1. What are our three contemporary sources of information concerning the life, character, and teachings of the historical Socrates? How might the differing personal perspectives and goals of each of these authors have influenced, perhaps even distorted, the portrait of Socrates they created?

2. How do Plato’s Crito and Apology appear to present sharply contrasting answers to the question: ‘Is it ever morally permissible for a citizen to disobey civic authority?’ What attempts have been made to reconcile the views presented in these two dialogues? (In your discussion be careful to distinguish between explaining: (1) how Socrates could have consistently chosen to remain in jail even though he had earlier displayed or threatened disobedient conduct, and (2) how the call for universal obedience made in ‘the speech of the laws’ might be reconciled with those earlier expressions of support for civil disobedience.)

3. Explain how Socrates argues against Euthyphro’s (3rd) definition of ‘piety’ or ‘holiness’ as ‘what is beloved by all the gods.’ Does Socrates argument really refute Euthyphro’s definition (or does Euthyphro’s concession to Socrates merely contradict his own proposed definition)? Was Socrates being unfair to Euthyphro in treating him as he did? What evidence does the Meno shed on what Socrates might have been trying to accomplish in his conversation with Euthyphro?

4. What view of how words possess meaning underlies the pursuit of philosophical knowledge in Plato’s ‘early’ dialogues? Why did Wittgenstein claim that it would be wrong to assume that every time we use a term we must have in mind a single set of attributes common to all its instances? Where do you come down on this topic--are you a Wittgenstinian or a Platonic ‘essentialist’?

5. What was Plato’s doctrine of recollection? How is Socrates’ geometrical session with Meno’s slave supposed to illustrate that doctrine? How might it be true that Meno’s slave acquired his answer to Socrates' question 'from within'? How does Plato’s view of knowledge echo the view of knowledge expressed by Heraclitus and Parmenides?

6. Why have some scholars regarded the recommendations in Plato’s Republic concerning the education and political role of women as ‘unambiguously feminist’? Why have others regarded Plato’s account as only a qualified or ‘diluted’ feminism, and still others considered it not a feminist view at all? What is your own opinion: what might be reasonably required in order for a view to qualify as ‘feminist’, and how does Plato’s account measure up on that definition?

7. What are the differences between an empirical and an a priori approach to knowledge as Plato explained them in his simile of the divided line and allegory of the cave? How did this way of understanding the nature of knowledge help to shape Plato’s thinking about proper scientific method, e.g. in geometry, music, and astronomy?

8. What, according to Socrates/Diotima in Plato’s Symposium, is the nature of eros--‘passionate desire’ or more generally ‘love’? Where on Diotima’s ‘ladder of love’ can we find our notion of a ‘Platonic’ relationship? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this conception of the nature of love?

9. What was Plato's Theory of Forms? What were his reasons for supposing that there must be such things as Forms or Ideas? How does Plato make use of this theory in his proposals for political reform and proper scientific method, as well as in his accounts of knowledge, meaning, beauty, and love?

10. Explain the criticism made by David Sachs of the defense of justice Socrates offers in Plato’s Republic? Is the charge of ‘fallacy’ a credible one? How does Plato attempt to link ‘vulgar’ and ‘Platonic justice’? Do you think Plato succeeded in defending justice against the cynical view presented by Glaucon and Adeimantus, or do you suspect that justice is not as profitable as Socrates claimed it was?