Instructions for the “Literature Review” stage of term project

1. As I have already said in class, your paper generally is to be either an analysis of one of Plato’s shorter and elenchic dialogues (one that is not part of our main schedule for reading and discussion) or a subtopic from one of his longer or non-elenchic (for example, the last nine books of the Republic) dialogues. Other topics, especially if you have had a sustained interest in such a topic in the past or if you are more interested in Aristotle than in Plato, may be chosen. Because so much has already been said on these philosophers, and because the exact interpretation their texts often depends on knowledge of the Greek, Latin, or Arabic languages, all the topics for this course are potentially difficult.

2. The literature review for a dialogue topic is to consist of 4 parts:
   a. A summary of the “Analysis” and “(Second) Introduction” that precede Jowett’s translation of the dialogue in the Past Masters database of philosophy texts. (These are in English, as are the texts. They also have some somewhat clunky aspects of formatting.) If your topic is a theme from a longer dialogue, you should select relevant portions of the “Analysis” and “Introduction.”
      i. As old and as undoubtedly outdated Jowett’s edition is in many respects, Jowett’s analyses and introductions, in my opinion, illustrate some of the kind of essential work that must be done to contribute constructively to the discussion of Plato.
   b. Your detailed analysis of the logic of some short (up to one page) but difficult portion of the dialogue (this may be hard).
   c. Summaries of five recent (from the last twenty years) articles or books on your dialogue or theme.
   d. A list of older sources cited in common by at least two of the items you list under (c). This may help you understand the structure of the contemporary discussion as a whole and whether and if so how it has arisen from past discussion.
   e. A list of newer sources that cite any of the five sources you list under (c). This may help you further understand the contemporary discussion. An important resource for this sort of search is the Arts and Humanities Citation Index.

3. The literature review for other topics should follow an analogous plan. If you are writing on Aristotle you will need to find a modern commentator for Part (a). For Analytics, Physics, De Anima, or Metaphysics this should be Sir David Ross. I will help you find a good modern commentator for other texts.

4. Your literature review as a whole should be 10-12 pages long.

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1 Both Plato and Aristotle wrote in classical Greek. However, much of the scholarly discussion of the process of determining the text has been, and still is, written in Latin. Also, some of the most historically important commentators on their works read them in either Arabic (for example, Averroes) or Latin (for example, St. Thomas
Aquinas) translations and also wrote their commentaries respectively in the corresponding language.