

Faculty panel on Plato's *The Apology of Socrates*

Classics Professor Danielle Allen
Classics Professor Christopher Faraone
Law Professor Philip Hamburger
Humanities Professor Herman Sinaiko

Moderator: Kendall Sharp

Question 3: Danielle Allen is asked to expand on her remarks about concerns over the political power of the younger generation in ancient Athens.

Allen: There is a big theme in the literature from the period of the civil crisis in Athens, and by civil crisis, I mean the period from 404 to 403 B.C. when the 30 tyrants took over the city. This was at the end of the Peloponnesian War and the city was much weakened. There had already been one attempted oligarchic coup at 411 and then in 404 they succeeded. In the end of Thucydides's "History of the Peloponnesian War," the expedition to Sicily--the huge excessive expedition--was pushed by the young men and it was the old men who were trying to hold them back. That's sort of a *locus classicus* for this contrast, but it's in Aristophanes too, so the *Clouds* is another crucial example.

I'm sure that the issue is more complicated than as I presented it, but they were clearly worried about this question of the relationship between sort of younger generations and older generations in the distribution of political power in a democracy and how you think about the relationship between those two groups.