

Course codes: BBN-FIL18-231.02, BMI-FILD-231.01, BMI-FILD-231.05, BBN-FIL-231:21, BMA-FILD-231:21

Course title: **Plato**

Instructor: László Bene, Associate professor

Thursday, 14.00-15.30 (Building i, 1st floor, Room 129)

General aim and content of the course:

Plato played a pivotal role in giving philosophy its contours as an intellectual enterprise and way of life, by demarcating it from other cultural formations of the 5th-4th centuries BC, such as poetry, rhetoric and sophistry. He created a unique literary genre, the philosophical dialogue, which allowed him to explore various theoretical possibilities and to portray philosophical activity as he conceived it, without laying down a systematic doctrine. The open and inquisitive character of his writing reflects, in a sense, the philosophical style of his master, Socrates, a philosopher who engaged in the critical examination of others' views in conversation and did not write philosophical works. Plato explored the possible theoretical foundations of Socrates' ethical thought and philosophical lifestyle, taking into account various strands of earlier Greek philosophy. In class we will examine fundamental issues in Plato's ethics, psychology and metaphysics.

The following dialogues will be discussed in class:

Meno, Gorgias, Republic Book IV-VI, Parmenides 127a–135c, Sophist.

Schedule: 12 and 26 February (no class on 19 February)

5, 12, 19 and 26 March

9, 16, 23 and 30 April

7 and 14 May

Requirements:

- Students are expected to **attend the sessions (3 absences at most)**, to prepare the readings for the classes, and to actively participate in the discussion;
- to turn in **four short papers** on the source texts which are discussed in the classes (**4-500 words each**) during the semester;
- to turn in **a paper (1500-2000 words)** that makes use of an article or book chapter of their choice from the secondary literature by the end of May (the choice must be agreed with the instructor in advance).

Grading will be based on home-works (40% + 40%) and on in-class activity (20%).

For the Faculty's regulation of the use of AI, see Dean's Directive No. II/2025 (XII.12.):
[II 2025 XII 12 sz dékáni utasítás.pdf](#)

Students are required to report the results of their use of AI tools for educational purposes in the main text and in the statement accompanying the paper. However, completing and attaching the "Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence tools" provided in Appendix 1 is **not** a mandatory condition for completing the subject.

Mandatory readings:

Plato: Meno, Gorgias, Phaedo, Republic Books IV-VI, Parmenides (127a–135c) Sophist, in: *Plato's Complete Works*, eds. John M. Cooper – D. S. Hutchinson, Hackett Publishing Company, 1997.

The reading list for the History of Philosophy 1 exam includes further texts by Plato: the Apology, the Euthyphro and the Lysis. Please take this into account if you register for this seminar as part of your preparation for the History of Philosophy 1 exam.

Recommended readings:

Hugh H. Benson (ed.): *The Blackwell Companion to Plato*, Blackwell-Wiley, 2006.

David Ebrey – Richard Kraut (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Gail Fine (szerk.): *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Gerald A. Press – Maeto Duque (eds.): *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Plato*, 2nd edition, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023.