Socrates’ refutation of Thrasymachus in Republic Book I is usually read as hinging on the nature of technē (craft or skill). In this lecture, I call attention to a neglected part of the argument: that which makes technē only an instance of the broader phenomenon of archē (the noun corresponding to the verb ‘to rule’). It is this move by Socrates that ultimately enables him to sublate Thrasymachus’ original definition: rule is indeed the advantage of the stronger, but qua ruler, the stronger must aim only at exercising their rule as completely and perfectly as possible. Drawing on other Platonic dialogues as well, I conclude by testing the potential gaps between rulers and the offices they hold, putting Plato in conversation with later political philosophers and with challenges today to the normative standards of office.

3:00 PM | Friday, November 3, 2017
S105 S. Kedzie Hall
Light refreshments served just before 3pm; discussion to follow at 4pm.