

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: MEDIEVAL

Instructor: Fr. Augustine Thompson O.P.
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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00 and Friday 11:00-12:00 (by appointment only)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will focus principally on the development of Christian philosophical theology, emphasizing: Patristic Roots (to 1100), Scholastic Synthesis (1200 to 1325), and Nominalist Critique (1325-1450). Attention will also be given to the reception of Greek, Arab and Jewish learning by the medieval west. Anselm of Canterbury, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Occam will receive special attention. Students will be expected to interpret and discuss such texts orally (proved by participation in class discussions) and analyze and interpret them in writing (proved by written examinations).

Student learning goals. That the students acquire a foundational knowledge of the history of Christian thought (philosophy / theology) from late antiquity to the early modern period.. In that process, they will learn to analyze medieval philosophical / theological texts, isolating their first principles and to make meaningful comparisons between authors of diverse perspectives. They will also become familiar with the influences of pagan, Jewish, and Islamic ideas on Christian thought in the period..

Student learning outcomes. That the students become proficient in interpreting and discussing medieval philosophic / theological texts (demonstrated by participation in class discussions), and become conversant with major authors and trends in the period as a whole (proved by comprehensive written exams).

Required Reading

If you do not know this book, you should: **The Bible.**

This may be considered the “text-book”. Read it as the term progresses:

Knowles, David, *Evolution of Medieval Thought*. Vintage, 1962.

<http://www.amazon.com/Evolution-Medieval-Thought-David-Knowles/dp/0394702468>

Numerous used copies are available through Amazon: prices between \$2 and \$19.00

Primary Sources in Translation will be assigned from:

Hyman, Arthur and Walsh, James, eds. *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions*. NEW EDITION. Hackett, 2010. \$51.00

<http://www.amazon.com/Philosophy-Middle-Ages-Christian-Traditions/dp/160384208X>

Fairweather, Eugene, ed. *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*. Westminster, 1982. \$24.89

https://www.amazon.com/Scholastic-Miscellany-Library-Christian-Classics/dp/0664244181/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1544830086&sr=1-3

Requirements of Course:

1. Two written exams (each 45% of grade)
2. *Active* participation in discussions and preparation of readings presentations (10% of grade)

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY SYLLABUS

READ EACH ASSIGNMENT BEFORE THE DAY IT IS LISTED (AND THEN AGAIN AFTER THE LECTURE IF YOU HAVE TIME); Knowles should be read by the end of the week assigned.

WEEK ONE: HEBREW FAITH AND GREEK REASON

Knowles, chapter 1-2

Feb. 4 — Ancient Roots: Platonism and Aristotelianism

Patristic Heritage

Feb. 7 — Augustine 1: Knowledge, Anthropology--Hyman, pp. 9-34 (*The Teacher*), 64-65 (*On The Trinity*).

WEEK TWO: KNOWLEDGE FOR GOD'S CITY

Knowles, chapters 3-4

Feb. 11 — Augustine 2: God and Creation--Hyman, pp. 81-99 (*The City of God*).

Feb. 14 — Boethius--Hyman, pp. 103-37 (*Consolation of Philosophy*) and pp. 138-39 (*Contra Eutychen*).

WEEK THREE: THE INHERITANCE TRANSFORMED

Knowles, chapters 5-8

Feb. 18 —DISCUSSION: PATRISTIC INHERITANCE

Feb. 21 —Anselm I: Hyman, pp. 158-161 (*Monologion*).

WEEK FOUR: FAITH AND DIALECTICS

Knowles, chapters 9-10

Feb. 25 —Anselm II: Hyman, pp. 161-81 (*Proslogion* and *Reply to the Fool*)

Feb. 28 —Dialectics: Peter Abailard: Fairweather, pp. 276-97 (Method and Ethics).

Sources of Scholasticism: Lawyers, Muslims, and Jews

WEEK FIVE: FROM LOGIC TO LAW

Knowles, chapters 11

Mar. 3 —DISCUSSION: ABAILARD AND ANSELM

Mar. 6 —The Canonists—Gratian, Decretals, and Glosses on Canon Law in this packet

WEEK SIX: EXEGETES AND MYSTICS

Knowles, chapter 12-14

Mar. 10 —The Victorines:--Fairweather, pp. 300-18 (Hugh), and pp. 324-31 (Richard).

Mar. 13 —DISCUSSION: CANONISTS, VICTORINES

WEEK SEVEN: ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY I

Knowles, chapter 15

Mar. 17 —FIRST EXAM (in class)

Mar. 20 —Origins of Islamic Philosophy--Hyman, pp. 244-64 (Selections from Ibn Sina, *The Salvation* and from *The Healing*).**SPRING RECESS: MARCH 23–27****WEEK EIGHT: ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY II**

Knowles, chapters 16.

Mar. 31 — Avicenna and Platonizing Aristotelianism—Continue working on the Ibn Sina readings.

Apr. 3 — Averroës and Purified Aristotelianism—Hyman, pp. 289-303 (Ibn Rushd, *The Decisive Treatise*)**WEEK NINE: JEWISH PHILOSOPHY**

Knowles, chapters 17-18

Apr. 7 — Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages—Hyman, pp. 364-85 (Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*)

Apr. 10 — Good Friday: No class

*The Scholastic Synthesis***WEEK TEN: ARISTOTELIANS**

Knowles, chapters 20–21

Apr. 14 — DISCUSSION: MUSLIMS AND JEWS

Apr. 17 — Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas 1: Being and Becoming--Hyman, pp. 451-57 (*On Being and Essence*), and pp. 466-70 (“Does God Exist?”).**WEEK ELEVEN: CONTROVERSY OVER ARISTOTLE**

Knowles, chapter 22, 19

Apr. 21 — Thomas Aquinas 2: The Human Person and Ethics--Hyman, pp. 494-528 (*Summa* on Human Person, the Will, and the Virtues).Apr. 24 —Radical Aristotelianism--Hyman, pp. 440-46 (Siger of Brabant, *On the Eternity of the World*)

WEEK TWELVE: BONAVENTURE

Knowles, chapters 23-24

Apr. 28 — Bonaventure 1: The Reaction to Aristotle: Rethinking Knowledge--Hyman, pp. 414-17
(Collations on the Hexameron) and *Retracing the Arts to Theology* (in this packet).

May 1 — Bonaventure 2: Mystical Assent--Hyman, pp. 417-36 (*The Mind's Journey to God*)

WEEK THIRTEEN: FRANCISCAN ALTERNATIVES

Knowles, chapter 25-27

May 5 —DISCUSSION: AQUINAS AND BONAVENTURE

Later Medieval Thought

May 8 —Duns Scotus: God--Hyman, pp. 556-70 ("Existence of an Infinite Being" and "God"), and
 pp. 599-606 (On Moral Acts); Hyman, pp. 541-50 ("The Condemnation of 1277").

WEEK FOURTEEN: NOMINALISM

Knowles, chapter 28

May 12 —William Ockham: Termism, Hyman, pp. 608-15 (*Summa Logicae*), pp. 631-36 (On
 Relations); and pp. 643-49 (On the Virtues).

May 15 —DISCUSSION: SCOTUS AND OCKHAM (AND PERHAPS SUAREZ)

EXAM WEEK

May 19—SECOND EXAM (in class)

Purposes, Outcomes, and Grading Rubrics for the Course

Course Goals

This introductory level survey course seeks to impart to students:

1. An understanding of the institutional, intellectual, and cultural history of Christian thought from late antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages sufficient to allow them **intellectual integration** of deeper studies on these thinkers or those influenced by them.
2. A sense of the ever provisional nature of all historical studies, which should encourage the students to model the **academic humility** and openness to contrasting opinions and methods that inform historical debate.
3. By reading difficult and alien writers on their own and achieving the mastery necessary to perform well on the course exams, the students should begin to develop the **self-direction** necessary for their future historical study.
4. Since the essay questions for the exams will be distributed before the exam and the students encouraged to work together preparing their answers, the course will foster a climate of **collaboration** and common ownership proper to research work and teaching.
5. By encountering a thought world that is profoundly different from our own modern one, students will acquire new perspectives that will allow them to **prophetically challenge** the commonplaces and prejudices of modern culture.

Course Outcomes

1. A **broad knowledge** of the history of the ancient and medieval thought as a whole, including the major Pagan, Jewish, and Islamic influences on it..
2. Beyond the broad outlines, ability to undertake even more **focused and critical reflections** on the texts studied, demonstrated in weekly discussions.
3. The **ability to communicate** the fruits of their own study, especially in class discussions..
4. The ability to bring sound historical conclusions to bear on **contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues**, especially during discussions.
5. An understanding of the historical relations between the Church and **non-Christian religions**, in Jewish and Islamic thought (three weeks of the course will be devoted directly to these authors).

Grading Rubrics

“A” signifies a comprehensive and accurate general understanding of the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and a sure and solid control of the ideas of all authors studied.

“A-“ signifies a generally solid familiarity with the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and the ability to sketch out the basic ideas of the major authors and most minor authors studied.

“B+” signified a basic familiarity with the general development of ancient and medieval Christianity, but somewhat sketchy recall of the ideas of individual authors, including the major ones. This is only marginally satisfactory in master’s level work, even in an introductory class.

“B” signifies even less secure understanding of development and serious lacunae for even major authors. As such, although passing, this is probably not sufficient quality for master’s credit.

Below a “B” means that, for all intents and purposes, the performance is so poor that it could not be used to fulfil requirements in a master’s program.

NOTE: If you need special arrangements to meet the course requirements for reasons of some documented disability, please see the instructor after the first meeting of the seminar.