First Friday Lecture Series
The Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults

Basic Program Bookends: The Theory of Recollection in Plato’s *Meno* and *Phaedo*

May 6, 2016 | 12:15 PM

**Claudia Cassidy Theater**
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington

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The University of Chicago’s Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults four-year curriculum has a carefully considered and delicious feature: students’ first tutorial is Plato’s *Meno*; their last is his *Phaedo*, the laden conversation culminating in Socrates’ death. *Meno* is the program’s piquant “Boot Camp”: engaged seriously, it challenges, chafes, and models. In the *Meno*, Socrates broaches the theory of recollection to rescue *Meno* from a despairing tantrum, to galvanize and champion the fruitfulness of inquiry, to hint at eternity. Late in *Phaedo*, devoted followers invoke *Meno*—perhaps uncomprehendingly—minutes before Socrates’ death. The arc occasioned in students’ minds is consequential. We will trace some implications.

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