Chapter 12 - Assignment 2: Plato's *Protagoras* Dialogue (On the Sophists)

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In order to answer the following questions, read Plato's *Protagoras* dialogue, which you can find on pages 3—8 of Chapter 12.

1. According to Protagoras, what *good* does a sophist do? (10%)

2. According to Protagoras, what are the five civic virtues? (The order doesn't matter.)

   (i) _____ (2%)

   (ii) _____ (2%)

   (iii) _____ (2%)

   (iv) _____ (2%)

   (v) _____ (2%)

3. Socrates and Protagoras debated about whether virtue is nature or nurture. According to Protagoras, virtue is *nurture* (rather than *nature*). Yet despite his initial doubts Socrates was ultimately persuaded by the philosophical sophist.

   (i) At first, Socrates *doubted* that virtue can be taught, but *why* did he have his doubts about the *teachability* of virtue? (5%)

   (ii) How did Protagoras explain to Socrates why even the most *highly* virtuous person cannot always turn a *non*-virtuous person (such as a *vicious* or *evil* person) into a *virtuous* person? (5%)

4. How did Socrates convince Protagoras that wisdom and temperance are very similar virtues? (10%)

5. During the course of his discussion with Socrates, Protagoras came to believe that four of the five civic virtues were very similar to each other, because he came to believe that those four virtues were simply different kinds of knowledge. Which *four* of the five civic virtues did Protagoras believe were very similar to each other? (The order doesn't matter.)

   (a) _____ (2.5%)

   (b) _____ (2.5%)

   (c) _____ (2.5%)

   (d) _____ (2.5%)

6. According to Protagoras, which *one* of the five civic virtues was entirely different than the other *four* of the five civic virtues? (10%)

7. According to Socrates, courage requires both *knowledge* and *confidence*, such that there's more than one way for someone to be uncourageous. According to Socrates, both cowards and maniacs are uncourageous, but cowards and maniacs are not uncourageous in the same way. Accordingly, answer the following two multiple-choice questions.
   [Hint: Think of the Golden Mean, as in ημέσον τε καὶ ἄριστον (or *in medio stat virtus*.)]

   (i) According to Socrates, who is confident but ignorant? According to him, who has confidence but lacks knowledge? A coward or a maniac? (5%)

   (ii) According to Socrates, who lacks both confidence and knowledge? A coward or a maniac? (5%)

8. According to Protagoras (and Socrates), everything *pleasant* (such as *pleasure*) is intrinsically *good*, and everything *unpleasant* (such as *pain*) is intrinsically *bad*. Yet also according to Protagoras (and Socrates), even *pleasant* things can be *bad* overall, and even *unpleasant* things can be *good* overall. Hence according to Protagoras (and Socrates), even *pleasant* things can be instrumentally *bad*, and even *unpleasant* things can be instrumentally *good*. Explain why Protagoras (and Socrates) thought so. (10%)

9. In the end, what did Protagoras convince Socrates about? (10%)

10. the end, what did Socrates convince Protagoras about? (10%)