

Hauptseminar Plato's *Sophist*

Wintersemester 2022/23

Dr. Guus Eelink

guus.eelink@uni-tuebingen.de

Time and place: Tuesdays 10–12 c.t., Hörsaal, Doblerstraße 33, first floor

Description: In this seminar we will discuss the long digression on falsehood in Plato's *Sophist* (Stephanus pages 236 – 264). The digression addresses the 'falsehood paradox', an argument that purports to show that one cannot say or believe falsehoods (because to say or to believe what is false is to say or to believe what is not, and therefore to say or to believe nothing at all). In addressing the falsehood paradox, the digression is meant to clear the path for a definition of the sophist as someone who is a master at deception and at making falsehoods appear true. The digression is one of the most philosophically rich and challenging parts of Plato's corpus. It deals with a variety of fundamental issues in metaphysics, the philosophy of language, and logic. In the seminar we will focus on the nature and philosophical merit of the arguments put forward in the digression. Although the discussions will occasionally, where conducive to a philosophical understanding of the text, refer to the original Greek, they will aim to be accessible to those without Greek. No prior acquaintance with Plato's works will be presupposed. Participants will be asked to give short presentations, which are meant to introduce parts of the text and to raise questions for the discussion.

The recommended translation of the whole work is: N.P. White (1993). *Plato's Sophist. Translated with introduction and notes.* Hackett.

White's translation can be found in: J.M. Cooper (ed.) (1997). *Plato. Complete Works.* Hackett.

The recommended edition of the Greek text is: D. B. Robinson (1995). SOPHISTES. In E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan, eds., *Platonis Opera: Tomus I, Tetralogias I-II Continens*, pp. 384 – 471. Oxford University Press.

The following is a very important, fairly recent book on the *Sophist*, which contains a translation of the digression (divided up into small parts, accompanied by detailed analyses) and a detailed bibliography:

Crivelli, P. (2012). *Plato's Account of Falsehood: A Study of the Sophist.* Cambridge University Press.

The following is an older but influential study of the *Sophist*:

Frede, M. (1967). *Prädikation Und Existenzaussage. Platons Gebrauch von "...Ist..." Und "...Ist Nicht..." Im Sophistes.* Vandenhoeck Und Ruprecht.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic + text</i>	<i>Crivelli</i>
18.10.22	introduction <i>Soph.</i> 216a–236d	Intr., ch. 1.
25.10.22	puzzles about not-being <i>Soph.</i> 236d–237e	2.1
1.11.22	Allerheiligen; no seminar	
8.11.22	puzzles about not-being c'd <i>Soph.</i> 238a–239c	2.1
15.11.22	puzzles about falsehood <i>Soph.</i> 240c–241b	2.3–4
22.11.22	monists and pluralists <i>Soph.</i> 242b–245d	3.1
29.11.22	materialists and idealists <i>Soph.</i> 245e–250d	3.2–3
6.12.22	predication and the 'late learners' <i>Soph.</i> 251a–c	4.1
13.12.22	the communion of kinds <i>Soph.</i> 251d–255a	4.2
20.12.22	differing from change and stability <i>Soph.</i> 255a–b	4.3
27.12.22	Christmas break; no seminar	
3.1.23	Christmas break; no seminar	
10.1.23	differing from being <i>Soph.</i> 255b–e	4.4–5
17.1.23	identity versus predication? <i>Soph.</i> 255e–256d	4.6
24.1.23	not-being and difference <i>Soph.</i> 256d–e	4.7
31.1.23	negation and not-being <i>Soph.</i> 257b–258e	ch. 5
7.2.23	false sentences and beliefs <i>Soph.</i> 261d–264b	ch. 6