

## Plato's *Timaeus* | CLAS/PHIL 472A

Fall 2020, second seven-week term | current 13 November 2020

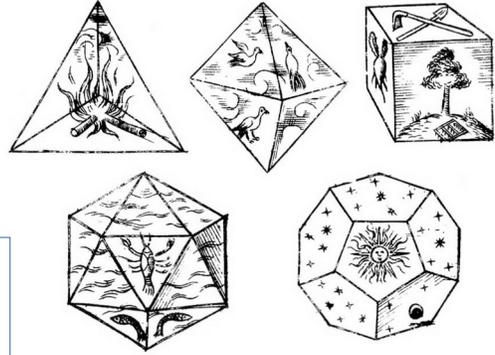
Dr. Bjorn Sether Wastvedt

Office hours: by appointment (please email me!), via Zoom

The course will be held entirely online, using D2L.

I answer all emails each weekday: [wastvedt@email.arizona.edu](mailto:wastvedt@email.arizona.edu)

This is a three-unit course, just like a standard semester-long course. Since the course only runs for seven and a half weeks, you should expect to spend about twice as much time per day on the course as you would on a regular course. Weekends will be busier. Readings will be more intense. Make the most of it!



The five “Platonic solids” as explained in *Timaeus* ([source](#))

### Description and Objectives

In *Timaeus*, the eponymous narrator gives an elaborate but only “likely” account of the creation of the world, “beginning with the origin of the cosmos and ending with the generation of humankind” (27c). He discusses a breathtaking range of subjects: being and becoming, and the Forms as opposed to mere images; the “demiurge” (a divine creator) and the “receptacle” (the material or space of creation); mathematics, music, and astronomy. In translation and commentary, the dialogue has been continuously popular for 2500 years, and it was a fundamental cosmological text at least until Copernicus. In conjunction with *Timaeus*, we will read related material in *Phaedo* and *Republic* and the story of Atlantis in the uncompleted *Critias*.

We will aim to improve your ability to think, discuss, and write, doing so creatively and critically, by working to understand course topics, articulate views on them, and explain their relevance. Problems we address will be philosophically, emotionally, and ethically difficult. Much of the course time, as much of life, will involve cooperative learning, but success will require individual skills of all sorts.

### Requirements

No late work or extra credit. You must have access to D2L, Zoom (through the UA), and the required text: [ISBN 978-0192807359](#): Waterfield, Robin and Andrew Gregory. *Plato: Timaeus and Critias*. Oxford World's Classics. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. **PLEASE USE THIS EXACT EDITION!**

Assignments are due at 2am MST on MWF (i.e., early mornings the next day). Aim for early completion. Save your work. Missing or late assignments will result in a zero, unless pre-approved by the Dean of Students. I will return work within a week. Grades: A > 89.5 > B > 79.5 > C > 69.5 > D > 59.5 > E

Workshop	In the first week or so we will work on reading and writing skills and grammar.	10%
D2L quizzes	A 5-question open-book, open-note quiz per reading as of 10/26 (drop lowest)	15%
Paper 1: Overview of <i>Timaeus</i>	1500w+ draft; peer review; revision; later, a MC Exam	20%
Paper 2: Your choice of topic	500w+ précis; 3000w+ draft; you revise; due as “final”	25%
Discussion	Four grades, based on group (15%) & individual (15%) work (contribute often)	30%

### Expectations and Support

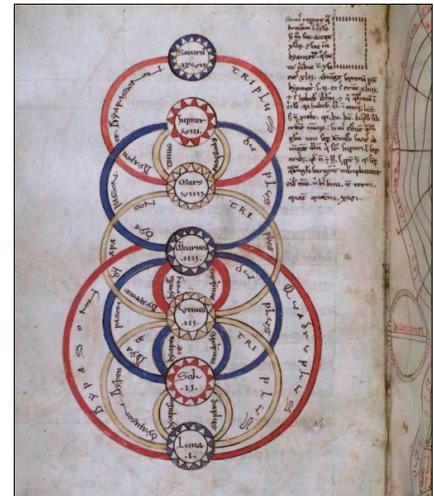
Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work and exercises must be products of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the [UA Code of Academic Integrity](#) as described in the UA General Catalog. All UA policies will be honored, notably those concerning [class](#)

[attendance, participation, and administrative drops](#); [absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice](#); [absences preapproved by the UA Dean of Students \(or Dean’s designee\)](#); and [threatening behavior by students](#), which prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself.

Our goal in this class is that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the Disability Resource Center (520.621.3268 or [online](#)) to learn about and establish reasonable accommodations. If this policy applies to you, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to participate fully.

The University is [committed](#) to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In this course, everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

To dispute a grade, email me a written appeal between two and seven days after the grade's posting. Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.



Planetary movement, as in *Timaeus* (12<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript, Bodleian Library; [source](#))

**Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

All material is due at 2am (so actually early the next morning). Starting on 10/26, a five-question (5Q) quiz will be due with the reading. D2L will drop your lowest quiz and discussion scores.

- 10/16 Introductory material and prep for 10/19
- 10/19 Reading, writing, and grammar workshop, quiz on D2L
- 10/21 17a-27c *before T. speaks* (10Q quiz)
- 10/23 27d-29d *some “basic” concepts*

**The effects of Intellect (discussion week, runs Mon.-Sun.)**

- 10/26 29d-34b *nature of the universe* (5Q quiz)
- 10/28 34b-39d *soul and the universe* (5Q quiz)
- 10/30 39e-47d *living beings* (5Q quiz)

**The effects of Necessity (discussion week, runs Mon.-Sun.)**

- 11/2 47e-52d *cause and causes* (5Q quiz)
- 11/4 52d-61c *physics and mathematics* (5Q quiz)
- 11/6 61c-69a *qualities, explained* (5Q quiz)

**First paper (discussion week, runs Mon.-Sun.) & Pandemic Ethics**

- 11/9 *Pandemic Ethics* discussion (throughout the week)

**11/10, 5pm MST** Speaker 1: Nathan Oakes on the Receptacle

11/13 1500w+ P1 first graded copy due; start P1 peer edits

**Necessity, intellect, & humans (discussion week, runs Mon.-Sun.)**

- 11/16 69a-92c *human constitution* (5Q quiz); P1 peer edits due
- 11/18 69a-92c *human capacities* (5Q quiz)
- 11/20 *Critias* (optional reading and quiz); live lecture on ways to improve your paper-writing (date and time TBD)
- 11/21 P1 final (second graded copy) due on D2L: 2am Sat. night
- 11/22-23 1<sup>st</sup> mandatory 15min conference with Dr. Wastvedt

**Second paper**

- 11/25 Multiple Choice (MC) exam; 500w+ P2 précis due on D2L
- 11/30 1000w+ of P2 due (submit on D2L)
- 12/3 P2 first graded copy due: 3000w+ total (submit on D2L)

**Student presentations and responses**

- 12/4-5 2<sup>nd</sup> mandatory 15min conference (time slots TBD)
- 12/6-7 Virtual paper presentations (time slots TBD)
- 12/9 Response to presentations due on D2L
- 12/17 P2 final (second graded copy) due

<sup>1</sup> This syllabus draws in part on Katja Vogt’s [course](#).