Plato’s *Symposium* is a literary masterpiece central to our understanding of Platonic thought and enormously influential in subsequent literary and philosophical traditions to the present day. It responds to a unique moment in history that brought together major figures of Classical Athenian politics, science, philosophy and drama in the years just before and subsequent to the calamitous Sicilian expedition. It exemplifies a newly emergent genre, the philosophical dialogue, even while it responds to a long tradition of sympotic literature, and it engages in complex ways with such diverse cultural phenomena as the civic institution of the Athenian dramatic festivals and the cults of the Greek mystery religions.

In this course we will undertake a close reading in Greek of the *Symposium*. We will also read and discuss a range of scholarly responses to this complex and enigmatic text.
Instructor Contact Information
Aara Suksi, Associate Professor
Phone: 519 661 2111 ext 81555
Email: asuksi@uwo.ca
Office: Lawson Hall 3225
Office Hours: TBA

OWL Site

There is an OWL site dedicated to this course. I will use the site to post course materials, readings, and grade information. If you would like to add anything to the site, please let me know and I will post it.

Course Information

Objectives and Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course you will be very familiar with Plato’s Symposium, through a close reading of the text in the original Greek. Your ability to read Attic Greek will be stronger, and you will be able to identify the stylistic features of Plato’s prose.
You will understand some of the scholarly debates and discussions arising from this dialogue, and from Platonic philosophy in general. You yourself will participate actively in these discussions. You will have identified a research question and developed an appropriate method for addressing it, and you will have presented the results of your research to your colleagues by means of a conference-style presentation and a related formal research paper.

Text
This text has been ordered by the Campus Bookstore.

All other assigned readings will be posted online.

Evaluation
Class Participation: 15%
Presentation: 15%
Paper: 20%
Midterm Test: 15%
Sight Translation: 10%
Final Exam: 25%

Important Dates
Midterm Test: Thursday October 17
Paper Due: Thursday December 5
Final Exam: TBA
Class Participation
Attendance for this course is mandatory. The success of the course as a learning experience for all of its members depends on the preparation and participation of each one of us. If you do need to miss class for some reason beyond your control, please contact me in advance. You should be prepared to participate at every class meeting. I will ask you to translate passages of Greek, identify forms, and explain syntax. We will not have time to translate all the assigned Greek in class, so as you prepare, be sure to flag any problem areas you would like us to go over.

In addition to this language work, we will discuss critical and theoretical issues arising from both primary and secondary readings. For our discussions of the assigned readings, be prepared to: 1) briefly summarize the main arguments in the reading; 2) offer a brief analysis of the place of the reading in the larger discussions of the Symposium; 3) identify the scholarly and theoretical method(s) used by the author; 4) comment on the rhetorical strategies used by the author; and 5) note any questions or problems that arise for you from the reading.

In evaluating your participation, I will consider the quality as much as the quantity of your contributions. I will also consider how well you demonstrate attention, courtesy and respect for the contributions of your colleagues to our discussions.

If class size permits, each week, one student will be assigned to lead a discussion of a secondary reading. The idea is not to summarize the reading for your colleagues, who will have completed the reading, but to lead the discussion by providing context, raising questions, or making observations.

Presentation
Each student will present a formal, conference-style paper on any topic related to the Symposium. Please speak to me about your proposed topic as early in the term as possible, and certainly by mid-October. There will be a sign-up sheet with available dates for the presentations. Each presentation should be accompanied by: a written abstract of up to 300 words; an outline of your argument with relevant passages, where appropriate; and a bibliography. These elements can be shared with the class in the form of a paper handout or a digital presentation. In either case, they should be sent to me to be posted on the course OWL site by the Monday before your presentation. The formal presentation itself should be fifteen to twenty minutes long, to be followed by up to fifteen minutes of class discussion. This presentation will be a preliminary version of your final research paper. It will be graded for effective communication as well as content. Criteria will include the quality of the research and argument, the clarity, timing and organization of the presentation, and its integration with the handout and/or slides that are shared with the class.

Paper
Research Paper and Abstract
Your paper will be a revised version of your presentation and should be about 3000 words in length. You should include an abstract of up to 300 words (most likely a version of the one included with your presentation). All of your research should be properly, consistently and formally documented by means of footnotes and bibliography. If you are citing any Greek (or Latin), you should include your own translations.
Your paper is due by midnight on the last day of term (Dec. 5). You may submit your paper by e-mail as a Word attachment to meet this deadline, but in this case you should also submit an identical hard copy by the end of the next business day.

**Midterm Test and Final Exam**

The midterm test and final exam will each consist of 3 passages selected from the *Symposium* for translation and comment. You will translate all three passages, and choose two of the three for commentary.

In your commentary, briefly describe the context of the passage within the *Symposium*, and write a short essay about the significance of the passage, with some reference to the relevant scholarship read for class. Your commentary should demonstrate your knowledge of some of the important scholarly approaches to interpreting the *Symposium*. You may choose to comment on, for example, elements of style, language, thematic concerns, engagement with contemporary historical or social contexts, reception, etc.

There will also be passages for sight translation given along with both the Midterm and the Final Exam. The sight passages will be taken from Platonic dialogues. We will spend some class time working on strategies for sight translation. The final exam will focus more heavily on the second half of the *Symposium*, but you are encouraged to discuss the first half also in your comments.

**Tentative Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read in Greek</th>
<th>Other Assigned Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>: Sept. 5</td>
<td>No assigned reading</td>
<td>Introduction to the course, Some background to the <em>Symposium</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong>: Sept. 26</td>
<td><em>Symposium</em> 182a7-188e4: Pausanias (con’t); Eryximachus</td>
<td>Edelstein, L., &quot;The role of Eryximachus in Plato's <em>Symposium,</em>&quot; <em>TAPA</em> 76 (1945) 85-103.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong>: Oct. 17</td>
<td>Mid-term Test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8: October 24</td>
<td><strong>Symposium</strong> 199c3-205a4: Socrates and Agathon; Socrates and Diotima</td>
<td>Halperin, David, &quot;Why is Diotima a Woman?,&quot; in <em>One Hundred Years of Homosexuality</em>, Routledge: New York (1990) 113-152.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td><strong>Study Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12: Nov. 28</td>
<td><strong>Symposium</strong> 219d3-223d12: Alcibiades; Closing frame</td>
<td>Clay, Diskin, &quot;The tragic and comic poet of the <em>Symposium</em>,&quot; <em>Arion</em> n.s. 2.2 (1975) 238-61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13: December 5</td>
<td><strong>Review Research Paper Due</strong></td>
<td></td>
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**Classics Program Policy on Requests for Accommodation**

If academic accommodation should become necessary at any point, students should contact their course instructor(s) and/or supervisor, as appropriate. Students should also contact the Graduate Chair in most cases, and especially if accommodation is needed for:

- more than one course
- more than one week
- any tests, exams, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of a final grade
- any program milestone (comprehensive exams, thesis, etc.)

In these cases, the Graduate Chair may request that a student work with Student Accessibility Services (http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/) to arrange a plan for accommodation (see SGPS Regulation 14: http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/14.html).

Staying healthy – physically and mentally – is an essential part of achieving your academic goals. There are many resources on campus available to help you maintain your health and wellness (start here: http://wec.uwo.ca/ and https://www.uwo.ca/health/). Please contact the Graduate Chair if you have any concerns about health or wellness interfering with your studies.
## UWO Policies

### Plagiarism
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

### UWO Accessibility Policy
Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: [http://accessibility.uwo.ca/](http://accessibility.uwo.ca/)

### Mental Health
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.