

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

POLITICAL SCIENCE 402Y1S/2011Y1S

PROBLEMS IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE
SOCRATIC SCHOOL

WINTER SESSION 2015-16

Professor C. Orwin (clifford.orwin@utoronto.ca)

The theme of the course is the problem of Socrates, as explored in two of the writings of Socrates' student Xenophon, his *Apology of Socrates* and his *Memorabilia* or *Recollections of Socrates*. Both works are defenses of Socrates, the former of which Xenophon ascribes to Socrates himself (by couching it as Socrates' speech at his trial), while the latter he acknowledges as his own, based on his firsthand knowledge of his teacher. At his trial Socrates was responding to the accusations of his accusers; in the *Memorabilia* Xenophon may respond to the *Accusation of Socrates* published by one Polycrates "the sophist" sometime in the 390's (i.e. not long after the trial and execution). (Like most classical literature Polycrates' work is lost.) We will have to ask why Xenophon wrote these two works in defense of Socrates rather than just one or the other, and how the defense that he published in his own name and voice differs from that which he ascribes to Socrates himself.

Of the two students of Socrates whose works remain to us, Xenophon was the more "normal." He married, had children, had to worry about earning a living, hunted, and (most notably) warred. Indeed he commanded one of the greatest military feats of antiquity: the retreat of the Ten Thousand. (In the course of this last campaign he even considered founding a city.) If he practiced philosophy it was only as one activity among several. Accordingly Socrates is only one of several higher human alternatives that we encounter in his work, and he appears not to have beautified him as Plato did. He is neither poetic nor sublimely rhetorical after the manner of Plato, nor he is the same relentless promoter of philosophy and the philosophic life. In all these respects we might even deem him superior to Plato.

**WE WILL SPEND THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COURSE DISCUSSING THE
APOLOGY OF SOCRATES, SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS ON THE *MEMORABILIA*.
PLEASE COME TO THE FIRST CLASS HAVING READ THE *APOLOGY* AND THE
DISCUSSIONS OF IT BY STRAUSS AND T. PANGLE.**

COURSE READINGS

**AVAILABLE AT THE BOB MILLER BOOK ROOM (180 BLOOR STREET WEST,
LOWER CONCOURSE LEVEL)**

Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, translated by Amy L. Bonnett, with an introduction by Christopher J. Bruell. Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 2001.

Strauss, Leo. *Xenophon's Socrates*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972 (St. Augustine's Press reprint). **Seminal readings of both the *Apology* and the *Memorabilia*.**

AVAILABLE THROUGH BLACKBOARD AS ELECTRONIC FILES:

Bonnette, Amy L. "Strauss on the *Memorabilia: Xenophon's Socrates*." In Timothy W. Burns, ed., *Leo Strauss' Writings on Classical Political Thought*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015, 285-301.

Pangle, Lorraine S. "Moral indignation, magnanimity and philosophy in the trial of the Armenian king." In Andrea Radasanu, ed., *In Search of Humanity. Essays in Honor of Clifford Orwin*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015, 101-113. **Although this essay deals with an episode in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, it raises issues germane to the *Memorabilia*.**

Pangle, Thomas L. "On the *Apology of Socrates to the Jury*." In Bartlett, pp. 18-38.

_____. "Humanity and divinity in Xenophon's defense of Socrates." In Radasanu, 115-128.

Ruderman, Richard S. "On Leo Strauss' presentation of Xenophon's political philosophy in 'The Problem of Socrates.'" In Burns, 193-212.

Strauss, Leo. "The Problem of Socrates" (1958). *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 23:2 (1996), 127-208.

_____. "The Problem of Socrates" (1970). *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 22.3 (1995), 321-28.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MARKING SCHEME

POL 402Y (the undergraduate course). One essay of 1375 words due Monday, February 8; one of 2000 words due Monday, February 29; one of 2000 words due Monday, April 4; a take-home exam to be distributed the afternoon of Friday, March 18, due by 2 PM on Monday, March 21. The first essay will be worth 10% of the final mark, the second and third 30% each, and the take-home exam 25%. There will be a participation component of 5%.

POL 2011Y (the graduate course). One essay of 2000 words due Monday, February 1, one of 3000 words due Monday, March 7, one of 5000 words due Monday, May 2; a take-home exam to be distributed the afternoon of Friday, March 18, due by 2 PM on Monday, March 21. The essays will be worth 15%, 20%, and 35% of the final mark, respectively; the take-home exam will be worth the remaining 30%.

In each of your essays you must remain within the prescribed word limit; surplus words will go unread.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ESSAYS ELECTRONICALLY, TO Clifford.Orwin@utoronto.ca THEREBY SPARING CANADA'S FORESTS.

- **N.B. In the graduate course as in the undergraduate one, no extensions will be granted on written work except for good cause. In keeping with Nietzsche's theory of punishment, however, according to which every crime has its price and punishment was originally nothing more than an exaction of that price (cf. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay), extensions will be readily available to those willing to purchase them. The price will be 3 points, plus 2 additional points per day beginning with the first, off your mark for that assignment. (If you are one day late you will lose 5 points; two days late, 7; etc.). This proviso does not apply to the take-home exam, which will not be accepted if late.**

You are responsible for informing yourself of and abiding by the University's policies on plagiarism and other academic offenses. These are available at the Department of Political Science or from the instructor.

MR ORWIN'S OFFICE HOURS

Thursdays, from 4:10 to 6:00 at Carr Hall 309 (416-926-1300, ext. 3277) or by appointment. You may also leave voice messages at that number, though it's better to contact me by e-mail.

