

Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Good

Many significant developments of Platonic philosophy in late antiquity (“Neoplatonism”) arose from a consideration of the nature of the First Principle—known as the One or the Good—and its relation to being and thought. The first part of this year’s programme will begin with readings from passages concerning the Good in Plato’s *Republic* and the second epistle attributed at the time to him. The Seminar will then move on to Neoplatonic interpretations of these passages and some Christian versions of them.

Texts

Readings for each seminar taken from the following works, in order of appearance:

Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. J. M. Cooper with D. S. Hutchinson, with translations by various authors. Indianapolis, 1997.

Plotinus, transl. A. H. Armstrong, vol. 5: *Enneads* V.1-9, Cambridge Mass., 1984.

Proclus, *Commentary on Plato’s Republic*, transl. D. Baltzly, J. Finamore and G. Miles, vol. 2, Cambridge, 2022.

Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. and transl., with commentary, by E. R. Dodds, 2nd revised ed., Oxford, 1963.

Damascius, *Problems and Solutions Regarding First Principles*, transl. Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Oxford, 2010.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Complete Works*, transl. C. Luibhéid, with prefatory contributions by other authors, New York, 1987.

Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato’s Symposium on Love*, transl. D. Knox (unpublished).

Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, ed J. Hankins with W. Bowen, transl. M. J. B. Allen with J. Warden, vol. 4: Books XII-XIV, Cambridge, Mass. 2004.

Place and time

Seminars will take place via Zoom, Thursday, 5.00-7.00, on the dates indicated below.

Schedule of Readings

Date	Readings	Topic	no. pages
6 Oct.	Plato, <i>Epistle</i> , II.312e-314c; & Proclus, <i>Platonic Theology</i> , II.8	'The King of All things'	6
13 Oct.	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , 504d-509e	Socrates on the Good	5
20 Oct.	Plato, <i>Republic</i> , 504d-509e (<i>cont.</i>)	Socrates on the Good (<i>cont.</i>)	5
27 Oct.	Plotinus, V.1.5-8	Plotinus on the Good and the Intellect	6
3 Nov.	Plotinus, V.5.12-13	Plotinus on the Good and Beauty	3
10 Nov.	Proclus, <i>Commentary on Plato's Republic</i> , XI.1	Proclus's general remarks	3
17 Nov.	Proclus, <i>Commentary on Plato's Republic</i> , XI.2	Proclus's analysis of terms	4
24 Nov.	Proclus, <i>Commentary on Plato's Republic</i> , XI.3	The Sun and the Good	5
1 Dec.	Proclus, <i>Commentary on Plato's Republic</i> , XI.4	The unknowable Good	3
8 Dec.	Proclus, <i>Commentary on Plato's Republic</i> , XI.4 (<i>cont.</i>)	The unknowable Good (<i>cont.</i>)	4
15 Dec.	Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> , props 1-5	The One and multitude	4
12 Jan.	Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> , props 6-8	The Good, unity and union	3
19 Jan.	Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> , props 9-13	Sufficiency and causation	3
26 Jan.	Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> , props 20-22	The One, monads and causal series	3
2 Feb.	Proclus, <i>Platonic Theology</i> , II.7	The Republic's Good revisited	5
9 Feb.	Damascius, <i>On First Principles</i> , ch. 1	The Ineffable and its relation to all things	3
16 Feb.	Damascius, <i>On First Principles</i> , chs 2-3	Transcendence and affinity	2
23 Feb.	Damascius, <i>On First Principles</i> , chs 4-5	Approaches to the Ineffable	3
2 March	ps. Dionysius, the Areopagite <i>Divine Names</i> , IV.1-7	The Good as universal cause and our desire for it	6
9 March	Ficino, <i>De amore</i> , II.2, & <i>Platonic Theology</i> , XII.3, §§5-9	The Good, Beauty and superessential Being	7
16 March	TBA		
23 March	TBA		
30 March	TBA		
6 April	TBA		
20 April	TBA		
27 April	TBA		
4 May	TBA		
11 May	TBA		

18 May	TBA
25 May	TBA
1 June	TBA
8 June	TBA