

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Introduction to Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Philosophy: Soul, Psyche and the Classical Cosmos
Required Reading
Nick Campion

Note on this week's reading

The most effective way of approaching this week's reading is to read chapter 10 from volume 1 of Campion, *History of Astrology*. Campion's lecture notes then include references under different headings, which can be used as a guide for locating relevant sections in the source material. For the suggested primary readings extracts from Plato's *Timaeus* and *Republic* are the most important: these are the foundational texts for much of western cosmology, astronomy and astrology. The extract from Aristotle on the Prime Mover is also important. The other readings, including background material on Greek philosophy, can then be used should you decide to write on any matter which requires a deeper knowledge of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. If you do work further in this area, then JSTOR will be very valuable especially, for example, on discussions on Plato's theory of soul.

We have kept the required reading tight this week, in order to allow you more time to investigate the recommended reading, as well as pursue other sources. If you decide to write in Plato and Aristotle, it is suggested that you also use the Oxford Scholar site via ATHENS, and search 'Philosophy'.

Above all, we are aware that early in the course it is easy to feel overwhelmed, especially when one encounters unfamiliar and complex material. If so, this is normal! If this material is new to you, it can be very dense, and you are not expected to understand it now: scholars who have been studying classical philosophy for years still argue about what it means. If you have any questions, contact either Bernadette or Nick.

Required Reading

Tutor's Lecture Notes

Nick Campion: 'Plato'.

Nick Campion: 'Plato Cosmology diagram'.

Nick Campion: 'Aristotle'.

Nick Campion: 'Aristotle Cosmology diagram'.

Nick Campion and Crystal Addey: 'The Neoplatonists'.

REMEMBER: these lecture notes are intended to assist your reading of the primary and secondary sources. You cannot quote from them in essays.

Required Reading: Primary Sources

It is important to engage with the primary sources. You should not expect to understand them at first reading for the modern translations struggle both with

complex Greek and subtle and complicated concepts. However, make what sense you can of them.

Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R.G.Bury, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press 1931 (Loeb Classical Library).

The *Timaeus* contains Plato's account of the creation and structure of the cosmos. This is one of the most if not the most, important text in western esotericism. The account of the emergence of an ordered cosmos from the creator, conceived of as consciousness, was to influence the western magical tradition, Christian mysticism, Jewish Kabbalah, and parallels other traditions, such as the Indian.

The most important passages are probably chapters 27 to 42/44. These are preceded by the Atlantis myth and followed by supplementary material which expands on the essential discussion. Some of the passages in chapters 27 to 44 are rather obscure but this section is important for its account of the structure of the cosmos in musical harmonies and the distinction between two states of existence, Being (eternal, perfect and unchanging) and Becoming (temporal, imperfect and changeable).

(We expect you to use the Loeb Classical Library but you will find another edition, the Benjamin Jowett translation on line at <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.1b.txt> (text) <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html> (html)

If you should check the Jowett version, read the section from Socrates statement, '**I see that I shall receive in my turn a perfect and splendid feast of reason**' (where he invites the astronomer Timaeus to give an account of the creation of the cosmos) up to '**Once more, then, at the commencement of my discourse**, I call upon God, and beg him to be our saviour out of a strange and unwonted enquiry, and to bring us to the haven of probability. So now let us begin again.'

Do not worry about the fact that the translation is complex and obscure. We want you to get used to reading primary sources. Make what sense of it you can, and we will go through it in the seminar.

Plato, *Republic*, 2 Vols., trans. Paul Shorey, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press 1937, Book 10.

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11.x.html>

Book 10 of the *Republic* contains the Myth of Er, the account of the soul's origination in the stars and descent to earth through the planetary spheres at birth.

Required Reading: Secondary Sources

Dodds, E.R., 'Theurgy and Its Relationship to Neoplatonism', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 37, Parts 1 and 2. (1947), pp. 55-69.
JSTOR

Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), chaps 3 and 13.
(e-book through the University Library)

Nicholas Campion 'Astronomy and Psyche in the Classical World: Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Ptolemy', *Journal of Cosmology*, 2010, Vol. 9.
<http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy118.html>