

Political Philosophy I
September 9, 11, 13 – Plato's *Gorgias* (pp. 23-78)

Terms:

theoretical wisdom (*sophia*)
practical wisdom (*phronesis*)
cleverness (*deinotēs*)
craft; skill; knack (*technē*)
speech; reason (*logos*)

opinion (*doxa*)
form; essence; truth (*edios*)
mimic; imitate (*mimesis*)

good (*agathon*)
fine; beautiful; noble (*kalon*)
pleasure (*hedonē*)
power (*krata*)

Socrates and Polus Part 1 (September 9)

What is Socrates' final word on the teaching of Gorgias? What is his criticism of it? What should students learn instead? How does Gorgias respond in defense of his teaching? How does Gorgias contradict himself? (23-27)

How does Polus, Gorgias' student, respond to Socrates' criticism of rhetoric? What is his defense of Gorgias' teaching of rhetoric? (27-28)

What does Socrates finally say rhetoric is? What is the analogy gymnastic versus cosmetics? Or medicine versus cookery? What trick does rhetoric play when it comes to legislation and justice? (27-34)

What kind of power does rhetoric actually have according to Socrates? What does it mean for human freedom, especially for dictators and tyrants? What is the difference between desiring what one wants, and what is "best"? (34-39)

Socrates and Polus Part 2 (September 11)

How does Polus respond, especially when it comes to envying the powerful? What is the difference between suffering versus doing injustice? Which is preferable according to Socrates? (39-42)

What examples of powerful people does Polus give? Why does he insist they are happier? How does Socrates respond – especially about those who agree with Polus that the unjust are happier? (42-45)

Why does Socrates still not agree that the unjust are happier than the just? How does Socrates' example of the criminal suffering a penalty show this? What does a just penalty do for a criminal? What's so bad about getting away with a crime? (45-60)

In conclusion, what is a good use of rhetoric? At the same time, what is the absolute worst thing we can do to our enemies with rhetoric? (60-62)

Socrates and Calicles Part 1 (September 13)

Why does Calicles think that Socrates' view is laughable and childish? How does Socrates respond as a lover of philosophy? (62-64)

How does Calicles respond to Socrates' earlier argument that it is better to suffer injustice than be unjust? What is his distinction between "nature" and "convention"? What is the true origin of law? What is the true natural order of things, especially the strong and the weak? (63-66)

What does Calicles' view of things mean for philosophy? What is a philosopher like Socrates really all about? What is the difference between "nature," and relations between the strong and the weak? Who specifically does he mean by "the stronger"? How do the stronger, superior sort live? (66-72)

Why is Calicles unclear about the "stronger" and the "better"? Why does Socrates insist that Calicles' ideal life is actually terrible? What are they missing out on that makes them so miserable? What analogies does he use to show this? (72-78)