

Sky and Psyche – Week 1

Purpose of the Week

This week's purpose is to introduce the module and to begin our look at psyche and soul and to examine the relationship between psyche and cosmology in Platonism.

Tasks of the Week

- Do the required reading, including the discussion reading for next week and the 'Writing Guidelines' and the 'Referencing Guide'
- Take the quiz 'Writing and Referencing'
- Check some of the recommended reading
- Take a look through the coming weeks to get a sense of the overall shape of the module
- Attend the seminar and/or listen to the recording
- Introduce yourself in the 'Social Space'

Class Description

There is no single agreed definition of the term 'psyche'. To the ancients, *psuchē* was the animating force in the cosmos and was often equated with soul – a view we find in the work of Plato, who we revisit this week. It is from the term '*psuchē*' that the modern word 'psychology' – speech or language of the soul, is derived. While the term is a modern classification, psychological insight and psychological techniques for healing and self-knowledge are not exclusive to the period following the invention of the term. Although most psychology journals and websites are 'scientific' in their orientation, psychology as a recognition of the inner reality of the individual is a much deeper and broader cultural phenomenon.

In this first week we shall examine the definition of psyche, and broadly consider how notions of psyche and psychology have developed over time, and what cosmologies may be compatible with the varying approaches to this diverse subject.

We look at Plato's view of the soul in *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus* and on the study of wisdom in *Epinomis*. We then examine soul and psyche in the cosmology of the Neoplatonists, particularly Plotinus and Iamblichus.

Thought for the Week

What is the nature of the relationship between cosmos and psyche?