As mentioned, the core of the final exam will be just like the hour tests, but there will be three features added to this core:

(1) A passage to read at sight. Reviewing vocabulary and principal parts will be the best preparation for that.

(2) A few rote syntax queries (what are the 3 common uses of the independent subjunctive?). I will provide a review sheet for this.

(3) An essay.

I am supplying the essay details in this email, so that you have a full three weeks to reflect on it. The essay will be due along with the rest of the exam.

The goal behind the essay portion is to encourage you to think, hard, about the dialogue as a whole, and as a literary and philosophical work. THIS IS NOT A RESEARCH PAPER. What I’d like is your well-considered thoughts, in about two pages, of some aspect of the dialogue. The best way to go about writing the essay will be to read back over the Symposium - the whole in English, with parts that seem critical to your thinking in Greek. To help with that I have loaded into our shared BOX folder (Greek203Plato) a full copy of the Jowett/Pelliccia translation of the Symposium.

Here are three prompts. You are welcome to think of a different prompt along the lines of your own interests, but you must get my approval in advance if you choose to do that. Again, this is not a research paper, and I prefer that you try to think this through on your own, and NOT try to locate scholarly discussions of these topics. But if you have read, or happen upon, a scholarly discussion that is relevant to your essay you must, of course, cite it appropriately.

1. As mentioned in class, Socrates has some strangeness about him, and some of that strangeness seems to map to a figure like a yogi or mystic. Interestingly, most of the details that highlight this side of the legend of Socrates derive from this one treatise, despite the large body of Platonic works. Why might that be? How might these yogi-like qualities tie in with other parts of the dialogue? Are there areas in which the philosophical content might benefit from highlighting that?

2. The famous comparison that Alcibiades makes between (1) Socrates and (2a) the satyr-like Silenus statues and (2b) the myth of Marsyas is explained by Alcibiades. But, recall, this is Plato writing what (Apollodorus says that Aristodemus says that) Alcibiades says here. In what ways, again, might this image tie in with other parts of the dialogue (that is, not Alcibiades’ direct explanation but other aspects), and contribute to the agenda, or to the complications, of the philosophical content?

3. The final paragraph of the Symposium 223b-d is famous and provocative. But how does that ending relate to and/or complicate other pieces of the dialogue, and, again, what intersection with the philosophical content can you find? Most commentators focus on the fact that Socrates is at the end of the night sitting between the comic writer Aristophanes and the tragic writer Agathon.

One area I would prefer that you NOT write on is the dramatic frame of the dialogue.