

## First paper topics

Write a paper no longer than 1800 words, about 5-6 pages, on one of the topics below. Please turn your paper in to my box in 208 Pearsons by 10 am on Thursday, February 26. Good luck!

1. Glaucon gives an account of the origins of justice in Book II (358e-359b) that is accepted as an extension of Thrasymachus's attacks on justice in Book I. But it is not obvious why this is so. Explain why someone might think that Glaucon's account of justice does not have the negative implications that Thrasymachus's accounts did. What are the best reasons for thinking that it does, as Plato apparently thought? What do you think? Would the truth of Glaucon's account of the origin of justice be just as bad for justice as the truth of what Thrasymachus said?
2. Glaucon challenged Socrates to show that justice is desired "for its own sake" and not just for the benefits that come from having a reputation for being just (357-8). Suppose Socrates had said this: it's obviously desired for its own sake because just people don't steal even when they could get away with it. Would that be enough to answer Glaucon's challenge? Give what you regard as the most compelling arguments on either side in explaining your answer.
3. I said Plato's analogy between the city and the soul faces a dilemma and that he has to choose between an attractive picture of the city and a plausible picture of the soul. Roughly, a city whose "reasoning" part regulated its "desiring" part in the way that the reasoning part of the soul regulates the desiring part would be harshly repressive. Rob, a student in this class last year, disagreed with my criticism. According to him, Plato saw the desires of a good, well-ordered soul as moderate. To put it another way, the good person doesn't want things so indiscriminately and violently that the reasoning part has to constantly repress it. If so, the analogy doesn't look as bad as I said it was. I like both interpretations quite a lot. So I would like you to settle it. Which one of us is right? To do so, you should

characterize our differing interpretations of Plato, give your reasons for preferring one, and respond to what you regard as a compelling objection.

4. The analogy of the cave in Book VII raises a question: why would the Guardians go back to rule the city? Explain why this question arises and how Plato tried to answer it. Give what you regard as a compelling objection to Plato's answer. Then give your own assessment: has Plato explained why the philosophers would be willing to serve as kings?