

# Classical Political Thought

## Outline of Plato's *Republic*

- Book I**
  - Socrates seized: Philosophy must always submit to power (327a-328d)
  - Political Justice (328d-336b)
    - Justice is piety toward the gods (Cephalus, 328d-331d)
    - Justice is giving to each what is owed – good to friends and harm to enemies (Polemarchus, 331d-336b)
      - Giving back what is owed? – Not always (332c-334c)
      - Doing good to friends? – Close friends vs. friends who are good (334c-335b)
      - The definition of “harm” – to hurt vs. to make better through justice (335b-336b)
  - Sub-political justice (Thrasymachus, 336b-354c)
    - Justice is the will of the stronger (336b-343b)
    - It's better to be unjust (343b-352b)
  - It's better to be just than unjust (Socrates, 352d-354a)
    - Justice is part of the purpose of the human soul (353a-d)
- Book II**
  - The view of justice among the many (357a-369a)
    - Most believe justice is drudgery (Glaucon, 358a-362d)
      - Justice is useful, not good (358e-359b)
      - The Ring of Gyges myth (359b-360d)
      - Test of the just and unjust (360d-362b)
    - Custom (*nomos*) does not praise justice in *itself* (Adeimantus, 362d-368c)
      - Only the reputation of justice is praised (362d-363e)
      - Poets praise injustice (363e-368c)
  - The Republic proper begins: A perfectly just city in speech can help us see justice in the soul (Socrates, 368c-369b) – in three parts:
    - First Part: The Laborers – providing for material comfort (the “city of sows”) (369b-373a)
    - Second Part: The Guardian Class – protecting the city (373d-383c)
      - The education of Guardians – guidelines for poetry about “the god” (376c-383c)
      - Standards for lyrics (386a-392c)
      - Standards for style and the problem of imitation (392-398c)
      - Melody and rhythm (398c-403c)
        - Gymnastic education of Guardians (403c-410b)
        - Harmony of soul (poetry) and body (gymnastic); the god's design (410b-412a)
    - Third Part: Overseers of the City (412a-414b)
      - Identifying Overseers with tests (412a-414b)
  - The Noble Lie to unify the city (414b-416b)
    - They sprung up out of the ground (414d-415a)
    - The classes are distinguished by precious metals in their souls (415a-d)
    - Mass re-education of the young (415d-417b)
- Book III**
  - The Perfectly Just City in Speech (419a-427c)
    - Happiness of the whole, rather than the individual (419-421c)
    - No money, no factions (421c-423d)
    - Education is supreme (423d-427c)
  - What Justice is: the right order of virtues in the city and the soul (427c-445e)
    - Wisdom of the Overseers (428a-429a)
    - Courage of the Guardians (429a-430c)
    - Moderation of the Laborers (430c-431e)
    - All together: Justice (431e-433e)
  - What injustice is: disorder of city or soul (433e-434c)
  - The just city is the image of the just soul (434d-435d)
  - The problem of human passions in causing disorder (439d-445e) (continued in Book VIII, on tyranny)
- Book IV**
  - If the Perfectly Just City was real (449a-480a)
    - The shamelessness of philosophy (Socrates vs. Glaucon, 449a-451b)
    - The Three Waves (Socrates, 451b-480a)
      - First Wave: Radical equality of the sexes (451b-457c)
        - Convention versus Nature (Glaucon vs. Socrates, 453c-456d)
      - Second Wave: All marriage and family in common (457c-471b)
        - The City is the family (457c-458b)
        - Selective breeding of Guardians (458b-462a)
        - Removing the cause of factions (462a-466d)
        - Education in warfare (466d-471c)
        - The City in Speech and the real world (Glaucon, 471c-473c)
      - Third Wave: The Overseers revealed as Philosopher Kings (473c-480a)
        - If philosophy and political power coincide (473c-474c)
        - Why philosophy deserves to rule (474c-487a)
          - Love of the whole, rather than the particular (474c-476d)
          - Knowledge (*edios*) over opinion (*doxa*) (476d-480a)
          - Hatred of falsehood (484a-485c)
          - Love of Truth (485c-486a)
          - No fear of death (486a-487a)
- Book V**
  - Corruption and reform in real cities (487a-503b)
    - The powerful rule, not the wise (487a-489e)
      - The ship analogy (488a-489e)
    - The true statesman (489e-491d)
    - The source of political corruption (491d-497b)
      - The Sophists corrupt the young by teaching (492a-b)
      - The city corrupts the young by expecting manipulation (492b-496a)
      - The philosopher retreats into private life (496a-497b)
- Book VI**

- Reforming a corrupt city with political philosophy (497b-503b)
      - Socrates and Thrasymachus together (498c-d)
  - Philosophic education (503b-511e)
    - Identifying the right students (503b-504e)
    - The highest study: The Idea of the Good (504e-511e)
      - Impossible to fully know – like the sun, illuminating the soul (504e-509b)
      - All things find their highest being in The Good, and are corrupt when they fall away (509b-511e)
- Book VII**
- The Cave (514a-521c)
    - Liberation from the Cave (514a-519d)
      - The “turning around” (514a-515e)
      - The hard, upward ascent (515e-516b)
      - Shadows, objects, and the sun (i.e., opinion, idea, and the Good) (516a-c; 518b)
      - Philosophic education can turn out good or bad, depending on the student’s soul (518b-519d)
    - Returning to the Cave (519d-521c)
      - Love of justice vs. desire to rule (521a-c)
  - Philosophic topics (521c-532a)
    - Arithmetic (522c-526c)
    - Geometry (526c-527c)
    - Astronomy (useful geometry) (527c-530e)
    - Music (useful arithmetic) (530e-532a)
  - Dialectic, the philosophic method (as opposed to rhetoric) (532a-535a)
    - The end of dialectic is the truth itself (while rhetoric is only representation) (532d-535a)
  - Selecting the right students (535a-538a)
    - Capacity for hard work (535c-536a)
    - Only those morally fit (unlike the Sophists) (536a-537d)
    - Only those over 30 (537d-538a)
    - Avoiding risk of corruption (e.g., the adopted child) (538a-539c)
      - Why philosophy gets a bad reputation (539c-d)
    - Selecting from among the best Guardians, including women (539d-541a)
  - Founding the best regime in education (541a-b)
  - Four types of city and four types of soul, all derived from the City in Speech (continued from Book IV, 439d) (534a-580a)
    - Timocracy (Cretan or Laconian [i.e., Spartan]) – lovers of honor (545b-550c)
      - Regime change: bad breeding leads to self-interest and factions (545c-548c)
      - The Timocratic soul: mixed, and torn between honor and wealth (548c-550c)
    - Oligarchy – lovers of wealth (550c-555b)
      - Love of wealth surpasses love of virtue (550c-551c)
      - Unskilled in warfare (551c-552c)
      - Moral decay of society (552c-554c)
      - Oligarchic education is focused on utility (554c-555b)
    - Democracy – lovers of equality (555b-562a)
      - Decay of the rich and honor of the poor leads to an uprising (555b-557a)
      - Democratic character: free-spirited, diverse, and humane (557a-558c)
      - Equality of ideas (relativism) (558c-562a)
    - Tyranny – lovers of power (562a-580b)
      - Champion of the people against the oligarchs (562a-563d)
      - The people submit to his rule (563d-564c)
        - Use of speech to turn the people against the oligarchs (564c-566b)
        - Security from criminals to protect him against the people (566b-568a)
          - The best men are his enemies (567b-d)
      - Why tragic poetry is appropriate to democracy: confront chaos in the human soul (568a-596c) (Cf. Leontius, 439e)
      - Tyrants have totally unrestrained desires (those appearing in shameful dreams) (571a-573c)
      - The tyrant’s life (573c-580b)
        - Parties and feasts (573c-e)
        - Confiscating property (573e)
        - Disrespect for elders and traditions, the gods (574a-575a)
        - Bodyguards against the democratic mobs (575a-576a)
        - No friendship (576a-576c)
        - Wretchedness of tyranny – tyrant and city both (576c-580a)
          - Paranoia (578a-579d)
          - Self-enslavement (579d-580a)
- Book IX**
- Justice is more profitable than injustice because the just are *happier* (588b-592b) (Cf. Book I, 352d)
    - The human part and the animal part of the soul (588b-589e)
    - Self-enslavement and the freedom of self-rule (589e-592b)
      - The pleasures of the philosopher (591b-592b)
- Book X**
- Epilogue: The quarrel between philosophy and poetry (595a-608b)
    - Dramatic poetry’s appeal to the emotions over reason (602c-605c)
    - The effect of dramatic poetry on character (605c-608b)
  - The ultimate reward for the just soul (608c-621d)
    - A proof of the immortality of the soul (608c-621a)
    - The rewards for justice in this life (612a-613e)
    - The rewards for justice after death (613e-621a)
      - The Myth of Er (616b-621a)