

PHIL\*4400X6310

MAJOR TEXTS: PLATO [0.50]

Instructor: J. Russon

Brief course Synopsis:

Plato is possibly the greatest philosophical writer in the Western tradition. His works are masterpieces of literature, profound, rigorous and original works of philosophical and deeply insightful reflections on the nature of human life. We will read carefully a few selected dialogues. For the first half of the course, we will study three short dialogues that consider the formation of character: the Laches, in which two generals argue about the nature of courage, the Lysis, in which Socrates discusses friendship with a couple of young adolescents, and the Charmides, in which Socrates discusses moderation and self-control with an older teenager and his adult mentor. In the second half, we will devote a number of weeks to the study of the Symposium, Plato's literary and philosophical masterpiece, in which the nature and importance of erotic passion is debated by the participants at a party, and then conclude with a study of the Apology, Socrates defence speech at his own trial for impiety, in which he argues for the necessity of philosophy for the care of the soul and considers the matters of ultimate importance in human life. Students need to be committed to careful reading of the texts and active participation in class discussion. Come to the first meeting prepared to discuss Laches, 178a-185e.

TEXTBOOK(S): TBA

EVALUATION: TBA

PREREQUISITE(S): 1.00 credits in Philosophy at the 3000 level