PAPER TOPICS
(paper one)

Write a five- or six-page paper in answer to one of the following questions:

1. How does hypothesis or supposition play a role in Plato's understanding of knowledge and being in the central books of the Republic?

(Refer concretely to the text in your answer)

2. In the divided line passage, Socrates uses the term 'hypothesis' or 'supposition' in his discussion of knowledge. Why does he do so?

(Answer some of the following in your essay: What does he mean by 'hypothesis'? Why is he looking for the unhypothesized? What kind of knowledge involves hypotheses for him? What kind of knowledge does not?

In addition, refer to as many of the parts of the divided line as you can.)

3. In the divided line passage, Socrates also uses the term 'hypothesis' or 'supposition' to explain being. Why does he do that?

Answer some of the following in your essay: Why is unhypothesized being important? What type of being is unhypothesized? What type is not? Why does it matter?

In your answer, refer to as many of the part of the divided line as you can.)

4. How are the images of the sun, the divided line and the cave related?

(Explain each in some detail.)

5. What are the stages of education in the image of the cave, and how do they relate to the forms?

(Explain the stages in non-metaphorical terms. For example, what does it mean to be in chains? What does it mean to break them? What is it to go up? Etc.)

3. What are education and knowledge like according to Socrates in his discussion of the sun, the divided line and the cave?

(Be sure to discuss each of the images in your answer.)
4. What might Socrates mean by the claim that the good is the cause of truth and therefore of knowledge?

(Your answer may be speculative, but see if you can support it—or give some support for it—by referring to the text. Hint: The good is a form or idea. Do ideas cause truth? The good, also, is the first form. Is its priority necessary for truth?)

5. What is Socrates’ view of truth in the central books of the Republic?

(Refer to the text and then interpret it.)

6. How are things like images according to the divided line passage?

(Answer some of these in your essay: What are images? What are things like images of? What does it mean that they are like images? What is the relationship of an image to its original? Etc.)

Due date: Thursday, February 18, 2016

Essays will be word-processed or typed, double-spaced, in 10- or 12-point type. They will have a title and a title page. They will be in finished form and without errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. All quotations will be accompanied by a reference in parentheses. Long quotations will be indented.

Essays should frequently refer to and quote texts considered. Be as concrete as you can. Quotations can help with concreteness. Examples can help. Most quotations should be explained in detail.