

## Short Paper #1

**Due:** Monday at class in hard copy, February 9 (Emailed by 9 a.m. if absent.)

**Mechanics:** Paper should be 2-3 pages (minimum of two full pages). Double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, with title. Citation style should be MLA, with in-text parenthetical citations that look like this (*Meno* 88d). Include Works Cited at end of your paper.

**Author's Note:** On a separate piece of paper, write a one paragraph (about half a page) "Author's Note" that discusses the writing of the paper and the paper's strengths and weaknesses. What went well in writing the paper? What didn't? What challenged you about the writing process? (E.g., things like time management, writing a thesis, sticking close to the text, editing, getting started...) Also discuss what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your paper. What could be improved for next time? (E.g., organization, coherency and connection of ideas, etc.) Be specific.

**Purpose:** These short papers are meant to be a chance for sustained, direct engagement with our class texts. They will critically engage ideas found in the texts and include both exegesis and textually-supported positions on questions found in or inspired by the text. The short length provides us an opportunity for practicing focused, succinct writing: these papers should be tight, and should not include anything extraneous to the point you are trying to make (in the way of too much summary, e.g.).

### Prompts:

1. Compare and contrast Plato's and Aristotle's ideas of knowledge. What is similar about how they approached this question? What is different and why are those differences meaningful? (Look to: *Meno*, *Protagoras*, *Republic* days 2 and 3, Aristotle day 1)
2. Discuss the role of education in the functioning of the state. How does education fit in with society? What is its purpose? (Look to: *Republic* day 1 and 3, Aristotle day 3)
3. Discuss the connection between inner nature or character and learning. To what extent is our process of learning or what we can know determined by our character in these texts? (Look to: *Meno*, *Republic*)
4. Choose your own! Look to your reading response questions for these past few weeks, and to blog posts (your own or others') for ideas. You may not copy your writing from a blog post, but you may explore an idea from a post in your paper if you are including new details and textual support. The focus should be on the ideas of the text rather than your own opinions—you can (and should!) express your assessment of the text's ideas, but not your own unrelated theories of what knowledge or the good is, for example.