0.1 Branches of Philosophy
Traditional branches of philosophy

• **Metaphysics.** The study of the fundamental nature of reality, focusing upon problems that are not yet suitably treated by the sciences.

• **Epistemology.** The study of knowledge. Key questions include:
  – What is knowledge?
  – How do we get knowledge?
  – What justifies belief and makes it knowledge?

• **Logic.** The study of reasoning and of the foundations of mathematics.

• **Ethics.** The study of the good, and how to act with respect to the good.
0.2 The Allegory of the Cave as an Allegory about Philosophy
The School of Athens

- Socrates (479—399 BC)
- Plato (428—348 BC)
  - *The Republic* is circa 380 BC
- Aristotle (384—322 BC)
0.3 The Philosophers we will most read this semester: Descartes and the Princess of Bohemia
Descartes

- Born in France 1596, died in Sweden in 1650
- The *Meditations* were first published in 1641
Princess of Bohemia

- 1618-1680
- Born in Germany, raised in exile in Holland
- Wrote to Descartes and met him after reading the *Meditations*