Plato in Paris  
Summer 2019  
June 24 – July 26  

Information Session:  
12/3 at 4:30 PM  
Simpson International Building  
OIP Conference Room (A66)  

This seminar takes as its text Plato's Republic, by any account one of the most influential, widely studied, widely admired texts of Western civilization, and one of the greatest pieces of writing of any age. The Republic covers a huge range of philosophical issues. Its focus is on the correct conception of justice, both the sort of justice that we find at the level of the political state, and the justice that we attribute to individuals when we think of them as being morally just agents. Along the way, Plato offers not only a sketch of what he thinks the Ideal City (or society) would look like, but also a penetrating analysis of human psychology, a theory of knowledge which still attracts philosophers today, an educational program centering on mathematics as a means of coming to see the truth, and an analysis of how societies can fall away from the ideal. The book culminates in a savage attack on art and literature, in which Plato deploys his insights about human psychology and the nature of truth in showing that his Ideal City can make no room for most art and literature because of their power to corrupt the minds even of decent people. French language skills are not required.

The course will be conducted as a seminar, with more than eighty hours spent in the classroom discussing this difficult and powerful text. There will also be excursions and other opportunities designed to expand and deepen your understanding of the text: a visit to the Louvre when we will examine examples of the sort of art Plato argued against so vociferously; a joint discussion session with Parisian students; and tours of the major monuments of Paris with an eye on urban planning (designing the Ideal City).

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Graduate Student, Department of Philosophy

For more information, please attend the information session on December 3rd or email Professor Morison or Gabriel Shapiro, or Francesca Schenker in the Office of International Programs (fs12@princeton.edu). For further details, go to the OIP website and follow links for 'Study Abroad', 'Explore Programs', then scroll down and click on 'Princeton summer programs'. Funding is available.