

Reading Proust's *In Search of Lost Time: Swann's Way* with Rebecca Goldner

Thursdays Apr 13, Apr 27, May 18, Jun 1 6:00 –7:30 pm ET

You will receive the Zoom link a week before the class begins.

Description

The first volume of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, "Swann's Way," begins in a half-awake, half-dreaming state that leads our narrator to reflect on his childhood in Combray, culminating in the now-famous madeleine episode. The madeleine offers our narrator access to memories of Combray he thought were lost to him, including a childhood moment of authorial inspiration. Next, the text takes us into the life of his neighbor in Combray, Charles Swann, detailing Swann's tumultuous and painful love affair with Odette de Crécy, a passion that becomes inspirational for our narrator both in his own romantic experiences and as an aspiring writer. The seeds for the remaining six volumes are all planted in volume one, though it is the only part of the novel where we leave the narrator's perspective for an extended segment, traveling into the Swann's past to uncover details only suggested in the first two chapters.

This class will be a guided discussion: the teacher will offer questions and passages for focus but will allow the class to discuss the text at hand for the majority of our time together, giving participants the opportunity to share their thoughts, questions and reflections in conversation. There will be no predominant perspective in the class but an open opportunity to learn from and with each other.

Required text

Please buy this translation of the book:

Swann's Way: In Search of Lost Time, Vol. 1 (Penguin Classics, ISBN: 0142437964)

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/292003/swanns-way-by-marcel-proust/>

Reading schedule

Apr 13: pp. 3-102 (...would perhaps be indispensable to a stockbroker.)

Apr 27: pp. 102-191

May 18: pp. 195-300 (Swann was never mentioned again)

Jun 1: pp. 300-end

About the instructor

Rebecca Steiner Goldner is a faculty member at St. John's College in Annapolis, MD, where she teaches throughout their all-required, liberal arts program of study. Her PhD is in philosophy and she has published works on sensation in ancient philosophy and tragedy. Her philosophical interests in sensation and memory eventually led her to Proust, whom she has been reading for over 20 years and teaching in seminars for juniors and seniors as well as in St. John's Community Programs. She recently received funding to chair a faculty study of the work of Henri Bergson (a thinker deeply connected to Proust), a project which further connected her work in philosophy to her study of *In Search of Lost Time*.