**Plato Philosophy 1020**

**Final Paper Topic**

*Write a five page paper double-spaced, with normal font, margin, etc., on the following prompt. It is due to me via email (jak374@pitt.edu) by* ***5pm on Thursday December 12. (Note: please send me the paper as a docx or pdf file. Do NOT send a google document!!!)*** *You may email me your paper before the deadline, but please note that I will only accept ONE version of the paper—once you send it, that’s the one I grade. So, please check the file carefully. This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade*:

At *Theaetetus* 151d-160e Socrates appeals to Protagoras’ famous “Man is the measure” doctrine and Heraclitus’ flux theory to undergird Theaetetus’ definition of knowledge as perception. Explain both what those doctrines are and *how* they support the definition of knowledge as perception. (This should take you approximately three pages, give or take.) Once you’ve articulated the Protagorean and Heraclitean doctrines explain Socrates’ final argument against the Heraclitean flux doctrine (at 179c-183c) and then offer one possible way that a Heraclitean might try to defend their doctrine from the objection. (This should take you another two pages, give or take.) Be sure to use quotes from the readings to support your interpretation, but use them selectively.

**About the Assignment/Grading Criteria:**

This assignment is designed to test your ability to explain and analyze difficult chunks of text in writing. Your grade on the paper will be determined by the quality of the writing, the thoroughness and accuracy of your exegesis of the different portions of the text, and the insightfulness of your suggested response on the Heraclitean’s behalf.

To do the assignment well you don’t need to read any outside material. You should carefully read the primary texts over and over again several times, paying close attention to the details of the argument and consult your notes from class for help. Note that there are multiple ways to interpret the passages. The ones I gave in class are only one possible way of interpreting the passages. You will not necessarily be penalized for adopting a different construal of the passages from the one I gave, but you will need to support your interpretation by appeal to particular quotes from the text.

Also note that in the first part of the paper you are not only asked to explain what Protagoras’ “Man is the measure” doctrine and Heraclitus’ flux theory are; you are supposed to explain HOW they are supposed to support the definition that knowledge is perception (make sure you answer the question “HOW do these two doctrines support the view that knowledge is perception?”).

**Tips/Further Guidelines:**

* Use clear, straightforward language and make sure your paper is organized and easy to follow. Writing counts for this paper!!! Think HARD about what words you use. Ask yourself: “Does this sentence convey what I mean in the clearest, most succinct, and accurate manner?”. Be on the lookout for sentences that go longer than three lines (revise them!). And please watch out for careless, factually incorrect statements.
* Your paper should have a *brief* introduction. But don’t overdo it. It should let the reader know what you plan to talk about. But get to the explanation of the argument as soon as possible.
* Don’t ramble needlessly. Make sure all of the material in the paper is contributing to your main task(s). If you end up with a paper that’s 4.5 pages, don’t worry (and don’t try to fill it up with fluff). When I say I want 5 pages I mean I want 4.5-*5.5 pages*. You will be penalized for omitting required tasks, but you won’t be penalized simply for the paper having a certain length.
* Make sure you do what the prompt requests. Don’t go rogue on the paper topic!
* Be sure to use quotes from the text. But be selective. And when you cite passages from the text use the following method: “[Plato quote]” (*Theaetetus* 161a-d).
* No need to have a concluding paragraph. Your response on behalf of the Heraclitean suffices.
* If you finish the paper before the deadline, you may email it to me (again, as a docx or pdf file). However, note that once you hand it in, it’s in and you can’t resubmit a revised version at a later date.