

Midterm Philosophical Dialogue Assignment

Due Sunday October 18 by 11:59pm

As we have discussed in class, your midterm is to write a philosophical dialogue between two to three discussants (no more than three!). Please remember that your task here is not to write a comedic sketch or parody but a serious philosophical dialogue, so while your characters may be fictional or historical, they may not be simply cartoonish figures “shooting the crap” as a setting for making jokes. You are encouraged to make up your own characters.

Building from ideas presented in Plato’s *Republic*, your characters need to present 1) an argument for what you think the ideal society would be and 2) the place of Art in that society. Please give special attention to Art related to your major at Denver School of the Arts. Your dialogue does not need to agree with Plato. In fact, some of the most interesting dialogues may emerge when your characters disagree with Plato, challenge assumptions in the *Republic*, or apply Plato's arguments to circumstances he could not have anticipated.

The dialogue between your characters needs to evidence your own reflections on our readings from Plato this term. Use no fewer than **seven** direct quotations from seven different Books in Plato’s *Republic* to evidence your knowledge of the readings. Essays and citations must be in MLA format to get above a “C.”

There should be three clear sections:

1. An Introduction with “dramatis personae” explaining the setting, context and background to the characters. (200-400 words)
2. The dialogue itself (2000-2500 words)
3. A meta-reflection: In 500 words, do a meta-reflection on your story where you explain your writerly choices. This is the place to include any specific research sources you may have drawn on to develop your story. If you used AI, please include the specific prompts you asked it.

Midterm Philosophical Dialogue — Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Developing	Beginning	Points
1. Philosophical Argument: Ideal Society	Presents a clear, thoughtful, and sustained argument about what an ideal society would be. Characters develop, complicate, question, and/or	Presents a clear argument about an ideal society with meaningful philosophical discussion. Some complexity or questioning is evident.	Presents a general idea about an ideal society, but the philosophical argument is underdeveloped, inconsistent, or	Little discernible philosophical argument; characters primarily express opinions without	20

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Developing	Beginning	Points
	challenge the argument rather than merely stating opinions. Demonstrates substantial independent reflection on Plato.		relies heavily on assertion.	developing or examining them.	
2. Philosophy of Art	Develops a substantial philosophical argument about the place and function of Art in the ideal society, with particular attention to the student's major/discipline at DSA. Explores significant questions about art, society, education, ethics, politics, or human formation.	Clearly addresses the place of Art in society and connects it to the student's major. Some philosophical development is evident.	Mentions or discusses Art but does not substantially develop its relationship to the ideal society or the student's field.	Art receives little meaningful attention or is treated primarily as background material.	15
3. Engagement with Plato's <i>Republic</i>	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of Plato's arguments and uses them as material for genuine philosophical inquiry. Plato's ideas are questioned, extended, challenged, applied, or reinterpreted rather than simply summarized.	Demonstrates good understanding of relevant ideas from the <i>Republic</i> and incorporates them meaningfully into the dialogue.	Shows partial understanding of Plato, but some ideas are simplified, misunderstood, or used primarily as quotations rather than as philosophical material.	Shows limited understanding of the <i>Republic</i> or uses Plato superficially.	20
4. Direct Quotations &	Includes at least seven direct quotations from	Meets the seven-quotation/seven-Book	Falls somewhat short of the requirement	Does not meet the quotation requirement	15

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Developing	Beginning	Points
Textual Evidence	seven different Books of the <i>Republic</i> . Quotations are accurately reproduced, well chosen, properly contextualized, and integrated into the characters' arguments.	requirement and generally integrates quotations effectively, with only minor problems of context or integration.	and/or quotations are insufficiently integrated, poorly contextualized, or occasionally inaccurate.	and/or quotations are largely disconnected from the philosophical argument.	
5. Quality of the Philosophical Dialogue	Characters have distinct perspectives and engage one another through genuine philosophical questioning, argument, counterargument, clarification, and response. The dialogue advances through intellectual exchange rather than functioning as an essay divided among speakers.	Characters engage one another meaningfully and the dialogue generally feels authentic and purposeful.	Dialogue sometimes becomes a series of speeches, exposition, or disconnected statements rather than an exchange of ideas.	Characters function primarily as mouthpieces for the author; little genuine dialogue or philosophical exchange occurs.	10
6. Introduction & Dramatis Personae	Provides a compelling and useful context for the dialogue. Clearly establishes setting, characters, intellectual background, and the circumstances that bring the discussants together.	Clearly establishes the necessary context and characters.	Provides basic background but leaves important aspects of the setting or characters unclear.	Introduction provides little useful context for understanding the dialogue.	5
7. Meta-Reflection	Thoughtfully explains the writer's philosophical,	Explains major writerly choices and sources and provides	Provides some explanation of choices but reflection is	Minimal or missing reflection; does not	10

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Developing	Beginning	Points
	narrative, and character choices and reflects on how the dialogue engages Plato. Clearly identifies research sources and, where applicable, AI use and prompts.	adequate reflection on the process.	primarily descriptive rather than analytical. Sources or AI use may be incompletely documented.	adequately explain the development of the dialogue or document sources/AI use.	
8. Organization, Style & MLA	Dialogue is well organized and readable; prose is polished and appropriate to a serious philosophical dialogue. Citations and formatting consistently follow MLA.	Generally clear and well organized, with minor stylistic or MLA problems.	Organization or prose occasionally interferes with clarity; multiple MLA or citation problems.	Significant problems with organization, readability, grammar, or MLA.	5
TOTAL					100

Requirements for a grade above C

To earn above a C, the submission must:

- Contain all three required sections of the assignment.
- Include a dialogue of approximately 2,000–2,500 words.
- Include at least seven direct quotations from seven different Books of Plato's *Republic*.
- Properly cite at least seven quotations from different and sources using MLA format.
- Present a substantive philosophical argument concerning both the ideal society and the place of Art within that society.
- Include the required 500-word meta-reflection.
- Document outside research and any use of AI, including the specific AI prompts used, where applicable.