

Pirsig's Progress: Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance as a Modern Spiritual Journey Syllabus

Instructor

Adam Rose

Quarter: Summer 2024

Start – End Date: 11 June 2024 – 30 July 2024

Session Day/Time: Tuesdays, 6:00-9:15 pm CT

Course Code and Section: HUAS10004 24U1

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Course Overview

Since its publication 50 years ago in 1974, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* (ZAMM) has been widely hailed as a modern classic as well as a work that defies conventional characterization. Part novel, part diary, part manifesto, ZAMM relates the thoughts and experiences of a philosophically-oriented unnamed middle-aged narrator as he progresses along a number of simultaneous personal journeys, all of which facilitate an overarching spiritual journey toward wholeness and wellness. Overall, though, ZAMM appears to be a special kind of “Chautauqua” designed to induce analogous journeys in readers. This course will undertake the ZAMM journey through close reading and discussion of this modern masterpiece along with related Platonic dialogues that lurk in the background.

Modality

Remote learning

Note to Students

Please complete the assigned readings for Week 1 before the first class.

Required Texts

1. Pirsig, Robert. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*. William Morrow / 978-0060839871. [25th Anniversary Edition*]
 2. Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including the Letters* (Bollingen Series LXXI). Princeton / 978-0691097183. [Or other.]
- (Handouts will be provided on Canvas.)

* The new 50th Anniversary Edition has the same text as, but different pagination from, the 25th Anniversary Edition. Either edition is acceptable, but the older edition is preferred so everyone can be “on the same page” as it were.

Books can be purchased online through the [University of Chicago Bookstore](#).

Course Readings

Week	Author	Reading Assignment
Week 1		INTRODUCTION
	Plato	<i>Meno</i> — 80a-86c
	Plato	<i>Phaedrus</i> — 227a-230e
Week 2	Plato	<i>Phaedrus</i> — 227a-257b
Week 3	Plato	<i>Phaedrus</i> — 227a-279c
Week 4	Pirsig	ZAMM — Part One
Week 5	Pirsig	ZAMM — Part Two
Week 6	Pirsig	ZAMM — Part Three
Week 7	Pirsig	ZAMM — Part Four
Week 8	Pirsig	ZAMM — “Introduction to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition” ZAMM — “Afterword” Final Class Handouts REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS

Accessing Remote Courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

Accessibility Information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or disabilities@uchicago.edu.

UChicago CARES Statement:

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct

(including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zme1@uchicago.edu.