

# **Syllabus for a Course on Plato's *Republic***

## **Prepared by Robert Canright**

Commercially available material enables capable discussion leaders to host a course on Plato's *Republic* by using the lecture by David Roochnik, available from The Teaching Company in audio CD and DVD, and the translation of Plato's *Republic* by Benjamin Jowett available in paperback and audio CD from Agora Publications.

The course by Dr. Roochnik contains 24 half-hour lectures. The audio CD's from Agora have the ten books of the *Republic* on ten CD's, each approximately 60 minutes long.

### **Material & Resources**

Each student would get a copy of the course transcript (\$25) for Dr. Roochnik's lecture and a copy of the paperback book (\$20) from Agora, enabling participants to follow along and take notes. The cost to each student for materials would be \$45. If the class needs to pay rent for a meeting room, then the cost of the class cannot be estimated without rental quotes.

Facility resources would include: (1) chairs for everyone, (2) electrical outlet, (3) tables would be nice, but not necessary. The class leader will bring a portable CD player.

### **Suggested Schedule**

Assuming a weekly meeting of adults at a recreation center, church, or private residence:

Session 1: Roochnik lecture 1, Plato's Life & Times & lecture 2, Book 1, the Title and Setting

Session 2: Roochnik lecture 3, Book 1, Socrates vs. Thrasymachus & lecture 4, Book 2, the City-Soul Analogy

Session 3: Book 1 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD.

Session 4: Roochnik lecture 5, Books 2 & 3, Censorship & lecture 6, Book 3, the Noble Lie

Session 5: Book 2 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD.

Session 6: Roochnik lecture 7, Book 3, Socrates's Medical Ethics & lecture 8, Book 4, Justice in the City and Soul

Session 7: Book 3 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD.

Session 8: Book 4 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD.

Session 9: Roochnik lecture 9, Book 5, Feminism & lecture 10, Book 5, Who is the Philosopher?

Session 10: Book 5 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD.

Session 11: Roochnik lecture 11, Book 6, The Ship of State & lecture 12, Book 6, The Idea of the Good

Session 12: Roochnik lecture 13, Book 6, The Divided Line & lecture 14, Book 7, The Parable of the Cave

Session 13: Book 6 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD

Session 14: Roochnik lecture 15, Book 7, The Education of the Guardians & lecture 16, Book 8, The Perfectly Just City Falls

Session 15: Book 7 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD

Session 16: Roochnik lecture 17, Books 8 & 9, The Mistaken Regimes & lecture 18, Book 8, Socrates's Critique of Democracy

Session 17: Book 8 of the *Republic* from the Agora CD

Session 18: Roochnik lecture 19, Books 8 & 9, The Critique of Tyranny & lecture 20, Book 9, The Superiority of Justice

Session 19: Book 9 of the Republic from the Agora CD

Session 20: Roochnik lecture 21, Book 10, Philosophy vs. Poetry & lecture 22, Book 10, The Myth of Er

Session 21: Book 10 of the Republic from the Agora CD

Session 22: Roochnik lecture 23, Summary and Overview & lecture 24, The Legacy of Plato's Republic

At this point the syllabus shows 22 hours of lectures and readings. If each session has an additional 30 minutes of discussion then  $22 \times 1.5$  gives 33 hours for this course. Time permitting, a couple of additional sessions would be desirable.

Optional Session 23: One hour discussion among group participants.

Optional Session 24: One hour panel discussion, either from invited panel members or class participants.

If the class has to schedule twice around holidays, then this course could run 26 weeks, half a year. If participants are willing to schedule 2 hour sessions, this would shorten duration of the course

## High School

This course could be adapted for a high school. It would be an excellent half-year (one semester) elective course. Considering three 6-week sessions, averaging 4 productive lecture/reading sessions per week (1 session per week of pure discussion), then if each session has only 45 productive minutes:

$3 \text{ terms} \times 6 \text{ weeks-per-term} \times 4 \text{ sessions-per-week} = 72 \text{ sessions}$

$72 \text{ sessions} \times 0.75 \text{ hours per session} = 54 \text{ hours}$ , providing plenty of time for discussions, supplementary material, additional research, and writing assignments.

## References

### The Teaching Company

<http://www.teach12.com/>

1-800-832-2412 (1-800-TEACH-12), Fax: 703-378-3819

Address: 4151 Lafayette Center Dr., Ste. 100, Chantilly, VA 20151-1232

### Agora Publications

<http://www.agorapublications.com/>

Phone & Fax: 508-376-1073

Address: 17 Dean Street, Millis, MA 02054

Plato's Republic is here:

[http://www.agorapublications.com/plato\\_republic\\_complete/](http://www.agorapublications.com/plato_republic_complete/)