Philosophy

• Love of wisdom
• One (rough) way to “get located”
  – Natural – what is (no praise or blame)
  – Moral – what ought to be (conscience)
• This course involves both aspects
• And concentrates on practical application
An unavoidable event—no choices
An entirely avoidable mishap
Pilot-induced
And another . . .
Branches of Philosophy

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Logic
- Aesthetics
- “Philosophy of . . .”
- Ethics
  - “The normative science of human conduct”
Ethics

• Two generally recognized (and interrelated) branches

• Decision theories -- choosing
  – Deontology
    • Duties, rights; centered on what people deserve
  – Consequentialism
    • Greatest good for the greatest number; centered on happiness

• Virtue theory and the practical question LMWL
  – What sort of person to be?
Ancient Greeks and Liberal Arts

• Socrates (479-399)
• Plato (428-348)
• Aristotle (384-322)
• Free men with time and capacity for philosophy
• Each with a sort of immortality (discussed in some depth later)
Method

• Dialectic – the philosopher’s laboratory
• Logic and discernment
• In Plato, Socrates is generally the protagonist
  – And he’s been told that the wisest of all men knows he does not know.
  – So he asks those who say they do know
  – Elenchus—reveals that beliefs are not always true
  – (Not everyone appreciates elenchus)
Republic - I

• The conversation at the Piraeus
• Polemarchus, Adeimantus, Glaucon, etc.
• “Either prove stronger than we are, or you will have to stay here.”
• A third possibility? Persuasion?
• What if we won’t listen?
• OK – go to Polemarchus’s house for discussion
Cephalus on Justice

• The old have traveled a road we will probably follow
  – Appetites relax; harmony ensues
  – Fear of death and that “stories are true”
  – Wealth allows speaking truth; keeping promises, repaying debts, etc.
    • But, are these things always just?
    • Should all debts be repaid?
Polemarchus on Justice

• Giving people what they are owed
  – Benefits to friends
  – Harms to enemies

• But, we make mistakes about friends and enemies

• Enter Thrasymachus (like a wild beast)
Thrasymachus

• Justice is the interest of the stronger
  – Rulers are the strongest
  – And they make rules to their own advantage
  – And so justice for the weaker is to obey these rules

• But, suppose the ruler makes rules that are actually contrary to his interests?
  – Obedience results in a contradiction
Ruling as a craft?

• As with breeding horses, or with medicine
  – It benefits others
• (T pretty much changes the subject): Injustice is always more advantageous
  – Unjust gets away with things, pays fewer taxes, etc.
• Those who condemn injustice do so because they fear suffering it
Ruling (and Psyche)

• Taking on others’ problems
  – Thoughtful folk resist ruling but,
  – They fear being ruled by others

• And now for a bit of editorial comment
  – Individuals are isomorphic to the polis
  – So, we’ve been talking about self-rule too
The larger challenge

• Is it better to be unjust or just?
• Can a gang committing injustice operate without justice?
  – A claim about human nature
• Functionality – particular purpose
  – Eyes – to see; ears – to hear
• What of the psyche itself?
Psyche’s function

• Deliberating, ruling, “taking care” of stuff
• No other capacity can do this for us
• And it can do so well or poorly
• Depending on how just it is
• But, we never answered the original question: what IS justice?
Republic - II

• Glaucon takes up the argument
• Investigation of values
  – Instrumental
  – Intrinsic
  – Both
• What sort of good is justice?
  – Most think it is instrumental only
  – Contract theory
Contracts; Ring of Gyges

• Most who behave justly do so because they cannot do otherwise?
• Invisibility—would it change how we behave?
• “Get away” with breaching contract?
• Is it better to
  – Seem just and be unjust?
  – Or to seem unjust and be just?
Next Time

• Understanding the polis, and the psyche