I. What is Justice? (Book I)

A. The dialogue with Cephalus (139-143)

1. What, according to Cephalus, is the greatest good that can come from possessing wealth?
2. What is justice according to Cephalus and what problem does Socrates find with his understanding?

B. From pages 144 - 160, Socrates speaks first with Polemarchus about how his understanding of justice and then beginning on p. 150 he speaks with his understanding of justice as the advantage of the stronger. You may find it advantageous to skim these pages just to have a sense of what’s going on, but I want us to resume our discussion in class of the Republic with his discussion of Thrasymachus’ claim that injustice, “when it is grand enough,” is better than justice.

C. Why does Thrasymachus believe (what was only implicit in his initial understanding of justice) that injustice, “when it is grand enough”, is better than justice? (160)

1. How does Socrates argue that perfect injustice is impossible, that without some element of justice neither a group nor a single individual would be able to accomplish anything? (169-170)

II. The Case for Injustice (again) and the First Outlines of the Just City (Book II)

A. Glaucon and Adeimantus’s case for the life of injustice (174-185)

1. Glaucon’s theory of justice; what it is and whence it comes (174-179)
   a. Notice the context of Glaucon’s theory. He is trying to explain what he believes most people who praise a life of justice only because of its consequences and not for its own sake must believe about justice - why, in other words, the seeds of Thrasyvmas’ views are sewn in the popular understanding of justice.
   b. What is justice on Glaucon’s theory?
   c. How does the story of Gyges’s ring show that those who are just are that way unwillingly?
   d. What does the comparison of the “superlatively just” and “superlatively unjust” life show?

2. Adaimantus: Justice is only praised for its consequences, never for itself (179-185)

B. The City (186-207)

1. Why does Socrates turn to an examination of what a city is and why it comes into being in order to adequately answer Glaucon and Adaimantus’s objections to the life of justice? (186)
2. What is the reason people come to live in cities and how does this lead Socrates to
propose as a principle of the city that each person should work at just one task in the city? (186-189)

3. The city of pigs and the feverish/luxurious city (191-193)
   a. Why does Glaucon object to Socrates’s initial description of the life of the city?
   b. Why does meeting Glaucon’s objection make guardians or warriors necessary to the city?

4. The guardians (193-207)
   a. What must the nature of the guardians of the city be like?
   b. Why does Socrates believe that it is important that the city take care what sort of poetry/literature the guardians are exposed to in their education?

III. Virtue in the City and in the Soul (Book IV)

A. The Happiness of the Guardians and the Unity of the City (251-261)

NOTE: Book III, which we skip, continues the discussion of the education and training of the guardians begun in Book II. The point of contention at the beginning of Book IV concerns Socrates’s conclusion at the end of Book III (see pp. 250-251) that the guardians are to be deprived of all private property sharing everything in common between them.

1. Why must the guardians be deprived of some of the happiness they might otherwise look forward to in Socrates’s city? (251-254)

2. Why is it important that the city be one, a unity? (254-261) Is it necessary that this unity be extended as far as Socrates does - even to the point of having wives and children in common (see 256-257)?

B. Justice in the City (262-271)

1. How does Socrates propose to isolate the role of justice in his city?

2. What are wisdom, courage and moderation/temperance in the city or what does Socrates believe it means to speak of a city as wise, courageous, or moderate/temperate?

3. What is justice in the city? How does it mirror the principle that Socrates established earlier that one person should only do one task in the city?

4. What are Socrates’s arguments for his understanding of justice in the city? (269-271, in particular)

C. Justice in the Soul (272-287)

1. What is justice in the soul? (Notice how Socrates’s discussion of the role of justice in securing harmony and unity in the soul (see p. 284, in particular) mirrors his emphasis on unity in the city.)
2. Why, at the very end of the Book, does Glaucon argue that Socrates has answered with this account of what justice is why the life of justice is better than a life of injustice for a human being as well?

IV. The Three “Waves” and the Philosopher (Book V)

A. The three “waves” (“waves” is Socrates’s characterization of the objections posed to his conception of the just city which threaten to drown him, so to speak) (287-319)

1. The first wave: how does Socrates argue for the equality of women in the just city?

2. The second wave: how does Socrates argue for the abolition of the private family in the just city? What is the importance of cultivating a “community in pleasure and pain” for Socrates? What does that mean?

3. The third wave: the rule of philosophers in the just city!

B. The Philosopher (319-328)

1. How does Socrates propose to define the nature of a genuine philosopher?

2. In what way do Glaucon’s “sight-fanciers” (321) resemble the philosopher?

3. Socrates’s distinction of the philosopher from the sight-fancier (321-228)

   a. What is the significance of Socrates’s obtuse discussion (321-322) of the way beauty, justice and other such “notions” are one but “appear to be many”?

   b. In what way do the sight-fanciers miss beauty (and other such notions) itself, only apprehending the many ways beauty appears?

   c. In what way is the sight-fancier like someone who is dreaming?

   d. Why does Socrates characterize the sight-fancier as possessing only opinion, not knowledge? What, for him, is the difference between knowledge and opinion?

V. The Philosopher and the Idea of the Good (Book VI)

A. The Philosopher and the City (329-352)

1. How does Socrates argue that philosophers ought to be leaders of the city?

2. How does Socrates argue that philosophers would be temperate? Notice his new/second image of the soul as a river of desire (330) and contrast with the first image as composed of desire, spirit and reason.

3. How does Socrates argue that the usefulness of philosophers to the city is overlooked by the city as it is presently constituted? What is the significance of his comparison of the city as it is now with a group of sailors without navigational skills fighting over who should navigate while the true navigator is ignored?
4. Notice Socrates’s image on p. 350 for how the philosopher would reform the city as it exists now? What would it mean, in practice, do you think to actually “wip(e) the panel clean” as Socrates suggests?

B. The Idea of the Good (352-365)

1. What is the “greatest task” (355) that the philosopher must undertake in her/his education?

2. Notice Socrates’s extreme reservations about presenting not only what the good is but even what he thinks on the subject. (p. 355) Why is Socrates being so reticent and what do you think is the significance of his reticence here? Could it have something to do with the distinctive nature of the sort of wisdom he has always claimed for himself? (Notice what he says at the top of p. 357 - “Is it fair for a man to speak about what he doesn’t know as if he does?”)

3. What is the significance of his analogy of the good to the sun? (358-361) In what ways is the good like the sun?

4. What points does Socrates make with his “divided line” (362-365)? How does our perception of objects in the world relate to our knowledge of the ideas of those objects? How does the good relate, in turn, to our knowledge of those ideas?

VI. The Cave and Philosophical Rule in the City (Book VII, 365-375, 399-401 & Book IX, 464-465)

A. The Cave (365-375)

1. How do the different levels of the cave in relation to the outside world relate to the different levels of knowledge and its objects as represented in the divided line?

2. How is our position (the position of the sight-fancier) like that of the prisoners in the cave?

3. How does what we have learned about the philosophical life help us to answer Plato’s two key questions: 1) why should philosophers rule? And 2) why should we be just? (This question is not explicitly addressed in the text. We will discuss it in class.)

B. Fragments concerning the institution of philosophical rule in the city and the significance of all of this?

1. Removing everyone over ten years of age to the country. (399-401) Why do you think Socrates resorts to such an oppressive act to begin the philosophical rule of the just city?

2. “The constitution within himself” (464-465) What are we to think of Socrates’s comments here? What is the value of having discussed a city that Socrates believes does not and probably cannot exist?