

**PLATO'S SOCRATIC CONVERSATIONS:
WISDOM, LOVE, AND IMMORTALITY
IRP, Spring 2015, Syllabus**

Coordinator: Eileen Sullivan

Readings: All readings are in Text and Course Pack

Text: A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues, C.D.C. Reeve ed., Hackett 2012. Contains all the dialogues we will use in relatively recent translations by several prominent scholars, including Reeve, Grube, Nehamas, and others. (\$21.85 on amazon)

Course Pack contains background information on Plato and Athens as well as secondary literature on his work. Unless indicated below, readings are taken from *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut, Cambridge University Press, 1992; Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Plato, and Their Tradition*, ed. Daniel W. Graham, Princeton University Press, 1995; *Companion to Plato*, Hugh H. Benson ed., Blackwell, 2006; *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Death*, ed. B. Bradley et al, Oxford University Press, 2013; and Rebecca N. Goldstein, *Plato At The Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won't Go Away* New York: Pantheon Books, 2014. The specific readings included in the Course Pack are indicated below in the schedule.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Socrates, Plato, and Their Times

Text: Plato, *Apology*: What is ignorance?

Course Pack: "Plato and Greek Politics;" Other Portraits of Socrates: Aristophanes, Selections from *The Clouds*; "I.F. Stone Breaks the Socrates Story," from *The New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1979

Week 2: When is life worth living?

Text: Plato, *Crito*; Death Scene from *Phaedo*, p. 97-100, 149-152

Course Pack: Selections from Goldstein, "Socrates Must Die" and Vlastos, "Socrates on Political Obedience And Disobedience"

Week 3: Life after death: do we know, hope, or doubt, and does it matter?

Text: Plato *Phaedo*, p. 97-129, 143-149 and *Republic*, Book X "The Myth of Er"

Course Pack: Gareth B. Matthews, "Death in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle"

Week 4: What is reality and how do we recognize it?

Text: Plato, *Phaedo*, p. 130-143

Course Pack: Selections from Goldstein "Man Walks into a Seminar Room" and Plato at the Googleplex" and Charles Kahn, "Plato on Recollection" p. 122-123

Week 5: What is love and what does sex have to do with it?

Text: Plato, *Symposium* p. 157-185

Course Pack: Goldstein, "I Don't Know How to Love Him" (For fun, also see "xxx Plato")

Week 6: What does it mean to love inquiry, to love the good?

Text: Plato, *Symposium*, p. 185-212

Course Pack: G.R.F. Ferrari, "Platonic Love"

Week 7: Can priests, poets, and lovers acquire knowledge or are they simply mad?

Text: Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 213-242

Course Pack: Selections from Elizabeth Asmis, "Plato on Poetic Creativity"

Week 8: The philosophers vs. the professors

Text: Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 242-266

Course Pack: Charles Kahn, "Plato on Recollection" p. 124-127

Week 9: What is justice?

Text: Plato, *Republic*, Book I

Course Pack: Over the next **4 weeks**, read Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," *Social Research* 71 (3) Fall 2004, p.

427-454

Week 10: Educating the heart

Text: Plato, *Republic*, Books II and III

Week 11: Men, Women, Philosophers, and Rule

Text: Plato, *Republic*, Books IV and V to p. 417

Course Pack: Gregory Vlastos, "Was Plato a Feminist"

Week 12: The ascent to knowledge and wisdom

Text: Plato, *Republic*, Books VI and VII