

# Socrates Part I



# Socrates

## ◆ No works

- Sources:
  - Aristophanes
  - Xenophone
  - Aristotle
  - Plato
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- <http://www.philosophypages.com/ph/socr.htm>

# Plato's Socrates

- ◆ Early dialogues
  - Negative outcome: ignorance
- ◆ Middle Dialogues: positive (Plato's own views)
- ◆ Later Dialogues: Lesser role

# Life

- ◆ 470/469BC
- ◆ Mother was a midwife: maieutic method
  - Recognize bastards
- ◆ Ugly
- ◆ Humor
- ◆ Method: question and answer



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# Alcibiades' Socrates

- ◆ Cold
- ◆ Army
- ◆ Drink
- ◆ Sex: love make the beloved more virtuous
  - Can't learn self-control if it isn't shown





# Is He a Sophist?

- ◆ Same Circles
- ◆ Same Topics (*Arete*)
- ◆ Differences:
  - Doesn't Teach
  - Takes no pay
  - Highest reward: Good Friend

# Goals

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- ◆ Socrates: Advance Truth
- ◆ Sophists: Victory

# Dialectic

- ◆ Conversation
- ◆ Agreement is not always best
- ◆ Character
  - Better to be refuted than to refute
  - Saved from error/ ignorance

# Requirements for Conversation

- ◆ Open and honest
- ◆ Not personally wedded to beliefs
- ◆ Rejects: wishy-washiness and dogmatism
- ◆ If reputation, wealth, winning, being right are more important than you are not a good candidate

# What Socrates Knows

## ◆ Combination of Conviction and Ignorance

- We ought to search for the truth
- Leads to moral improvement
- Relativism leads to idleness and cowardice

# What Socrates Knows II

## ◆ Human excellence is knowledge

- What to do and how to do it
- *Techné* Applied Knowledge
- If neither Socrates nor the Sophists teach it is it knowledge then?

# Wrongdoing is due to Ignorance

- ◆ To know the right is to do the right
- ◆ We always act for some good
- ◆ One doesn't knowingly do evil
- ◆ We believe to be good what in fact is evil
- ◆ We believe the false: ignorance
- ◆ Evil is due to ignorance
- ◆ Euripides: Phaedra: we know the good but don't do it (laziness, value some pleasure more)

# What is most Important

- ◆ Care for the soul
- ◆ Better to suffer injustice than to do be unjust to another
- ◆ A Good person can not be harmed in life or death