

## Learning Guide Unit 8

**Reading Assignment****Australia/Oceania: Dr. Mary Rosalind Hursthouse (New Zealand)**

From Wikiwand: Born in Bristol, England, in 1943, Hursthouse spent her childhood in New Zealand. Her aunt Mary studied philosophy and when her father asked her what that was all about, he could not understand her answer. Rosalind Hursthouse, 17 at the time, knew immediately that she wanted to study philosophy, too, and enrolled the next year. She taught for many years at the Open University in England. She was head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Auckland from 2002 to 2005. She is currently a professor of philosophy at the University of Auckland. In 2016, she was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. See more at: [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Rosalind\\_Hursthouse](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Rosalind_Hursthouse)

Start your exploration of this remarkable woman at the Wikiwand site above. Now read an excerpt from her Virtue Ethics book, free from Plato Stanford at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/#toc>. Read the short introduction by Dr. Hursthouse and then move down to Section 2.4 "Platonistic Virtue Ethics." Of interest, pay attention to more modern scholars interpretation of Plato's work. Hursthouse points out that the ego sometimes gets in the way of our ability to see the world around us. She writes of ego, it is "[c]onstantly attending to our needs, our desires, our passions, and our thoughts skews our perspective on what the world is actually like and blinds us to the goods around us." Has this happened recently to you? Can you think of an example where you have gotten in your own way while trying to interpret what was going on around you? If you can't think of an example, it's happening right now.

She uses Adams (1999) to highlight that to Plato, all *good* came from *God* or being *like God*.

Now skip all the way near the bottom of Section 4. "Future Directions." Here an argument is made by Dr. Hursthouse as to why we haven't heard much about her topic, virtue ethics. "[W]hile Plato and Aristotle can be great inspirations as far as virtue ethics is concerned, neither, on the face of it, are attractive sources of insight where politics is concerned," she writes in Section 4. Basically, virtue ethics is complex to understand outside the realm of application (doing something with it), but the study of virtue and vices necessarily take *virtue ethics* to a place many have not done before.

There are a couple takeaways from this writing. 1. As you can see, a core understanding of Plato and Aristotle appear to be at the base of all "western" philosophy. We did not find this to be the case with our Asian and African studies last unit, and neither of them had a "common base" at all, as it were. 2. Notice how Dr. Hursthouse writes. She sources all her data in place, at length, and gives comparative statements between the writers she is using. If you take nothing else away from this, remember that a college-level professional writer gives credit (cites and sources) and has enough knowledge and maturity within his or her subject to point of juxtaposed positions, conflicts, and contradictions while driving at a central theme throughout. It may have not all made sense to you, but the style and approach in presenting a professional article is a valuable lesson as you move forward in your college career.

**South America: Paulo Freire (Brazil)**

From Wikiwand: Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (1921 - 1997) was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy. He is best known for his influential work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, considered to be one of the foundational texts of the critical pedagogy movement. Read this remarkable man's biography on Wikiwand at [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Paulo\\_Freire](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Paulo_Freire)

How do you think early childhood influences one's philosophy of life? Using Paulo as an example of overcoming adversity to greatness, it certainly stands to reason that humans really can do amazing things given the personal drive to follow-through. You have started this yourself by working on a degree with UoPeople. Unlike Paulo, we hope, you will not start with poverty and famine, a Great Depression, no school, prison, and the rest of it. By definition, you have survived everything that has ever happened to you. Please read Paulo Freire of Brazil as another example of someone else who survived what came his way – and exceeded all expectations. By the time of his death he an accomplished Philosopher and the Secretary of Education for Sao Paulo.

Like the other thinkers in this unit, Freire leveraged knowledge of Plato in his writings, but he also used Marx and other anti-colonialist viewpoints appropriate to the society within which Paulo lived. One of his most famous works,

Skelton, K. (2023). Counter-Critical Pedagogy: A Manifesto. *Critical Studies in Education*, 65(4), 348–365.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2023.2266522>

- This article challenges traditional frameworks of critical pedagogy, proposing a counter-narrative that critiques the limitations and contradictions within the field. The article explores the complexities of pedagogy and its role in addressing power dynamics, questioning whether current educational practices truly serve marginalized communities. This article offers a contemporary and critical lens on pedagogy that aligns with, yet diverges from, traditional Freirean thought.

## Video Resources

Revolution and Ideology. (2019, November 16). *False generosity - Paolo Friere - Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [Video]. YouTube.



### North America: Thomas Jefferson (U.S.A.)

Start your reading about Thomas Jefferson at the *American Philosophical Society* (the oldest such society in the U.S.). Find a brief description of it and Thomas Jefferson here: <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/american-philosophical-society>

Now we're going to try something different. I want you to go find The Thomas Jefferson Hour, a podcast presented by an actor named Clay Jenkinson. Find it here: <http://jeffersonhour.com/> Generally Mr. Jenkinson assumes the role of President Thomas Jefferson and takes questions from a modern interviewer, on modern topics, and answers as if he were President Jefferson interpreting the issue from his times.

The following is an excerpt from a letter between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1814... Of note. Adams was the second President of the United States and Jefferson was the third. They were close friends and political rivals. Something we rarely see today. They also, in one of the greatest coincidences in American History, both died within hours of each other on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence (on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1826). Read below and see if your views on Plato match Jefferson's.

*"I am just returned from one of my long absences, having been at my other home for five weeks past. Having more leisure there than here for reading, I amused myself with reading seriously Plato's Republic. I am wrong however in calling it amusement, for it was the heaviest task-work I ever went through. I had occasionally before taken up some of his other works, but scarcely ever had patience to go through a whole dialogue. While wading thro' the whimsies, the puerilities [childishness], and unintelligible jargon of this work, I laid it down often to ask myself how it could have been that the world should have so long consented to give reputation to such nonsense as this? ... bringing Plato to the test of reason, take from him his sophisms [arguments used to deceive], futilities, and incomprehensibilities, and what remains? ... Yet this which should have consigned him to early oblivion really procured him immortality of fame and reverence."*

Now listen to "Episode #1181 Too Much Freedom" <https://jeffersonhour.bandcamp.com/track/1181-too-much-freedom>. In this podcast, President Thomas Jefferson (as portrayed by Clay Jenkinson) discusses Plato's "Republic," his personal dislike for the writings, and the differences between true democracy and a republic. This will likely be the best explanation and discussion you've ever heard on Plato's "Republic" as well as adapting philosophical principles to the world around you. It for this reason that we have chosen it to be last in your Introduction to Philosophy class.

It is by listening to this lecture series that you will understand not only the difference between democracy and republic (as presented by Plato), but also view into the mind of America's third president and author of its Constitution. The depth of philosophical conversation cannot be understated whether learning about Jefferson or Plato, you will learn more than you thought possible during this listening assignment.

Take notes: questions on this unit's quiz and the final are taken directly from this hour-long program.