Today

• Greek primary and secondary education

• Plato’s theory of knowledge

• Plato’s theory of rhetoric
Education in Greece

• Pre-school (up to 7)

• Grammatistik (from 7-10) – focused on basic literacy

• Grammatike (10-14/15) – focused more on literary-ness

• Studies in rhetoric (12-15+)
A rhetorical education

- Technical vocabulary
- The Canons
- Great orators (10 Attic orators)
- Progymnasmata
- Stasis exercises
- Declamations
Plato’s life (428-347)

• Born into an aristocratic family in 428

• Service in the Peloponnesian War

• Starts to associate with Socrates
  – Attends Socrates' trial in 399
Plato’s life (428-347)

• Opens the Academy in 387

• Dies in 347 (at age 80)
Theory of knowledge

Knowledge is knowing what a thing is and not what it appears to be
Plato's Cave

- the Fire
- Roadway where puppet showmen perform
- Prisoners
- ascent to Sunlight
- diffused Sunlight
- Shadows cast on this wall
Obstacles to knowledge

- Appearances
- Bodily pleasure
- Pursuit of social and political power
- Commonly used language
Is rhetoric an art?

Plato denies the title techne (art) to anything that cannot deliver an account of how it functions.
Is rhetoric an art?

If our lives depended on choosing length and avoiding shortness, we would devise a techne of measurement that would prevent us from making a mistake (Protagoras)
requirements of a true art:

• it must be universal

• it must be reliable

• it must be teachable

• it must have explanatory power
Plato’s theory of rhetoric

- a study of souls
- a study of words and arguments
- making proper use of words
Rhetoric and social control

“unless…either philosophers become kings in out state or whom we now call out kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophical intelligence… there can be no cessation of trouble (Republic 473c-e)
Rhetoric and social control

• rhetoric induce “us all to practice all justice freely, and without compulsion” (Laws 663d-e)

• rhetoric will influence:
  – the selection of mates
  – the rearing of children
  – popular understanding of history, custom, and tradition
Plato is the “pioneer of the propagandists”

Karl Popper