

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Plotinus, Eriugena, and David of Dinant

SYLLABUS

Don Ross, Instructor

This course will cover three philosophers united only by the fact that they are rarely taught but deserve more attention. Plotinus (204 - 270) is the most striking one of these. He was the great systematizer of Platonism and the founder of the school of what scholars now call Neoplatonism. He is too late to be included in most ancient philosophy courses, but also a pagan and so doesn't fit easily into medieval philosophy courses with their focus on thinkers of the Abrahamic faiths. But he is probably the most underrated philosopher of all time, because he developed a religious synthesis that served as the basis of the philosophical systems developed within those faiths.

John Scotus Eriugena (c. 810 - c. 877) was born in Ireland and immigrated to the court of Charles the Bald in the 840's, where he became one of the leading lights of the Carolingian Renaissance. It was undoubtedly there that he composed his *magnum opus*, the *Division of Nature*. Many attempts were made to stamp out all memory of the work: it was condemned in 1210, 1225, and 1241; and in 1684 was put on the Index. The reason is easy to see. Although Byzantine theology formed an independent Christian tradition from that of the West, Eriugena was its only significant Western proponent. It was thus a challenge to the only "true" theology and consequently a dangerous heresy. It was thus imperative that it be snuffed out.

The writings of David of Dinant (c. 1160 - c. 1217) actually *were* snuffed out—first in 1210 and again in 1215. Until recently, we were dependent entirely on Albert the Great's and Thomas Aquinas's "refutations" for information on David's ideas. But in 1933, excerpts from David's *Quaternuli* were rediscovered by Alexandre Birkenmajer, and they were published in 1963 by Marian Kurdzialek. Particularly the fragment, titled by Kurdzialek "Mens, Hyle, Deus," is important for understanding David. I have put together a document containing all known metaphysical fragments of David of Dinant.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Plotinus

Week 1

<i>Enneads</i> V 1 [10]	Hypostases	O'Brien: 91 - 104
<i>Enneads</i> I 6 [1]	Beauty	O'Brien: 34 - 43
<i>Enneads</i> II 4 [12] 6-16	Sensible Matter	Ross: 8 - 16

Week 2

<i>Enneads</i> IV 9 [8]	Soul	Ross: 1 - 3
<i>Enneads</i> IV 3 [27] 1-11	World-Soul	O'Brien: 126 - 140
<i>Enneads</i> IV 3 [27] 12-24	Individual Souls	O'Brien: 140 - 152
<i>Enneads</i> IV 8 [6]	Double Soul	O'Brien: 62 - 70
<i>Enneads</i> V 2 [11]		O'Brien: 106 - 108

Week 3

<i>Enneads</i> I 4 [46]	<i>Nous</i>	Ross: 23 - 33
<i>Enneads</i> V 9 [5]		O'Brien: 46 - 57
<i>Enneads</i> II 4 [12] 1-5	Intelligible Matter	Ross: 5 - 8
<i>Enneads</i> V 7 [18]	Forms	Ross: 17 - 18

Week 4

<i>Enneads</i> VI 5 [23] 1-5	One	Ross: 19 - 22
<i>Enneads</i> VI 9 [9]		O'Brien: 73 - 88

Eriugena

Week 5

<i>Periphyseon</i> I 1 - 10	Introduction	Ublfelder: 1 - 13
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Week 6

<i>Periphyseon</i> I 11 - 78	God	Ublfelder: 14 - 104
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Week 7

<i>Periphyseon</i> II 27 - 29	Creation	Ross: 1 - 16
<i>Periphyseon</i> II 36		Ublfelder: 108 - 109
<i>Periphyseon</i> III 1 - 17		Ublfelder: 123 - 198
<i>Periphyseon</i> III 18 - 23		Ross: 17 - 27

Week 8

<i>Periphyseon</i> IV 1 - 9	Humanity	Ublfelder: 207 - 256
<i>Periphyseon</i> IV 9 - 10		Ross: 28 - 31
<i>Periphyseon</i> IV 10 - 11		Ublfelder: 257 - 261
<i>Periphyseon</i> IV 11 - 15		Ross: 32 - 45

Week 9

<i>Periphyseon</i> V 1 - 3	Return	Ublfelder: 271 - 280
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 4 - 5		Ross: 46 - 48
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 6 - 8		Ublfelder: 282 - 288
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 8		Ross: 49 - 51
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 20 - 23		Ublfelder: 295 - 310
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 23 - 25		Ross: 52 - 60
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 25		Ublfelder: 312 - 316
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 25 - 26		Ross: 61 - 63
<i>Periphyseon</i> V 38 - 40		Ublfelder: 345 - 360

David of Dinant

Week 10

<i>Quaternuli</i>	Intellect, Matter, God	Ross: 1 - 12
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REQUIRED TEXTS

Plotinus. *The Essential Plotinus*. Trans O'Brien. Hackett, 1975, 9780915144099 (\$11.00)

Eriugena, *Periphyseon: On the Division of Nature*, trans Ublfelder, Wipf and Stock, 2011, 9781610976305 (\$35.50)

HANDOUTS

The Essential Plotinus Supplement. Trans. Don Ross..

Eriugena Supplement. Ed. Don Ross..

David of Dinant: Metaphysical Fragments. Ed. Don Ross.