READING QUESTIONS - BOOK 1 - PLATO'S REPUBLIC - HW 1 - due TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 – IN CLASS.

WRITTEN: 1 TYPED page, .7" margins, 12pt font or smaller, ONE LINE FOR YOUR NAME, DATE, HW#. Answer any 3 to 5 questions of your choosing from the list below. DO NOT REPEAT THE QUESTION AS PART OF YOUR ANSWER. JUST STATE THE # OF THE QUESTION THAT YOU ARE ANSWERING. All are from Book I of Plato’s Republic.

Note: although you only need to turn in 3 to 5 “answers”, the midterm will draw from some of these questions so you should make sure you can “find the answer” to these questions from your reading and lecture.

1. The rich old man Cephalus is asked by the philosopher Socrates whether or not old age is a "difficult time of life." What is Cephalus' answer to this question? What are the necessary and sufficient conditions according to Cephalus for living the "good life"?

2. Socrates says that "most people" would not agree with rich old Cephalus. What different answer would "most people" give to the question posed to Cephalus?

3. If there is an "upside to wealth" for the "good person" what is this upside? Do you agree?

4. At this point the dialogue changes tack onto a new, but related topic, "what is justice. What follows is a series of attempted "definitions" and "tests of the definitions" of justice. What is the "first" definition of justice of Simonides that is "paraphrased" by Socrates and how does he "destroy" the definition with a counter example? What counterexample does he give?

5. Polemarchus comes to the rescue with what "upgrade" or fix of Simonides' first definition of justice in section "332"?

6. Now things get tricky. Socrates attempts to show, through the use of IMPLICATION and ANALOGY that Polemarchus' "upgrade of Simonides' argument" is SELF-CONTRADICTORY. An implication is when one thing that is stated or observed STRONGLY OR NECESSARILY SUGGESTS some other thing. How does Socrates make his case using implication and analogy (analogy of Justice to WHAT other "common activity") that Polemarchus’ definition (we’ll call this Def. 1b) is self-contradictory?

7. Polemarchus says that "he's not sure what he "meant""What is "meant" by this confusion on the part of Polemarchus in the face of someone like Socrates?

8. But still, Polemarchus holds to his guns regarding his definition of Justice. At this point Socrates exposes an ambiguity (when a term has MORE THAN ONE MEANING in a given context) of a key word in Polemarchus' definition. What is this key term that Socrates queries?

9. Polemarchus then responds that his "account" is bad - what is meant here by "account"? Next he comes up with a new, improved definition. What is this new, improved definition? We can call this Def. 1c.

10. Socrates accepts this "new" definition but critiques it as well. What sort of implications follow (according to Socrates) such that Def. 1c is faulty?

11. What does Thrasymachus think of this "philosophical method" employed by Socrates? Do you agree with Thrasymachus here?

12. Thrasymachus criticizes Socrates’ “method” by using an analogy involving adding numbers to get 12 – what claim is Thrasymachus implicitly making regarding Socrates' “method.”? Does Thrasymachus accurately capture Socrates’ philosophical method?

13. What sort of payment does Socrates ask in return for doing philosophy? How about Thrasymachus?
14. Thrasymachus gives a definition of justice, we’ll call it, Def. 2a. What is his first definition and what “objection” does Socrates raise against it? Why does Thrasymachus find Socrates’ response “disgusting”?

15. What is Thrasymachus’ new definition, “2b” – what does he “add” to Def. 2a? What sort of objection – or counter-example – does Socrates levy against Def. 2b? (Hint: what sort of INCONSISTENCY or CONTRADICTION does Socrates identify as a possible scenario under Def. 2b?)

16. Philosophers get into trouble when they use words or terms that are ambiguous. That is, if a key word has two or more meanings in a given context, then it’s ambiguous. What part of Def. 2b was “ambiguous” such that Socrates was able to “interpret” the definition in one way instead of a different way? (Hint: is there a difference between “appearance” and “reality”? Between how things seem to be versus how things actually are?)

17. And what is Thrasymachus’ newest definition, “2c”? How does Socrates’ use ANALOGY to show that even this new, spiffed up definition, 2c, is also, in the end SELF-CONTRADICTORY?

18. Thrasymachus is not convinced and at this point he gives a “speech” in defense of Def. 2c. What are the key reasons he gives in support of his defense?

19. Socrates, of course, is not convinced by Thrasymachus and shortly thereafter Thrasymachus offers, in order to make his arguments clear to Socrates, to “pour his argument into (Socrates’) soul.” Given what you’ve observed thus far about how philosophy is practiced why do you think Socrates would reject this “method” of doing philosophy? (Assume that a technology existed that would allow us to literally “pour” our views and arguments into other people…)

20. According to Socrates “good people” (whatever that means) don’t rule for the reward of money or fame (honor). They rule due to another motivation. What is this other thing that motivates good people to be rulers?

21. Socrates proposes two methods to decide whether Thrasymachus or Socrates is correct regarding justice/unjust rulers/def. 2c. What are these two methods for deciding which approach is closest to the actual truth? (Hint: have you ever decided something by listing the “pros” vs. “cons”?)

22. Using the tool of IMPLICATION, Socrates gets Thrasymachus to agree that, based on Def. 2c, LARGE-SCALE, “PERFECT” injustice is linked with virtue/wisdom and justice is linked with vice and ignorance. Socrates notes that this is an unusual notion. Does Thrasymachus definitely believe this? Explain? Does it matter to you whether Thrasymachus really believes what he says?

23. Socrates then cross-examines Thrasymachus regarding the properties or qualities of a “just person” vs. “unjust person” with an eye towards the idea that if MANY PEOPLE ARE JUST then they all share in something called “justness” and the same with “injustice”. Not only do just people share in the qualities of “justness”, they will KNOW whether another person shares in “justness” or not. How does Socrates use this line of reasoning to show that the implication above (that justice = vice) actually leads, via further implications, to its opposite? That is, that Thrasymachus ends up contradicting himself yet again?

24. Thrasymachus would prefer to make “speeches”, even demagoguery style speeches than engage with Socrates in “philosophizing” – why do you think Thrasymachus prefers speeches to philosophy? Do you agree with Thrasymachus here?

25. Thrasymachus “appears” confused by Socrates here and “does not know what he wants” – What, in your view, does Socrates want from Thrasymachus? Does he just want Thrasymachus to “agree” with Socrates?

26. Socrates asks another series of questions, this time about the viability, or practicality, of an UNJUST CITY maintaining its power. Where does this line of questioning lead? What sort of CONTRADECCTION is again arrived at?

27. In the last section, Socrates discusses the function of the soul. What is the “virtue” or “proper excellent/function” of the soul?