This class meets on Fridays, 2:10-5:00 9, DSPT 2

**Goals of the Course**

In this course you will learn the issues associated with the interpretation of Plato’s texts, particularly the dialogue form and the significance of extra-Platonic sources. You will engage Plato’s texts through a method that is literary and historical. Using this method you will explore in depth the content of Plato’s thought on selected topics. To do this we will read a selection of Plato’s dialogues and two secondary sources. The texts selected include many of the most frequently read dialogues but we will read some of the not so familiar dialogues as well.

**Format**

**What I will do:** I will prepare some material to introduce the dialogue(s) or book being discussed and sometimes direct our attention to particular passages. I will periodically give presentations or summaries to help us keep the “big picture” of Plato’s philosophy in focus.

**What you will do:** You will read the material we will discuss and come in with one page of written commentary to assist your participation in the discussion. Since this is a seminar, the quality of the class will reflect the quality of your preparation. The details of the course requirements and the class paper are at the end of this syllabus.

Feb. 7  
**Introduction to the Study of Plato**  
*Alcibiades* While its authorship is doubtful, it serves as a good introduction to Plato by someone who understood him well.

Feb. 14  
**Socratic Dialogues on Virtue**  
*Charmides*  
*Laches*  
*Lysis*  
*Hippias Minor*
Feb. 21
The Expert Use of Language
   *Ion*
   *Euthydemus*
   *Gorgias*

Feb. 28
The Erotic Dialogues
   *Phaedrus*
   *Symposium*

Mar. 7
**Rhetoricians, Sophists and Philosophers**
   Discussion of Andrea Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy*

Mar. 14
**Wealth, Power and Pleasure**
   *Meno*
   *Philebus*

Mar. 21
**Virtue and Knowledge**
   *Protagoras*

Mar. 28
Spring Break—No class

Apr. 4
**Discussing the One and the Many**
   *Parmenides*
   *Phaedo*

Apr. 11
**The Significance of Platonic Myth**
   Discussion of Luc Brisson, *Plato the Myth Maker*

   Paper Proposals Due

Apr. 18 Great Friday—No Class
Course Requirements:
1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussion are expected.

2. For each class, prepare one written page of reflection on the readings for the class. This may focus on a passage that you found particularly enlightening or challenging, on the dialogue as a whole, on the relationship between the dialogues being discussed, on anything that will assist us to engage the text.

3. A paper of about twenty pages on a topic of your choice. A proposal and preliminary bibliography are due on April 11.

   Some suggestions
   Plato’s Theology
   Some aspect of the interpretative tradition e.g. a comparison of the methods and conclusions of two Plato scholars
   The Significance of Eros
   The Function of Myth in the Dialogues
   Plato’s Understanding of the Human Soul

Required Texts


These are conveniently available at http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20/about