

PHIL 7009 PLOTINUS
Spring Semester 2018
Friday 2-4
Syllabus

Dana Miller
135 Collins
email: dmiller@fordham.edu or millerquis@gmail.com
Phone: x3292
Office Hours: M 3-6, F 12-1 and by appointment or by chance.

DESCRIPTION:

Plotinus is a late Platonist philosopher (205-270 CE), often said to be the first “Neoplatonist,” though the term is a recent contrivance with little meaning. Plotinus wrote, by Porphyry’s arrangement, six groups of nine (hence “Enneads”) treatises (making a total of 54 for the uninitiated). In the last 15 years there has been a great deal of good work done on Plotinus and studies of his philosophy are now becoming mainstream in Ancient Philosophy. This course will use as a guide a new (2017) book by Eyjolfur Emilsson, the foremost scholar today in the study of Plotinus. The course will examine many, but not all, of Plotinus’ treatises in as much detail as possible with the intent of providing a complete overview of his philosophy.

TEXTS:

The *Enneads* have been translated into English a number of times. Plotinus’ Greek is very elusive, so the quality of translation is of utmost importance. A.H. Armstrong published the *Enneads* in seven volumes (Harvard University Press 1966-1988 in the Loeb series with facing Greek). The translation is very good. A new translation is being published by Cambridge University Press in February 2018. Access to these translations should become possible. There is an old translation by Stepen MacKenna which may not be used in this course for reasons to be explained.

REQUIREMENTS:

20ish pp. paper. At least one in-seminar report.

SECONDARY LITERATURE:

There is a vast secondary literature, not all of which is helpful. More recent work is recommended. A PDF of all literature on Plotinus 1950-2000 will be provided. That said, the following text is mandatory: E. Emilsson, *Plotinus* (Routledge 2017). This text has a good bibliography at the back on diverse aspects of Plotinus’ thought. Also strongly recommended: Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect* (Oxford 2007); Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense Perception* (Cambridge 1988); D. Caluori, *Plotinus on the Soul* (Cambridge 2015). Also worth considering: *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Gerson (1996), and D.J. O’Meara, *Plotinus: An Introduction to the Enneads* (Oxford 1993).

Classes.

- Jan. 19: Platonism after Plato. Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* (in the Armstrong trans.). Emilsson, *Plotinus* (=EP) ch. 1.
- Jan. 26: Several early treatises. I.6 (1) *On Beauty*. III.4 (15) *On our Allotted Guardian Spirit*. IV.9 (8) *If all Souls are One*.
- Feb. 2: V.1 (10) *On the Three Primary Hypostases*. V.2 (11) *On the Origin and Order of the Beings Which come After the First*. EP 2.
- Feb. 9: V.4 (7) *How that which comes after the First comes from the First, and on the One*. VI.9 (9) *On the Good or the One*. EP 3.
- Feb. 19: VI.8 (39) *On autonomy and the Will of the One*.
- Feb. 23: V.3 (49) *On the Knowing (Cognitive) Hypostases and that which is beyond*. V.5 (32) *That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect, and on the Good*. EP 4.
- March 2: V.8 (31) *On the Intelligible Beauty*. V.9 (9) *On Intellect, the Forms, and Being*.
- March 9: IV. 2 (4) *On the Essence of Soul*. IV.8 (6) *On the Descent of Soul into Bodies*. EP 4.
- March 16: IV.3-4 (27-28) *On the Difficulties (Problems) of Soul (I) and (II)*.
- April 6: III.7 (45) *On Eternity and Time*. IV.7 (2) *On the Immortality of Soul*.
- April 13: III.6 (26) *On the Impassibility of Things without Body*. III.8 (30). *On Nature and Contemplation and the One*.
- April 20: I.8 (51) *On what are and whence come Evils*. II.4 (12) *On Matter*. For more on the physical world see also II.1 (40) *On Heaven*. EP 6.
- April 27: I.1 (53) *On what is the Living Being and What is man?* I.4 (46) *On Happiness*. EP 7, 8, 9, 10.
- May 4: VI.4, 5 (22-23) *On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole*.
- May 11: VI.7 (38) *How the Multitude of the Forms came into Being, and On the Good*.