

**PHILOSOPHY 1A03**  
**FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

PLEASE READ ALL OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

Write a complete reply to *one* of the topics below. Be careful to make a complete reply to all the points of the question. A successful assignment *will not merely rewrite notes*. It will answer the question directly and, as far as possible, in your own words. *Refer to the Tips for a Good Assignment* on the class Avenue page.

In writing your assignment, you may assume that your reader has been in our class and heard the same lectures and read the same readings as you have. You should not explain things that anyone in our class already knows, like that Socrates was a Greek philosopher or that he was accused of a crime and tried.

It is not intended that this assignment require research or the use of sources other than the course text and your thoughts. When referring to these texts use a parenthetical page reference; you don't need a footnote, endnote, or bibliography. *However, if you refer to or otherwise rely on any sources besides the course readings, be sure to reference the source properly.*

- Length: not much less than 1000, and not more than 1200 words.
- Double space, number pages, identify your TA.
- Due 8 October to Avenue dropbox by 11.59 PM.

## 1. Question about *Euthyphro*

Carefully reread Plato's dialogue *Euthyphro*. Then answer all these points.

(a) Socrates questions Euthyphro about piety. To Euthyphro, the matter seems not complicated. Piety is what is loved by all the gods. Why is Socrates unsatisfied with this clear, concise explanation? What would satisfy Socrates and bring his questions to an end?

(b) What is the point of engaging in such conversations? Consider Socrates's explanation of his conversations in *Apology* (bottom 39-40)

(c) How do you think Socrates's treatment of Euthyphro relates to what Plato (or Socrates) think philosophy is and its value? Illustrate your reply with appropriate citations from any relevant text by Plato.

## 2. Question about *Apology*

A voice turned Socrates away from politics. Wisely, as Socrates sees it. “Do you really imagine I could have survived all these years, if I had led a public life?” (42) You cannot serve both justice and the state. “He who will fight for the right, if he would live even for a brief space, must have a private station and not a public one”—that is, must lead a private, not a public life, if he is to survive. (41)

(a) Why does Socrates say this? What reasons can you find (whether in *Apology* or elsewhere) for his position? Summarize and explain in your own words.

(b) Is the idea one you find plausible or implausible? Explain why you take your view.

### 3. Question about *Symposium*

Select one of the first three *Symposium* speeches by

- Phaedrus (82)
- Pausanias (83-86)
- Eryximachus (86-88)

(a) Summarize the main points. Use your own words, confirmed by carefully selected **and brief** quotations.

(b) Discuss how this speech relates to any part of the speech by Socrates, from his interrogation of Agathon (96-98) till the end of the speech he recounts by Diotima (98-107).

Alternative:

(c) Discuss how the speech you select from those first three relates to the speech by Alcibides at the end (109-15).

Do (a) and either (b) or (c) but not both.

