

Periodisk emnerapport

FIL 4012: Lesning av filosofiske originalverk fra antikken (Vår 2019)

Course Theme: Plato on Poetry, Music and Art

Course Description:

This course will be a close reading and analysis of two central texts in which Plato treats these issues: the *Ion* and the *Republic* (esp. books 2, 3, and 10). The meaning of these texts is highly contested, and the purpose of the course is to go through them carefully and in detail in order to formulate what Plato's position on poetry, music and art really is. Topics treated will include the possibility of truth in art, the nature and value of artistic beauty, the structure and epistemic status of imitation, the possibility of divine inspiration, the educational value of narratives, the ethical meaning (if any) of harmonies and rhythms, and the role of pleasure in aesthetic experience.

Course Requirements:

Attendance, one-page papers and a final paper presentation.

9 students initially enrolled, with 2 students sitting in, 6 completed the course by handing in a final paper. 3 received A, 2, a B, and 1, a C.

The class time was primarily dedicated to close, line by line, reading of the texts, along with analysis and argument reconstruction. I would usually begin by presenting some main lines of interpretation and controversy, and then we would have a discussion about those issues. The final class periods consisted of a workshop, in which each student came prepared with a draft of the final paper and a handout, and presented their view for 10-15 minutes. The presentation was followed by prepared comments from another student and then open discussion and questions from the audience. Each student had 30 minutes in total.

During the class period before the final presentations, I blocked off a period of time for discussing students' impression of how the course was going ('runder' method). I asked them four general questions about course readings, pace, structure, and assignments. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They very much liked that the course was dedicated to slow, close readings of the texts and one student described this as teaching them "how to read Plato carefully." The use of one-page papers was also praised. Students found the assignments "demanding" but appreciated that it forced them to read the text strategically. They also expressed appreciation for my feedback on the assignments. Regarding the final paper presentations, some students were apprehensive and nervous about them, but they nevertheless saw the benefit of doing them. The workshop itself was a great success, and several students said that they enjoyed and learned a lot from it.

As to suggestions for improvement, some students wanted the discussion of secondary literature to be more integrated into the course. They did have a good amount of mandatory secondary literature reading assignments, but we never focused our discussion on these texts during class. For next time, I would consider trying to integrate an article per meeting more directly into my plan for the course.