

# Annotated Bibliography of Resources for Teaching Plato

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## **Teaching the *Republic***

Brooks, Thom. “Bringing the *Republic* to Life: Teaching Plato’s *Republic* to First Year Students.” *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 3(3) (2008): 211–21.

Brooks describes his approach to teaching the *Republic* in a seminar format. The pedagogy centers around two-page handouts of central passages from the day’s reading along with provocative questions about each passage. He outlines the course’s learning goals, the way in which his approach helps students meet them, and the extent to which his approach teaches students skills and capacities central to being a citizen in a democracy.

Brumbaugh, Robert. “Teaching Plato’s *Republic* VIII and IX.” *Teaching Philosophy* 3(3) (1980): 331–37.

Brumbaugh, Robert. “The Mathematical Imagery of Plato, *Republic* X.” *Teaching Philosophy* 7(3) (1984): 223–27.

In 1951 Brumbaugh published some notes for teaching books VIII and IX of the *Republic* using diagrams that explain traditionally vexing passages that involve mathematical argumentation. These notes were reprinted in *Teaching Philosophy* in 1980, with a follow up article four years later on book X. For

book VIII Brumbaugh proposes a 3-4-5 right triangle, with one side marked by the three parts of the soul discussed in books II–IV, the next marked by the four parts of the divided line and other images in books V–VII, and the hypotenuse marked with the five kinds of government and individual described in VIII–IX. Somehow this is supposed to make sense of the famous “nuptial number” passage in 546b–c, which has vexed commentators going back to Aristotle and Proclus. It isn’t clear from this brief note how the diagram is meant to help understand the passage, or how it would help in teaching the *Republic*.

Cannon, Dale. “Levels of Socratic Irony and Escape from the Cave in Introduction to Philosophy.” *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 1(1) (2001): 201–03.

Cannon discusses some challenges that arise in introducing students to Socratic Irony, and, drawing on some remarks by Robert Paul Wolff, outlines an approach to illustrating not only Socratic Irony but different grades of knowledge. Of particular interest to Cannon is Socratic ignorance and the extent to which that ignorance is itself a sort of knowledge. He suggests that the stages of the prisoner’s escape from the Cave mirror certain contemporary psychological theories of the stages of intellectual development of college students.

Colwell, Gary. “Plato, Woody Allen, and Justice.” *Teaching Philosophy* 14(4) (1991): 399–407.

Colwell discusses how a major plotline of Woody Allen’s movie *Crimes and Misdemeanors* can be used to serve as an objection to Socrates’s argument in the *Republic* that justice is intrinsically good and injustice is intrinsically bad. A major character in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* seems to illustrate Plato’s unjust man with a reputation for justice, yet he does not suffer the fate Plato imagines for him. The article includes a summary of Socrates’s theory of justice, contrasts it with the theory of justice offered by characters in Allen’s film, and suggestions for integrating the film into discussions of the *Republic*.

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- Gold, Jeffrey. "Bringing Students Out of the Cave." *Teaching Philosophy* 11(1) (1988): 25–31.
- Schonsheck, Jonathan. "Drawing the Cave and Teaching the Divided Line." *Teaching Philosophy* 13(4) (1990): 373–77.
- Robinson, Jim. "Teaching the Allegory of the Cave." *Teaching Philosophy* 15(4) (1992): 329–35.
- Bowery, Anne Marie. "Drawing Shadows on the Wall: Teaching Plato's Allegory of the Cave." *Teaching Philosophy* 24(2) (2001): 121–32.

This sequence of papers is interesting because it focuses on how the allegory of the cave is represented visually, and two of the articles are about actually having students attempt to draw the diagram themselves. The conversation starts in 1988 when Jeffery Gold suggests using the allegory of the cave as an introduction to the purpose of philosophy on the first day of an introductory level course. Two years later, Jonathan Shonsheck writes approvingly of Gold's suggestion, but emphasizes that one should teach the divided line, shifting the focus of the conversation from the first day of an introductory class to more extended work in a more advanced class. Shonsheck also pays attention to the way the cave is drawn, offering his own diagram and comments about the diagrams included in prominent translations.

This sets the stage for the later papers, which are explicitly about pedagogical techniques in more advanced classes. Robinson suggests having a student read the description of the divided line aloud while another student attempts to draw it. Even though many texts will provide their own illustration, it is important for students to work through the logic of the diagram for themselves. This process should be repeated for the cave. The task of mapping the cave back onto the line is then given as small group work. Once all the mechanics of the images are in place, class discussion can turn to broader questions, such as where are we to find ourselves in these pictures, or how does this all relate to the main themes of the *Republic*, justice and happiness? Robinson suggests asking these questions as if you were wondering to yourself aloud, inviting the students to explore new territory with you. Mentioning the role of memorized poetry in Greek society, Robinson suggests, can trigger students to contrast false images of justice contemplated by those inside the cave, and the real images of justice to be found outside of it. The whole essay amounts to a lesson plan for a very dramatic class session or two.

The final paper of the sequence is the most satisfying and pedagogically sophisticated. The previous papers emphasized the importance of the way the cave is drawn for understanding the allegory. Bowery in this essay describes a class session where students dive all the way into the visual imagery: push all the desks to the sides of the room, roll out large sheets of paper, break out the markers, and have everyone get on the floor and draw. Different groups of

students are asked to draw different parts of the allegory: the situation inside the cave, what happens when the prisoner is released, and what happens when the prisoner returns to the cave. A representative of each group explains what they drew to the rest of the class, and a discussion ensues on the nature of the allegory and how it might be a reflection of the student's own experiences with education and the shattering of illusions. Bowery does a great job of showing the pedagogical value of this exercise and defending it from the objection that drawing is a childish or silly activity. She ends with a discussion of other classical texts that could be used for source material for drawing activities.

The two articles by Brumbaugh discussed above ("Teaching Plato's *Republic* VIII and IX" and "The Mathematical Imagery of Plato, *Republic X*") also outline diagrams for use in explaining parts of the *Republic*.

McKee, Patrick. "A Lesson from Cephalus." *Teaching Philosophy* 26(4) (2003): 361–66.

Donohue, Brian. "The Dramatic Significance of Cephalus in Plato's *Republic*." *Teaching Philosophy* 20(3) (1997): 239–49.

*Teaching Philosophy* has actually published two articles specifically on Cephalus and his role in the *Republic*. Both articles claim that the Cephalus passage is significant in the *Republic* and that Plato intended to portray the character of Cephalus sympathetically. McKee suggests that Cephalus presents a positive portrayal of old age and the ability of the elderly to see their lives on a whole. He suggests having students read this passage in conjunction with modern research in gerontology on the role of a "life review" in the elderly. McKee also addresses Plato scholars who dismiss Cephalus and this passage (Annas, Bloom, Taylor, White, Schleiermacher), suggesting that some of them are just being ageist.

Donohue argues that the character of Cephalus dramatizes the relationship between Plato and Socrates, and students who see this point are better able to appreciate the role that Socrates plays in Plato's works—something many of them struggle with. Donohue claims that students are not satisfied with ignoring the question of whose views are coming out of the mouth of Socrates, nor do they readily understand the standard view that sees Socrates evolve from expressing his own views in the "early" dialogues to becoming more and more of a mouthpiece for Plato's views in the "middle" and "late" dialogues. The bulk of Donohue's article is devoted to making the case for his interpretation of the role of Cephalus, drawing on not just *Republic I*, but *Meno*, too. He closes the article by discussing how Cephalus can be a guide to *Republic's* main argument about the nature and value of justice.

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- Weiss, Sam, director. *The Cave: A Parable Told by Orson Welles*. Stephen Bosustow Productions, 1973. Animated. Time: 8:13.
- Ramsey, Michael, writer, director, producer. *The Cave: An Adaptation of Plato's Allegory in Clay*. Bullhead Entertainment, 2007. Claymation. Time: 3:10 .
- Gendler, Alex, writer. *Plato's Allegory of the Cave*. TED Conferences, LLC, undated.
- Gould, Arthur, writer, director, producer. *Plato's Cave*. Pyramid Productions, 1974. Live action. 20 Minutes.

There are myriad videos of the allegory of the cave available, but most are not very good. Searching for videos mostly yields student projects, adaptation of classroom lectures, and videos that are using the allegory of the cave to push a religious or conspiratorial agenda. There are, however, some very good videos out there as well, suitable for classroom use.

By far the best one is an eight-minute animated film from 1973, narrated by Orson Welles. The most notable thing about it is that Welles is simply reading a slightly edited form of the original text based on the Jowett Translation. Mostly, they cut out Glaucon's replies, sometimes working a few words into Socrates's speech. A few words are changed here and there. The one major edit is at the end, right before 517b, after Socrates notes that anyone caught trying to free the prisoners would be put to death, the narration skips to a rougher paraphrase of 519d where Socrates says that the enlightened person is obligated to return to the people of the cave to "partake of their labors and honors, whether they are worth having or not." The visuals are animations of evocative drawings by the illustrator Richard Oden, who among other things did some very striking illustrations for medical textbooks and ran the drawing program at Cal State University Long Beach. Oden's drawings can give the student a clear image of what is going on in the allegory and pack an emotional punch without being distracting. The music by soundtrack composer Larry Wolff is haunting.

As of this writing, a decent quality copy video is readily available online (e.g., <https://youtu.be/d2afuTvUzBQ>); however, it is not clear who the rights holder is. The sound in the version shared online is a little muddy, and the picture a little grainy. The original production company seems to be Stephen Bosustow Productions, an education film company founded by one of the creators of Mr. Magoo. At some point, the movie may have been owned by McGraw-Hill Films, but it does not show up on the website for the current McGraw-Hill companies. VHS copies also show up in the catalogues of various libraries, but it is not clear that any of these would be higher quality than the version currently being shared online.

Arthur Gould's movie is hard to find and a bit of an oddity. For starters, it is a live action production, which may be unique. It also has no dialogue or narration to speak of, and might be hard to follow for students not already

familiar with the allegory. Unlike the Orson Welles–narrated version, you probably couldn't show this to a class that hadn't been assigned the reading. The movie does a good job, on the other hand, of capturing the details of the allegory. When the prisoner escapes from the cave, we see him blinded, and then looking at his reflection in a pond. When he sees real objects, images of the fake objects he saw in the cave are superimposed on them, at first. Later, after looking at the sun through the trees, he starts to see geometric patterns superimposed on the things around him. The movie ends on a down note, with the prisoner returning to the cave only to be beaten, seemingly to death, by his former colleagues. Cynical students might find this production cheesy or campy. On his way out of and back into the cave, the prisoner encounters strange dancers wearing fierce masks whom the credits list as “fears.” If you frame it properly, however, students might find it fun, or even moving.

The remaining movie versions of the allegory of the cave all suffer in one way or another because they simplify the original allegory. A 2007 claymation version written directed and produced by Michael Ramsey is visually very striking; however, it is only three minutes long, and leaves out a lot of important elements, including the important multiple levels of representation that match up with the divided line, and all the details of the return to the cave and freeing the prisoners. The clip ends with the narrator emphasizing that the things outside of the cave are “not less real” than the shadows, rather than saying they are “more real,” which is of course Plato's actual message. A short animation from TED-ed narrated by Alex Gendler does a better job with getting the Plato right and includes a quick discussion of the theory of the forms. It, too, however, does away with all of the levels of detail involved with the allegory.

### Teaching the *Meno*

Brumbaugh, Robert S. “I. Plato's ‘Meno’ as Form and as Content of Secondary School Philosophy.” *Teaching Philosophy* 1(2) (1975): 107–15.

Brown, Malcolm. “II. Comments on Brumbaugh's *Meno* for Secondary Schools.” *Teaching Philosophy* 1(2) (1975): 115–18.

Neville, Robert. “III. Teaching the ‘Meno’ and the Reformation of Character.” *Teaching Philosophy* 1(2) (1975): 119–21.

Thompson, Hugo W. “IV. The *Meno* in Secondary Schools: Comments.” *Teaching Philosophy* 1(2) (1975): 121–24.

These four pieces, based on a colloquium at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association, discuss how and why one might teach *Meno* to high school students. Brumbaugh's article opens the conversation and defends the importance of paying attention to the dialogic form of Plato's dialogues: features of the characters and of the dramatic setting matter to the philosophical claims

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under discussion. Brumbaugh suggests that discussing some central questions of the *Meno*—what can and cannot be taught? Can values be taught? How can teachers help students learn? What role must students take in their own education?—are valuable ones to raise in a high school class.

Most of Brown's discussion is a disagreement with Brumbaugh over some interpretive issues, though he does mention the possibility of raising in a classroom the topic of the student's attitude toward her own learning: students who think the curriculum or the teacher will do all their learning for them are destined for failure, and *Meno* can be a helpful platform on which to have this discussion. Neville focuses his comments on the issue of character formation and reformation, suggesting that *Meno* can be used to introduce high school students to the psychological issues and debate surrounding the question of the possibility of character reform. Thompson reminds readers of some of the important differences between high school and college classes (teacher preparation, student psychological development, the greater need for active learning approaches, etc.), and offers further ideas for making the dialogue relevant to the high school audience.

Carpenter, Amber, and Jonardon Ganeri. "Can You Seek the Answer to This Question?" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88(4) (2010): 571–94.

Carpenter and Ganeri argue that there is nothing particularly Platonic about the *Meno* paradox—that is, nothing that ties it to Platonic epistemology—because the same paradox comes up repeatedly in Indian philosophy. The authors open with a brief, but nuanced, discussion of the role of the *Meno* paradox in the *Meno* itself. Then they move on to discuss three places in classical Indian philosophy where versions of the *Meno* paradox come up: (1) Śabara's commentary on the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, (2) the *Brahma Sūtra* by the great nondualist philosopher Śaṅkara, and (3) the *Khaṇḍanakhāṇḍakhāḍya* by the skeptic Śrīharṣa. Each treatment winds up emphasizing different aspects of the problem, often emphasizing the difficulty in formulating a *desire* for something unknown. They also propose different solutions to the problem, with the skeptic Śrīharṣa actually arguing that no form of intermediate knowledge or partial knowing would be sufficient to resolve the paradox. This would be a very useful resource for devising inclusive syllabi.

Melillo, Lasile. "Teaching the *Meno* (Correspondence)." *Teaching Philosophy* 1(3) (1976): 361–64.

A response to Brumbaugh, "Plato's 'Meno' as Form and as Content of Secondary School Philosophy." The author is a high school teacher, who discusses ways in which she has taught the dialogue in her classes. The article includes suggestions for activities connected to the following issues in the dialogue. Is

Socrates teaching? What is the difference between knowledge and true opinion? How, and whether, values can be taught, and the character of Socrates. Suggestions are included as well for additional background and historical resources to help the students contextualize the dialogue.

Weingartner, Rudolph. "Is Reading Plato Educational? Thoughts on Education, Prompted by a Reading of Plato's *Meno*." *Teaching Philosophy* 17(4) (1994): 335–44.

A meditation, based on a lecture to undergraduates at Cornell, on different understandings of what education is: Acquiring information, developing skills, or seeing what is true? Weingartner argues that the third option is what Plato's *Meno* teaches us about education, to be followed by the search for reasons, justifications, and the other methods of "tying down" true opinions. Weingartner weaves this discussion of the nature of education with a discussion of the different ways we might read Plato: to acquire information about him and his views, to become skillful readers and writers, or, finally, to engage with the text ourselves as a means of "illuminating a chunk of the world" that we might not otherwise be able to see. Though not explicit in the article, this distinction about what "education" means can be easily added to a class unit on the *Meno*.

### **Teaching the *Euthyphro***

Brod, Harry. "Euthyphro, Foucault, and Baseball: Teaching the *Euthyphro*." *Teaching Philosophy* 30(3) (2007): 249–58.

In this article, Brod discusses a way of teaching the Euthyphro problem (Is the pious pious because it is loved by the Gods or is it loved by the Gods because it is pious?), using an extended analogy with baseball (Is a runner out because the umpire calls him out, or does the umpire call him out because he is out?). For students familiar with baseball, this analogy is an effective way of explaining just what the Euthyphro question is, as well as the difference between the possible answers. Brod discusses the two answers in terms of how one would become an expert in piety and the way in which one view offers a secular, and the other a religious, worldview. The article closes with a suggestion for how to use the historical and cultural setting of the dialogue to explore the Foucauldian idea that "power is knowledge."



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- Brown, John. "The Logic of the *Euthyphro* 10a–11b." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1964).
- Cahn, Steven M. "The Logic of Plato's *Euthyphro*, 10A–11B." *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 4(2) (2005): 6.
- Dumke, Russell W. "Using *Euthyphro* 9e–11b to Teach Some Basic Logic and to Teach How to Read a Platonic Dialog." *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 9(1) (2009): 7–10

"Help! How can I teach *Euthyphro* 10A–11B when I don't understand it myself?!" If it is any comfort, people have long been baffled by the passage where Socrates rejects *Euthyphro*'s proposed definition of piety as "that which all the gods love." Different instructors are going to want to engage this passage with different amounts of granularity, depending on the sophistication of their students and their education goals. The two short articles from the *APA Newsletter on Teaching* offer short reconstructions that require no knowledge of Greek and can be used in intro level courses. Cahn depicts Socrates as getting *Euthyphro* to commit to an inconsistent triad of propositions. Dumke depicts Socrates as getting *Euthyphro* to commit to two separate conditionals, corresponding to the acceptance or rejection of divine command theory, and then deriving a contradiction from them. This model is more useful because it highlights the connection with the debate over divine command theory. Dumke also uses logical symbolization for three key statements in the argument, but the treatment is not very detailed and elides over a number of distinctions.

Moving from the teaching literature into the literature directly about Plato can give instructors more resources for students that remain puzzled by the passage. There have been many articles devoted solely to this passage, and a lot of them have titles similar to the ones above. We have listed John Brown's article from 1964 above primarily because it includes a formalization of the argument that is more sophisticated than the one given by Dumke, but it is still suitable for classroom use. Brown gives an analysis of the argument in seven steps that makes the argument formally valid (if you add a hidden premise) and has *Euthyphro* committing to two separate contradictions. The treatment uses a certain amount of formal logic, but nothing that can't be explained to students on the spot. The bulk of Brown's article is devoted to the vexed issue of how to interpret the "because" in "what is carried is a carried thing because it is carried." Brown argues that Socrates actually commits the informal fallacy of equivocation on the term "because" in his argument. This part of the article might be more useful as background for teachers of undergraduates, or as an entrée into the larger scholarly literature on this difficult passage.

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Glouberman, Mark. “Euthyphro’: A Guide for Analytic Instruction.” *Teaching Philosophy* 15(1) (1992): 33–49.

Glouberman offers an approach for making *Euthyphro* the central “analytic teaching text” for half of a semester. He identifies the central theme of the dialogue as “the conditions for stable knowledge in objective matters” and gives instructors tools for using the dialogue to explore analytic concepts like bivalence, non-contradiction, necessity & sufficiency, and (briefly) quantificational predicate logic. Glouberman draws connections between the themes of the dialogue and the work of Wittgenstein, Dummett, Russell, and Goodman—revealing how the dialogue can serve as an introduction to some central debates in twentieth-century philosophical logic.

Hardwig, John. “Socrates’ Conception of Piety: Teaching the *Euthyphro*.” *Teaching Philosophy* 30(3) (2007): 259–68.

A response to Talisse, “Teaching Plato’s *Euthyphro* Dialogically” (see below). Hardwig is less concerned with offering an approach to teaching the text and more concerned with offering a response to Talisse’s philosophical interpretation of the dialogue. Hardwig makes a stronger case for Euthyphro’s conception of piety as requiring religious expertise into the meaning of “religious” or “revealed” stories and contrasts it with the dialectical expertise distinctive of Socrates’s understanding of piety.

Marcus, Russell. “Cooperative Learning on the First Day of Class.” *Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 97(2) (1998): 135–37.

Marcus explains how to use a jigsaw approach to help students work through the dialectic surrounding the first two definitions of piety that Euthyphro offers to Socrates. Marcus explains how to use this exercise on the very first day of class, with students who are unfamiliar with the dialogue. In addition to setting out a Euthyphro-specific assignment, Marcus ably explains how to use the jigsaw approach to small-group work—something that can be deployed in any number of class situations.

Simmons, J. Aaron, and Scott F. Aikin. “Teaching Plato with Emoticons.” *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 9(1) (2009): 5–7.

This article describes a simple exercise where students annotate the *Euthyphro* using emoticons in order to better understand the dramatic structure of the dialogue and relate it to their own experience. Although the specific example here is the *Euthyphro*, it could be applied to many other dialogues, by Plato or other writers. The article is somewhat dated in that it focuses only on emoticons that can be made using a standard keyboard layout, and not the broader world of emojis, which have since come to dominate over pure

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ASCII emoticons and actually automatically replace ASCII emoticons on most platforms. The exercise described here has students work in groups off of a pre-set list of emoticons with their meanings.

Talisse, Robert B. "Teaching Plato's *Euthyphro* Dialogically." *Teaching Philosophy* 26(2) (2003): 163–75.

Talisse argues for the pedagogical value of taking up the dialogical approach to *Euthyphro* (as well as, by implication, to the other dialogues, too.) This approach foregrounds questions of form: e.g., what significance attaches to the fact that Plato wrote a dialogue and not a treatise? Talisse offers a way of presenting the dialogue to students that helps them understand a conflict between types of expertise, through a closer examination of the character of Euthyphro and his motivations. The dialogic approach is connected to the more traditional ways of teaching the text (confusion over definitions, the "Euthyphro problem," etc.). For instructors unfamiliar with the original Greek text, Talisse offers helpful discussions of the meanings of names, and alternative translations of some passages that help cast light on some allusions and double meanings in Plato's text.

### Teaching the *Apology*

Chaffee, John. "An Issue I Would Die For." *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 6(1) (2006): 6–9.

Chaffee discusses an assignment that asks students to write a dialogue involving an issue they would be willing to die for. The assignment is intended to help students understand Socrates's choice to die rather than cease philosophizing. Examples of student work are included.

Silvermintz, Daniel. "Socrates on Trial: Strategies for Teaching." *Classical World* 3 (2007): 283.

The author details a unit on Socrates that culminates in the students enacting, through role-play, his famous trial. Readings in preparation for the trial include Aristophanes's *The Clouds*, selections from the pre-Socratics, *Meno*, Plato's *Apology*, selections from Diogenes Laertius, as well as selections from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. The author stresses the importance of paying attention to the prosecution's side of the case and further argues that this active learning approach helps the students improve as critical thinkers, arguers, and writers. An extensive bibliography of resources to be used by a classroom teacher for this activity is included.

### Teaching the *Crito*

Conway, Jeremiah P. "Socrates and the Minotaur: Following the Thread of Myth in Plato's Dialogues." *Teaching Philosophy* 16(3) (1993): 193–204.

Defending a dialogic approach to reading Plato, Conway offers a suggestion, following Friedländer, that we read *Crito* as a myth. Conway pays close attention to aspects of the dialogue often overlooked in teaching it to undergraduates: Socrates's prophetic dream at the opening of the conversation with Crito and, most importantly, the allusions to Theseus. Conway argues that the trial and imprisonment of Socrates is a commemoration and re-enactment of Theseus's story, with Socrates and Athens alternately occupying the role of the minotaur. Conway argues that viewing the dialogue as a myth has important pedagogical implications: for one, it helps students see the importance of studying the text, as they are encouraged to see minotaurs, labyrinths, King Minoses, Socrateses, and so on in their own lives.

### Teaching the *Lysis*

Conway, Jeremiah. "Friendship and Philosophy: Teaching Plato's *Lysis*." *Teaching Philosophy* 34(4) (2011): 411–21.

A discussion of the benefits of launching an upper-level course on the philosophy of friendship with *Lysis*. A summary of the key moments in the dialogue are included, but more focus is on the questions and topics the dialogue helps to frame for students: the varieties of friendship (anticipating Aristotle's treatment), the importance of reading the work dialogically, and the close connection between friendship and the practice of philosophy. The dialogue also draws our attention to the role of friendship in moral cultivation and the importance of the ways in which friends talk to, and about, one another—topics Conway argues connect closely with concerns that college students have. Conway concludes that the dialogue is not only a welcome addition to a class on friendship, but that it improved the interpersonal dynamics of the course: helping the students in the class to behave more like friends.

Rider, Benjamin A. "Socratic Philosophy for Beginners? On Introducing Philosophy with Plato's *Lysis*." *Teaching Philosophy* 37(3) (2014): 365–77.

Rider offers suggestions for using *Lysis* in an introductory-level class. Beginning with a frank discussion of the obstacles introductory students (and their teacher) will face in reading the dialogue, Rider argues that some of the challenges in the *Lysis* actually make it an excellent text for a student-centered, active-learning classroom. The topic of friendship needs little to no motivation, and the methods Socrates employs in the latter part of the dialogue are, Rider

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claims, excellent examples of philosophical method. Rider includes example assignments: a pre-class homework assignment, a group task for class, and an argumentative essay prompt.

### Socrates as Teacher

Biel, Joseph. "Teaching in the Shadow of Socrates." *Teaching Philosophy* 17(4) (1994): 345–50.

Biel notes that the model of Socratic teaching works best when employed with students willing to engage in the elenctic process, but wonders about what method might be appropriate for those who are not willing participants. Biel notes that many of Socrates's interlocutors knew (or at least knew of) him before their dialogue, and asks whether this feature, which may be missing in the relationship between students and teachers, makes it problematic to approach our students as Socrates approached his interlocutors. Biel argues that another mode of discourse, such as epideictic oratory—the language of praise and blame—might be better suited for bringing people together into the communal venture that is a philosophy classroom. This may be most important in an introductory philosophy course, or in the first few weeks of a class.

Biondi, Carrie-Ann. "Socratic Teaching: Beyond *The Paper Chase*." *Teaching Philosophy* 31(2) (2008): 119–40.

Biondi emphasizes that as we praise the Socratic method for its pedagogical benefits, we need to recognize the importance of the intellectual virtues that Socrates embodies. Certain character traits the instructor manifests in the classroom, and not merely the instructor's ability to encourage rational, respectful debate, are crucial to the effectiveness of the Socratic method, she contends. Drawing on an examination of Socrates in *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, and *Gorgias*, Biondi discusses how philosophy instructors who wish to teach Socratically should be "exemplars" or "role models" of the intellectual and moral virtues that Socrates himself embodies. Among the virtues she argues Socratic instructors should have are epistemic humility, humor, honesty, and persistence. Biondi moves beyond the examination of the dialogues to offer suggestions for how instructors can be exemplars of the virtues she emphasizes, through classroom practices and assignment design.

Boghossian, Peter. "The Socratic Method (Or, Having a Right to Get Stoned)." *Teaching Philosophy* 25(4) (2002): 345–59.

Boghossian examines the effects of employing the Socratic method on classroom power relationships and the extent to which the teacher can function as the leader in the classroom. His goal is to defend the Socratic method against a set of recent attacks. Beginning with a discussion of just what the

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method is, Boghossian then defines “power” and “leadership” as a preface to investigating the relationship between them. It turns out that the answer to the question of whether Socratic teachers maintain power or are leaders depends on the instructor’s pedagogical goals. The fact that teachers who employ the Socratic method may cede some power and leadership, when those concepts are traditionally understood, may be all to the good, Boghossian concludes.

Brickhouse, Thomas C., and Nicholas D. Smith. “Socratic Teaching and Socratic Method.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, ed. Harvey Seigel, 177–94. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Brickhouse and Smith consider what it means to take Socrates as a model of a teacher when Socrates himself denies being a teacher or knowing anything. After parsing out what Socrates does and does not mean in these declarations, the authors suggest that Plato actually gives us three distinct models of Socratic questioning: one chiefly found in early dialogues like *Euthyphro* or *Charmides*, one found in the *Meno*, and one found in the *Theaetetus*. The model found in the early dialogues, the authors argue, is actually not a well-defined method at all. Nevertheless it involves generally a sort of testing of people that is useful in contexts like legal cross examination—the sort of contexts that gave us the term “elenchus” to begin with. The model in the *Meno* is actually the one found in contemporary American law schools going by the name the Socratic method. It is useful for inculcating expertise in areas of abstract reasoning. The method of the *Theaetetus* is a form of collaborative inquiry in the context of a caring community. The authors suggest that this is a good teaching model for women students, particularly minority women.

Clark, Sherman J. “The Seventh Letter and the Socratic Method.” *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform Caveat* 49(1) (2015): 52–62.

The author examines Plato’s *Seventh Letter* in order to illustrate the nature, purpose, mechanics, and value of the Socratic Method. His goal is to help teachers (primarily law professors) who employ something they call by that name to reflect on why they use the Socratic Method, how it works, and how to improve their deployment of it. The “true” Socratic Method is at odds with the often aggressive, combative practice employed by law faculty, and the author argues that returning to the method as Plato describes it in the *Seventh Letter* and dramatizes it in the Socratic dialogues will help faculty teach what we should be teaching: cognitive and emotional skills rather than content-laden doctrine.

## Annotated Bibliography of Resources for Teaching Plato

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Colter, Robert, and Joseph Ulatowski. "Freeing Meno's Slave Boy." *Teaching Philosophy* 38(1) (2015): 21–47.

Colter, Robert, and Joseph Ulatowski. "What's Wrong with This Picture? Teaching Ethics through Film to Wyoming High School Students," *Teaching Philosophy* 36(3) (2013): 253–70.

In "Social Dexterity," the first essay in the journal you are reading now, Colter and Ulatowski argue that Socrates can be a good role model for teachers for how to tailor their presentation to their audience. In other essays, the two have promoted Socrates as a model for the use of scaffolded learning. In "Freeing Meno's Slave Boy," they use Socrates's encounter with the slave boy in Meno to explicate and develop a model for scaffolded learning in a philosophy course. After explaining what scaffolded learning is and illustrating how Socrates models the technique in his discussion with Meno's slave boy, Colter and Ulatowski defend this pedagogy from some oft-heard objections. They describe scaffolded learning as having four phases and eight stages and offer an excellent introduction for someone who wishes to use it, whether in teaching a Platonic dialogue or in teaching some other philosophical topic. To see the Socratic model of scaffolded learning in action, readers can look at Colter and Ulatowski's essay "What's Wrong with This Picture?" There, the authors describe teaching ethics through film to high school students, using a scaffolded learning plan they again explicitly link to the strategy Socrates deploys in *Meno*.

McCracken, Janet. "Comic and Tragic Interlocutors and Socratic Method." *Teaching Philosophy* 22(4) (1999): 361–75.

McCracken offers a view of Plato's theory of education in which close attention is paid to the tragic and comic elements of the people involved in the educational process. She applies that theory to the contemporary classroom, urging teachers to pay attention to character traits and interpersonal dynamics as part of the evaluation of one's teaching methods. Even though, according to the Platonic theory of education she develops, learning is some version of self-teaching (think of the theory of Recollection), good teachers are still necessary—indeed, those teachers who are good at guiding, encouraging, or "midwifing" the self-taught. Interesting analogies are drawn between scenes in various dialogues and the contemporary situation of college teachers. For instance, Socrates's cross-examination of Anytus in *Apology* parallels, to an extent, the risks that teachers undertake in challenging students' tightly held views (especially those students who are aware of the power of end-of-term evaluations).

Mullis, Eric C. "On Being a Socratic Philosophy Instructor." *Teaching Philosophy* 32(4) (2009): 345–59.

Mullis cautions instructors on the extent to which they should employ the Socratic method in their classrooms. Should teachers employ Socratic irony? How confrontational should they be? How much of her own beliefs should the instructor reveal? To what extent should they just "ask questions" and not give answers? While some of these characteristics of Socrates can be deployed legitimately in a classroom, Mullis offers some sensible caveats and urges caution, noting that bodily comportment (often invisible to ourselves) might make instructors seem more confrontational than they intend to be. Above all, he argues, we should be aware of our pedagogical aims and be clear about how using the Socratic method serves, or impedes, those aims.

Pecorino, Philip A. "The Midwife's Trickery or On Teaching Philosophy: A Provocation." *Aitia: Philosophy-Humanities Magazine* 3 (1975): 13–17.

The author uses the model of Socrates as a sort of midwife—one who helps others bring their ideas out—as the paradigm for how philosophy teachers should approach introduction to philosophy courses. The author claims that what teachers of philosophy should be teaching is the quest, or desire, for wisdom, not answers to philosophical questions.

Roochnik, David. "Socrates' Pedagogical Flexibility: Two Case Studies." *Teaching Philosophy* 24(1) (2001): 29–44.

Beginning with a description of the sort of student-centered flexibility that Dewey and Isocrates claim is required of good teachers, Roochnik demonstrates that Socrates exhibits just such a flexibility when one compares his interaction with Callicles in *Gorgias* and to his conversation with Theaetetus. Roochnik maps Socrates's pedagogy onto the Divided Line image of *Republic* 6, and, with a careful analysis of both *Gorgias* and *Theaetetus*, shows the pedagogical advantages of responding to the different needs that students manifest.

Shah, Mehul. "The Socratic Teaching Method: A Therapeutic Approach to Learning." *Teaching Philosophy* 31(3) (2008): 267–75.

Shah characterizes "learning diseases" as beliefs that interfere with learning, and argues that midwifery, recollection, and cross-examination—three principles of the Socratic teaching method—are effective therapies for these diseases. Believing that learning is passive—it just happens to the student—is one learning disease. Others are the belief that learning is too hard and a hesitance to express misunderstandings. Shah explains the Socratic "treatments" for these diseases and makes connections to contemporary psychological therapeutic practice.



### General Discussions of Teaching Plato

Haines, Byron L. "Teaching Plato as an Introduction to Philosophy." *Metaphilosophy* 24(4) (1993): 407–14.

A defense of introducing philosophy with both the early Socratic dialogues (*Euthyphro*, e.g.) and the middle dialogues (*Meno* and *Republic*, e.g.). The early dialogues introduce the questioning character of Socrates—an attractive figure, dramatically presented—but the author emphasizes the importance of the middle dialogues for an introductory audience as they introduce students to what, in the author's view, is the distinctive subject matter of philosophy—abstract universals—and its distinctive method—the conceptual analysis of those universals. Not only does the introduction of the Forms and the Theory of Recollection in the middle dialogues continue the intellectual story begun in dialogues like *Euthyphro*, but, the author argues, discussions of these two pillars of Platonism help students to see that philosophy has a distinctive subject matter, a distinctive methodology, and can arrive at truth claims. This helps counter popular misconceptions that philosophers are merely expressing opinions and that only science can arrive at truth.

Harrison, J. Derek. "Keeping It Alive." *Teaching Philosophy* 8(3) (1985): 201–06.

The author reflects on why he and his students find Socrates such a compelling and captivating character. What aspects of his character, his intelligence, and his attitude toward himself and others accounts for his continued (if not universal) appeal? The author notes some of Socrates's character flaws, concluding that the real reason students continue to be fascinated with Socrates is his determination to think and talk about virtue. Though only implicit, the author seems to suggest that there is pedagogical value in talking with students about why Socrates continues to fascinate and draw admirers (and detractors) from those who read him.

Lenkowski, William Jon. "An Approach to Introductory Philosophy." *Aitia: Philosophy-Humanities Magazine* 5–6 (1977): 6–13.

The author argues for teaching an introductory philosophy class by spending the entire term engaging with one Platonic dialogue (he has used *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, and *Republic*) devoid of any historical, disciplinary, or scholarly context. Having students encounter the dialogue as if it were discovered under a rock encourages, the author argues, students to engage in genuine self-criticism, which, he claims, is the central project of philosophy. The author discusses the assessment for the class, which is a single term paper in which students engage with a genuine problem encountered in the text and class discussions. He includes two examples of paper prompts.

Passell, Dan. "Plato's 'Introduction to Philosophy.'" *Teaching Philosophy* 23(4) (2000): 315–28.

Passell advocates introducing philosophy to students not, as is popular, with the Allegory of the Cave, but with Socrates "What is T?" Questions ("What is Justice?," "What is Piety?," etc.). Plato's conception of philosophy, Passell suggests, is the quest to answer such questions. He focuses on the criticisms that Socrates offers (in the *Theaetetus*, but in other dialogues as well) of answers to these questions that consist in giving a list of the things that are T. He argues that careful attention to the problems with the list answer can help students understand the philosophic enterprise. Passell includes a substantial imagined dialogue between Socrates, Theaetetus, and Theodorus in which the problems with the list answer are more fully explored.

Rawson, Glenn. "Teaching Ancient Philosophy among the Ruins of Ancient Greece." *Teaching Philosophy* 26(4) (2003): 367–80.

Rawson, the author of an essay in this volume discusses the value of teaching Socrates, Plato, and other canonical ancient Greek Philosophers in the ruins of Ancient Greece. He gives advice for how to integrate trips to various relevant locations in Greece into lessons on Greek philosophy. The article is of great value to people able to travel to Greece with their students, but limited value to those who are not.

Seay, Gary. "Plato's Early Dialogues as an Introduction to Philosophy." *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 89(1) (1989): 21–24.

The author argues for structuring an introductory course entirely around four dialogues: *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Gorgias*. The author argues that the course can emphasize both philosophical methodology (close reading, argument reconstruction, questioning assumptions, etc.) as well as discussion of substantive, relevant, interesting philosophical issues. Moreover, the course can demonstrate the power of philosophy to make progress on those issues. The accessibility of the dialogues, their centrality to the canon, and the insight they give us to the character of Socrates as a persistent questioner are reasons for centering a course on these texts. Though it focuses on just these texts, such a course, can integrate the work of other philosophers.

Taylor, Quentin P. "The Last Day of Socrates: An Invitation to Philosophy." *Midwest Quarterly* 42(1) (2000): 20.

Taylor argues for the importance of the Introduction to Philosophy class, as the first, and perhaps only, place where students might have a philosophical "spirit" awakened. He argues that such a class should begin with, and spend a good deal of time on, the dialogues centered on Socrates's trial and death:

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*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo*. He argues that (a) the dialogues are accessible (especially if one uses only selections from the *Phaedo*) linguistically and dramatically—even funny at times; (b) Socrates is a compelling character and the situation he is in is a gripping one; (c) the content of the dialogues is important: Socratic dialogue, particulars and universals, the foundation of ethics, justice, political obligation, the philosophical way of life, the nature of death and the right attitude toward it, and moral expertise are central to the problem space of philosophy; and, finally (d) space is opened up for exploring the historical context of Socrates and Athens for those who want to pursue those issues in class.

Weinstein, Jack Russell. “Three Conversations: Teaching Plato in Introduction to Philosophy.” *Teaching Philosophy* 26(1) (2003): 3–20.

Weinstein defends a pedagogical approach for teaching Plato that emphasizes the dialogues as examples of the process of doing philosophy: an approach that uses the dialogues to teach students about the process of engaging in philosophical inquiry. His title refers to Weinstein’s claim that students should be brought to see that there are three simultaneous conversations that students need to be aware of: that between the interlocutors in the text, that between Plato and other philosophers, and that between Plato and his readers. Weinstein describes writing assignments linked to this “conversational” framework: one that helps students discover “hidden” questions embedded in the third conversation, and another, drawing on the second conversation, that asks students to compare Plato’s approach to philosophy to the views of philosophy offered by Russell, C. S. Peirce, and Herbert Feigl.