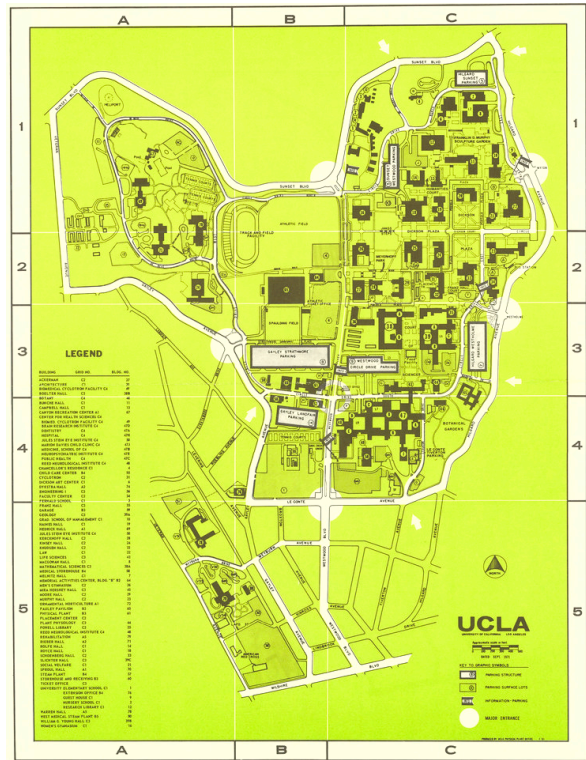
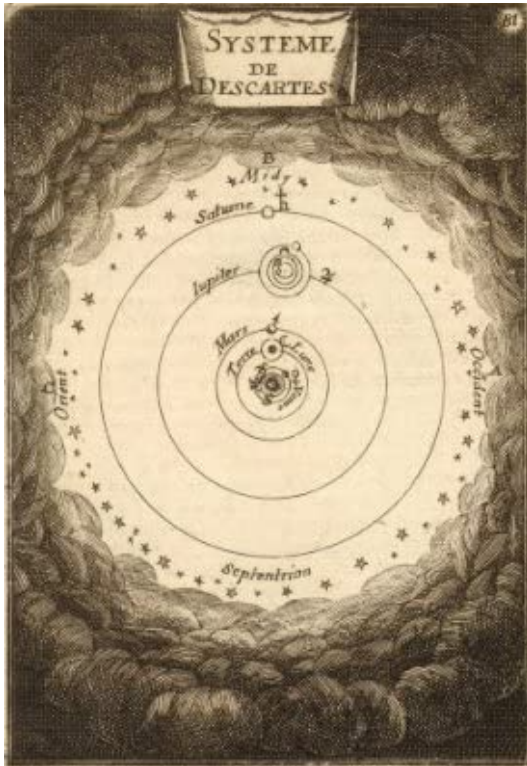


## *UCLA as a Space for Thought*

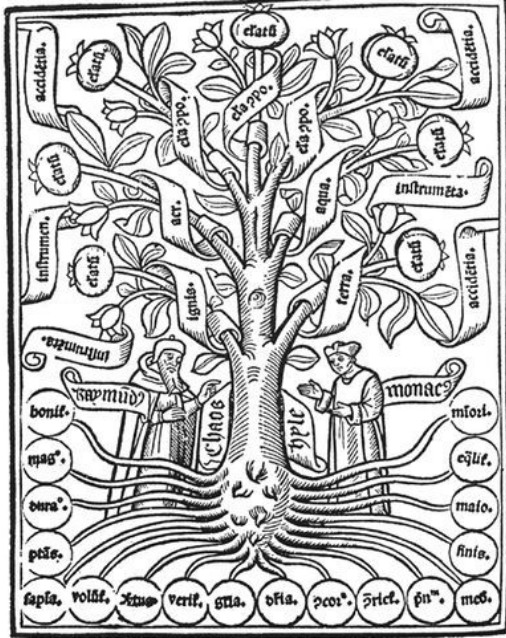


### **Brief:**

Philosophy students are familiar with making “argument maps,” which attempt to throw light on arguments by representing the relationships between their inner workings spatially. Spatial representations of thought patterns are in fact familiar from the history of philosophy, from Porphyry’s tree to Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome. But, space is often used as a mere analogy. This assignment aims to push students to take the idea of philosophical space more literally by asking them to create a “philosophical map” of the UCLA campus. Ideally this will transform the class’s sense not only of the way in which UCLA is a place for thought, but also how the content of the course’s philosophical arguments interact in with familiar parts of the campus in unfamiliar ways, laying the groundwork for a deeper probing of “spatial (in)justice.”

### **Assignment schedule:**

In the week before the assignment begins, students will have read the prologue, introduction, and first chapter of Edward Soja’s *Seeking Spatial Justice*, and we will have discussed it in class, particularly the connection between Soja’s ideas and more frequently covered topics in moral philosophy.



Students should come to class prepped with basic information and history about one of the buildings on the UCLA campus in which they spend a great deal of time on coursework. We will discuss the different buildings and mark them off as “nodes” of thought on a shared campus map.

**Part One:**

During the first week of this two-week assignment, we’ll be covering Plato’s discussion of justice in Book One of the *Republic*. Each day students are on campus, they will keep a notebook handy and try to notice the following things: where on campus do thoughts about the material crop up? Where do other thoughts crop up that you would be willing to label philosophical? How do those relate or fail to relate to the course material? Where on campus do you tend to have conversations? Where do

you find yourself talking, where questioning, and where listening? Consider, in particular, how the content of the course material relates to surroundings – how the topic of justice, considered in the abstract by Plato, is “porous” to the campus: how do elements of the space and how it is constructed raise issues to which the concept of justice applies? How do Soja and Plato help you to think about this? Is your sense of the importance of certain buildings changed? Each day, aim to mark off several significant spots on a personal campus map where thinking, talking, or questioning occurred. On Thursday, do a review of the map and see what general trends stand out to you, looking for “nodes” and “districts” different from the ones we marked off as a class. Mark off places where significant thoughts or conversations have occurred to you. Pay attention to surprising blank spots. Try to look for connections between nodes based on content. On Thursday, meet with a partner for 30 minutes to discuss Plato. Compare maps and note similarities and dissimilarities, with particular emphasis on the ways in which Plato’s account of justice raises issues. In class on Friday, we’ll compare individual maps and “thicken” the original class map in light of significant features that students have noticed during the week.

**Part Two:**

During the second week, we’ll be covering Philippa Foot’s discussion of the scope and limits of moral argumentation in her essay “Moral Arguments.” Students will be engaged in extending Foot’s thoughts by creating a fotonovela that develops and crystallizes their reflections on the campus map from the previous week. Each student will pick a spot on campus that raises particularly important issues for the topic of justice. They will then create a fotonovela that aims to argue visually why that spot is important. Each student will present their fotonovela in class on Friday, and we will continue to collaboratively thicken the class map in light of ensuing discussion.

