



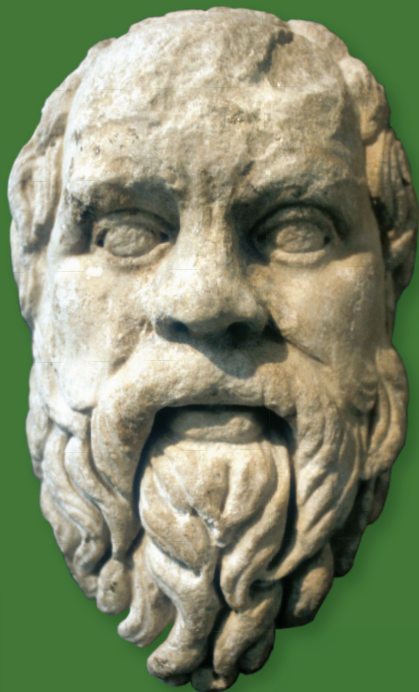
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Plato, Socrates, and the Dialogues

Course Guidebook

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In addition to this series of lectures on the dialogues of Plato, Professor Sugrue has also taped *The Bible and Western Culture* for The Teaching Company.

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Plato, Socrates and the Dialogues

Scope:

This set of sixteen lectures examines the Greek philosopher Plato, whose writings are at the core of the Western intellectual tradition. The famous quote: “All philosophy is but a footnote to Plato” exemplifies the fact that he is the necessary starting point for any study of Western philosophy. In many of his dialogues, he speaks through the person of his revered teacher, Socrates, using the dialogic form that is still today termed the “Socratic method.” The lectures will analyze this form and then discuss certain key dialogues and other writings that address issues concerning governance, knowledge, reality, virtue and others that have engaged philosophers both before, but especially since, Plato. This exploration of the thought of Plato necessarily makes us consider the Greek world of thought and literature, to which Plato was the heir. In fact, in a play on the quote above, it has been suggested (half-seriously) that Plato is merely a footnote to Parmenides of Elea. Thus, we will also consider other philosophers and their schools, as well as the world of 5th century BC. Greece as we explore Plato’s fascinating world of Greece and of the mind.

Objectives:

Upon completion of these lectures, you should be able to:

1. State the key facts concerning the lives of Socrates and Plato, and the 5th century B.C. Greek world in which they lived.
2. State and discuss the basic teachings of the major presocratic philosophers and the Sophists.
3. Explain the structure and purpose of the Socratic dialogue as employed by Plato in his writings.
4. Summarize the topics and main arguments of the following dialogues: *Euthydemus*, *Meno*, *Timaeus*, *Theaetetus*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Laws*, *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*.
5. Define and explain key philosophical terms used by Plato.
6. Evaluate the importance of Plato from the perspective of his contribution to the Western intellectual tradition.