Class Notes:

- **Plato's Symposium, 180c-185c – Pausanias' speech on love:** their task is to “speak in praise of love” (180c). Says there are two kinds of love, because there are two goddesses of the name Aphrodite, and Love and Aphrodite are inseparable.

  - The first goddess is Urania, or Heavenly Aphrodite. She is an older deity, the motherless daughter of Uranus, the god of heaven.
  - The second goddess is Pandemos, or Common Aphrodite. She is a younger deity, the daughter of Zeus and Dione.

  Therefore, it follows that there is a Common as well as a Heavenly Love.

- “No action is either good or bad, honorable or shameful” (180e).
  - “Love is not in himself noble and worthy of praise; that depends on whether the sentiments he produces in us are themselves noble” (181a).

- Common Aphrodite's Love: “he strikes wherever he gets the chance... the love felt by the vulgar... all they care about is completing the sexual act” (181b).
  - “These vulgar lovers are the people who have given love such a bad reputation that some have gone so far as to claim that taking any man as a lover is in itself disgraceful” (182a).

- Love of Heavenly Aphrodite: “those who are inspired by her Love are attracted to the male: they find pleasure in what is by nature stronger and more intelligent” (181c).

- “It is no good for rulers if the people they rule cherish ambitions for themselves or form strong bonds of friendship with one another” (182c).
  - “Plain condemnation of Love reveals lust for power in the rulers and cowardice in the ruled” (182d).

- “We consider it more honorable to declare your love rather than to keep it a secret... a lover is encouraged in every possible way; this means that what he does it not considered shameful. On the contrary, conquest is deemed lovely, and failure shameful... our custom is to praise lovers for totally extraordinary acts” (182d-182e).
  - “Giving in to your lover for virtue’s sake is honorable, whatever the outcome” (185b).
  - “The gods will forgive a lover even for breaking his vows – a lover's vow, our people say, is no vow at all. The freedom given to the lover by both gods and men according to our custom is immense” (183b-183c).
    - “We consider the lover’s desire and the willingness to satisfy it as the noblest things in the world” (183c).

- “Love is, like everything else, complex: considered simply in itself, it is neither honorable nor a disgrace – its character depends entirely on the behavior it gives rise to” (183d).

- “It is the common, vulgar lover, who loves the body rather than the soul; the man whose love is bound to be inconstant, since what he loves is itself mutable and unstable” (183e).
  - “We can now see the point of our customs: they are designed to separate the wheat from the chaff, the proper love from the vile” (184a).

- “Our customs, then, provide for only one honorable way of taking a man as a lover” (184b).
  - “We allow that there is one – and only one – further reason for willingly subjecting oneself to another which is equally above reproach: that is subjection for the sake of virtue” (184c).

- “Both the principle governing the proper attitude toward the lover of young men and the principle governing the love of wisdom and of virtue in general – must be combined if a young man is to accept a lover in an honorable way” (184c-184d).
  - “When the young man understands that he is justified in performing any service for a lover who can make him wise and virtuous – and when the lover is able to help the young...”
Question 7: If a beautiful thing isn’t the form of beauty, how (according to Plato) can it be beautiful?

- The form of beauty partly composes Plato’s theory of forms (the world of the intelligible), wherein non-physical forms or ideas exist transcendentally from our world and compose the ultimate reality. In our world, all that we see are reflections of these forms, such as beauty.
  - “And beauty itself and good itself and all the things that we thereby set down as many, reversing ourselves, we set down according to a single form of each, believing that there is but one, and call it ‘the being’ of each... And we say that the many beautiful things and the rest are visible but not intelligible, while the forms are intelligible but not visible” (Republic, 507c).
    - “You have two kinds of thing, visible and intelligible” (Republic, 509d).
    - “One subsection of the visible consists of images. And by images I mean, first, shadows, then reflections in water” (Republic, 509e).
    - “As the opinable is to the knowable, so the likeness is to the thing that it is like” (Republic, 510a).
  - “Thus there are four such conditions in the soul, corresponding to the four subsections of our line: Understanding for the highest, thought for the second, belief for the third, and imaging for the last... consider that each shares in clarity to the degree that the subsection it is set over shares in truth” (Republic, 511e).

- Beautiful things are merely the reflection of the form of beauty: “It is not anywhere in another thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else, but itself by itself with itself, it is always one in form; and all the other beautiful things share in that” (Symposium, 211b).
  - Beautiful things differ from the form of beauty for they are “polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality” (Symposium, 211e). Whereas the form of beauty is “absolute, pure, unmixed” (Symposium, 211e).

- A beautiful thing cannot be the form of beauty because otherwise we would not desire to possess it: “What about Love? You agreed he needs good and beautiful things, and that’s why he desires them – because he needs them” (Symposium, 202d).
  - “Beauty, however, is in harmony with the divine” (Symposium, 206d). If beauty is in harmony with the divine, then a beautiful thing cannot be the form of beauty itself, for we exist in a world of mortals, rather than in the heavens with the divine.

- However, beautiful things are all a reflection of the true form of beauty, which remains unchanged and universal as it is a form of the intelligible.
  - Diotima claims that beauty exists “by itself with itself, it is always one in form” (211b). Reflections of beauty compose the “great sea of beauty” (Symposium, 210d).
  - Similarly, Diotima notes that beautiful things are not “beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as it would be if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others” (Symposium, 211a).

Question 8: When Plotinus interprets Plato’s story of the birth of love, Plotinus symbolically identifies the following characters: Aphrodite, poros, and penia. What does each character represent? What does their relationship imply about the soul’s self-knowledge?

- Penia’s character represents poverty, while Poros’ character portrays resource or ‘plenty’.
  - Poverty, or Penia, “had intercourse with an intelligible nature, not merely with an image of the intelligible or an imagination derived from it, but she was there in the intelligible and united with it, and bore the substance of Love made from form and indefiniteness, the indefiniteness which the soul had before it attained the Good” (Ennead, 3.5.7).