

Philosophy 151/*Philosophy in the Polis*/First Paper  
Sheet Distributed: 5 Oct. 90/Paper due: 11 Oct. 90

As indicated on the syllabus, the first of two papers for this course will be due on October 11, 1990. It is to be a three-page (750-word) *interpretive essay* on Plato's *Euthyphro*. You have been asked to consider *why* the dialogue is incomplete ('aporetic') and *how* it gravitates around the question: "Is the holy loved by the gods because it is holy? Or is it holy because it is loved by the gods?"

The question is put by Socrates at *Euthyphro* 10a. The most important step in the preparation for your paper will be to determine (1) how the question emerges in the course of the conversation between Euthyphro and Socrates, (2) how the question governs their discussion once it is raised, and (3) how the dialogue (despite its *prima facie* incomplete or 'aporetic' character) achieves a literary perfection. The best way to do this will be to read the dialogue at repeated sittings (it is very short) and to discuss the question and its context with as many classmates as you yourself can engage in dialogue. There is no 'correct' answer to the question; it would be futile to look for one. But, within the miniature drama depicted by Plato, the question will suggest a wide array of fruitful lines of interpretation. Develop *one* of them.

You need not consult any secondary literature in preparation for your writing of this paper; the dialogue itself should be your focus. But *if* you should wish to look at some of the vast literature on Plato to explore interpretive options (a three-page paper will allow no space for any explicit discussion of materials ranging beyond the dialogue itself), you may find one or more of the following helpful:

Allen, R.E., *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms*, New York, 1970.

Allen, R.E., tr. and ed., *The Dialogues of Plato*, with analyses, Vol. I, New Haven, 1984.

Friedländer, Paul, *Plato*, H. Meyerhoff, tr., Vol. II, New York, 1964.

Guthrie, W.K.C., *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. V, Cambridge, UK, 1975.

Hegel, G.W.F., *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy* [delivered 1805–31; published 1833–44; the source of the modern conception of the history of philosophy], in three volumes, E.S. Haldane & F.H. Simson, trs., London, 1892 (currently published in London by Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd.); see the section on Socrates in Vol. I.

Taylor, A.E., *Plato: The Man and his Work*, London, 1926.

Versényi, Laszlo, *Holiness and Justice: An Interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro*, Lanham, MD, 1982.

A reminder: Consult the hand-out "Ten Clues to Better Papers in Philosophy" for questions of *style* and *timeliness*.