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 7. March 7  Xenophon, *Apology; Memorabilia* (selections). Last things: *Phaedo* (selections)

Take-home final exam due March 20 at 5p.m, emailed and posted on NYU Classes

The primary text for this course, Reeve, C.D.  *The Trials of Socrates* is available (under the course number and instructor’s name) at the NYU Bookstore. 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 (Jan. 31), please post on NYU Classes (by Monday at 9 p.m.!) AND bring to class a coherent 1-2 paragraph response to the week’s reading; students will volunteer or be called on to read their observations and comments. 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 cell phones in class – turn them off and put them away. And, except in cases of medical necessity, no computers in class – that would be un-Socratic!