citizens? How much of this would the Plato of *The Republic* definitely reject? Why? And is there anything that he would accept?
- 4b) What do Xenophon and Plutarch expect readers to revere about Sparta and Spartans? How much of this would Plato of *The Republic* accept? Why? And are there aspects of the Sparta *such as it was envisioned and praised by Xenophon and Plutarch* that he would definitely reject?