Plato’s Apology

‘Corrupting the youth' of Athens? Virtue in action? Threat to the body politic? Model citizen? Plato’s Socrates presents a conundrum for ancient and modern thought. In his brilliant dialogue, the Apology, Plato recreates Socrates’ defense of himself at his trial in 399 BCE for (among other things) ‘corrupting the youth' of his city. The Apology sits at the intersection of law, politics, philosophy, religion, erotics, and pedagogy. In this course, we will read the Apology closely, exploring it as philosophical reflection, courtroom oratory, literary text – and as gripping drama. Supplementary readings will address: intellectual milieu, historical and political context, questions of genre.

Week 1. Jan.30
Introduction. Problems and perspectives.

Week 2. Feb. 6

Week 3.Feb. 13

Week 4. Feb.20
In-class written exercise.

Week 5. Feb.27

Week 6. March 6
Crito; Kraut, R. “Socrates and the State” in Brickhouse and Smith, The Trial and Execution of Socrates 224-234

Take-home final exam due March 25, emailed and delivered in hard copy to my office.

The primary text for this course, Reeve, C.D. *The Trials of Socrates* is available (under the course number and instructor’s name) at Shakespeare & Co. Bookstore, 716 Broadway (right across the street from Gallatin). Secondary readings will be posted on NYU Classes. Texts designated ‘reading’ in the weekly schedule above are required; you are urged (but not required) to read those designated ‘recommended’, and it will be to your advantage to draw on them in your written work.

- Course requirements: 1) class attendance (more than 1 absence -- except for documented emergencies -- will automatically lower your final grade) and participation; 2) required readings; 3) *weekly response paragraphs on the assigned reading* 4) in-class written exercise; 5) take-home final exam.

Grading will be based on: class participation and response paragraphs 25%; in-class exercise 25%; final exam 50%. All your written work must be your own; “borrowed” work will be severely sanctioned in accordance with school policies. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.

*Response papers:* each week -- beginning with next week’s meeting (Feb. 6), please post on NYUC (by 9 p.m. the evening before each class). These response paragraphs will not be graded, but constitute an essential element of your participation in the class. Your response may include questions about the reading, or outlining or critique of arguments in the secondary material.

N.B. No computers in class – that would be un-Socratic!