

"Ruins of the Temple of Zeus with Ortigia in the distance, Ettore Bergler, 1891



Siracusa Summer Seminar in Ancient Greek Philosophy with a focus on Plato's *Phaedo* 27 July - 7 August 2026

The ability to navigate Greek texts enhances our understanding of ancient philosophy and reveals its hidden treasures. Exedra's "Greek for Philosophers" courses, organised with the Fonte Aretusa association, provide opportunities for scholars of philosophy to cultivate their language skills and engage with the ancient texts, whether they have studied Greek before or not. Courses are held online during the academic year and culminate in a summer school in Siracusa.

The sixth Siracusa Seminar on Ancient Greek Philosophy 2026 with Dr. George Gazis, Dr. Chiara Blanco, Dr. Jurgen Gatt and Prof. Heather Reid will be held from **27 July - 7 August 2026** and combines the best aspects of a philosophy conference and a classical language summer school.

The focus will be Plato's *Phaedo*. Set on the cusp of Socrates' execution, Plato's *Phaedo* explores a variety of important themes including mind and body, the theory of recollection, the nature of *aretē*, the theory of forms, the immortality of the soul, and a philosophical approach to death.

Guest lecturers are invited and participants are encouraged to give short papers on the *Phaedo*.

The Advanced course takes the form of a reading group where excerpts of the original Plato will be read in Greek, translated and commented on. Participants will prepare a translation of a short passage in advance and then present their translation in class, after which the discussion of the content will be open to all. The aim is to provide students and scholars interested in Plato with an informal platform in which they can come into contact with the text in the original Greek and discuss the content in a relaxed and friendly environment.

An Intermediate Greek course will also be held for Greek learners who have already done a Beginners course (at least 20 hours of classes recommended) and who have basic notions of the Greek language (article, declensions, pronouns, verbs etc.). Learners will read simple original Greek texts, and work on the grammar and syntax using "*Reading Greek Beginners Course*".

A Beginning Greek Grammar course will be arranged for total beginners or anyone who needs to go back to basics. The text for this introduction to Ancient Greek will be "*Learning Greek with Plato*". Those interested in Beginners Greek who wish to attend for one week only should register for the first week as the course will be designed to run over both weeks consecutively.

The groups will come together each day for presentations, lectures, workshops and discussion of Plato's philosophy as encountered in the text.

If you would like to **present a paper on the *Phaedo***, please upload an abstract in the registration form of no more than 300 words, prepared for blind review. The deadline for submitting abstracts is for early acceptance May 1 2026; afterward abstracts will be accepted only if room in the program remains.

[Registration form](#)

The Seminar will run with a minimum of 6 participants per level for each week. Exedra reserves the right to cancel a level if numbers are not reached. Applications to the seminar will be accepted as long as space permits.

Siracusa, with its great Greek heritage, is the perfect place to study the works of Plato and Ancient Greek – and to enjoy the Mediterranean setting between classes. The Seminar will combine Greek language study with academic lectures and presentations, as well as cultural activities, guided tours and cooking sessions. Participants study on the picturesque island of Ortigia, just steps from the 5th cent. Temple of Athena, and a short walk from the 6th cent. Temple of Apollo – or the Cala Rossa beach, in case you are in the mood for a swim. Come prepared for a full immersion into the Mediterranean lifestyle!



DAILY SCHEDULE

The seminar-sessions run in the afternoon, leaving mornings free for optional activities or relaxing on the beach. Sessions begin with ancient Greek language study split into three groups, depending on level. For the final session of each day, the groups come together for academic presentations or lectures, followed by open discussion in a relaxed environment.

Extra-curricular Activities

The seminar fee includes tuition, coffee-breaks, welcome and farewell meals, plus an Ortigia tour and guided visits to the historic sites of Siracusa. Additional activities will be organised by the Exedra Mediterranean Center team to give you a taste of Siracusa, its great monuments, culture, and cuisine.

On Saturday 1 August, an out-of-town excursion will be arranged. Details and cost will be announced shortly (min. 7 participants). Guests who are accompanying seminar participants may register to come on the day-trip.

Tentative Schedule Weeks 1 - 2 (Details to be confirmed)

	Date	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	Mon July 27	Welcome breakfast, Ortigia tour	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	Apericena
2	Tues July 27	Orsi Archaeological Museum	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
3	Wed July 29	Cooking Class and lunch	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
4	Thur July 30	Castello Maniace and Giudecca	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
5	Fri July 31	Free morning	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	Farewell dinner
6	Sat July 01	Optional trip away TBC		
7	Sun July 02	FREE DAY		
8	Mon July 03	Welcome Breakfast, Ortigia tour	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	Apericena
9	Tues July 04	Neapolis archeological Park	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
10	Wed July 05	Cooking class and lunch	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
11	Thur July 06	Catacombs and Santa Lucia	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	
12	Fri July 07	Free morning	Classes 3.00 - 7.00	Farewell dinner

FEES AND DEADLINES

Participants can attend for one or both weeks, although we recommend attending for both weeks, especially for those doing the language classes.

If registering for the Beginners Class for one week only, please register for the first week.

A bursary covering **one week of tuition** will be offered to a student from each of the three levels based on the quality of the abstract submitted by the financial aid deadline of May 1 and their CV. Submit the documents through the registration form.

DEADLINES

- ❖ May 1, 2026 Early registration deadline (necessary if applying for a bursary)
- ❖ June 1, 2026 Registration deadline (if submitting an abstract for presentation)
- ❖ *Registration for Standard Participation will be accepted as long as space permits.*

FEES

- ❖ 1 week €549.00 incl. VAT
- ❖ 2 weeks €1050.00 incl. VAT
- ❖ Returning participants 1 week €480.00 incl. VAT
- ❖ Returning participants 2 weeks €950.00 incl. VAT
- ❖ Optional Day trip on Saturday 2nd August to be announced.

Siracusa Summer Seminar Costs include:

- ❖ Instruction (Mon - Fri) and course-materials, not including text books
- ❖ Certificate of attendance if requested
- ❖ Welcome and farewell group meal
- ❖ Coffee breaks
- ❖ Orientation material
- ❖ Guided Ortigia tour
- ❖ Exedra support and 24-hour emergency number
- ❖ General liability insurance
- ❖ 1 cooking activity a week
- ❖ 2 guided tours in Siracusa a week (with transport where necessary)



APPLICATION AND PAYMENT

Register for the seminar [Registration form](#)

On completing the registration form, you will be sent a pro-forma invoice listing your choices for you to check and confirm, with details of fee payment options.

To confirm your place, you should pay the non-refundable deposit of €200.00 (two hundred euros). The deposit will only be refunded if Exedra Mediterranean Center is forced to cancel the entire course or part of it.

The remainder of the fee should be paid by **July 1 2026**.

WITHDRAWALS

On a participant's withdrawal after payment of the fees, the fees will be reimbursed, minus the deposit and any non-refundable, documented costs, up to one week before the start of the course. After one week before the course starts, all fees are forfeited, except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of Exedra Mediterranean Center.

2025 FACULTY

Prof. Heather Reid is emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa USA and Scholar in Residence at Exedra Mediterranean Center in Siracusa, Sicily. She is a 2015 Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, 2018 Fellow of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies, and 2019 Fulbright Scholar at the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II. She has also published books and articles in ancient philosophy, philosophy of sport, and Olympic Studies, including *Introduction to the Philosophy of Sport* (2012), *Athletics and Philosophy in the Ancient World* (2011), and *The Philosophical Athlete* (2002, 2nd ed. 2019).

Dr. George Gazis is Assistant Professor in Greek Literature at the Department of Classics and Ancient History, at Durham University in the UK. His research interests lie in Archaic Greek Poetry (mainly Homer), as well as Greek Lyric and Tragedy. He is the author of *Homer and the poetics of Hades* (OUP, 2018) and the editor of *Aspects of Death in Greek Literature* (LUP, forthcoming).

Dr. Chiara Blanco is a Teaching Fellow in Classics at the University of Edinburgh. Before moving to Edinburgh she was a Research Lecturer in Classics at Trinity College, Oxford. Before joining Trinity, she was a Lecturer in Classics at Exeter College, Oxford, and she has taught Classics at Durham University and the University of Cambridge, where she completed her PhD. Her main research interests lie in the intersections between ancient literature (Greek tragedy in particular) and medicine, and she is also interested in the role of the senses and emotions in Greek and Roman culture.

Dr Jurgen R Gatt is Junior College Assistant Lecturer at the University of Malta. He is researching late 5th century literature, especially the Hippocratic Corpus, the orators Antiphon, Gorgias and Andocides, and the historians Herodotus and Thucydides. His interest lies in the use of evidence (especially empirical and testimonial) in the pre-paradigmatic era of scientific development represented in these texts, also logic, the philosophy of science and epistemology, particularly the philosophy of testimony.

ACCOMMODATION

Participants can find their own accommodation, but this year Exedra has an arrangement with *Le 2 Sicilie Guesthouse* in via dei Mille in Ortigia.

Participants will have a special discounted rate for the seminar in twin/double and triple rooms, with a limited number of single rooms available on payment of a supplement. If you are interested in this option please complete the [housing form here](#). The housing will be invoiced separately from the seminar fees. Please apply early to guarantee availability.

Non-participating family members/ guests are welcome.



Other options can be found on AirB&B, Booking.com etc such as self-catering apartments, and hotels of all types. Anywhere on Ortigia is at most 15 minutes walk from the centre. We recommend participants look for lodging in Ortigia, zona Umbertina and Borgata - Siracusa is not particularly well-served with public transport, and the other city-quarters are quite a long walk away.