

Syllabus
Medieval Philosophy—PHL 262--Spring 2011
Michael R. Baumer, Course Instructor
MWF 1:30-2:35
Main Campus, Main Classroom Building, Room 305

Course Description:

A survey of medieval philosophy in Christian and Muslim lands. Medieval philosophy is philosophy of the medieval (sometimes spelled “mediaeval”) period, or middle ages, as defined by events in Europe, extending roughly from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Protestant Reformation, a period of over 1000 years.

The middle ages contrast with classical antiquity in the prevalence of religious exclusivism, which began in the fourth century with the gradual adoption of Christianity as the dominant sanctioned religion of the Roman Empire, all other forms of religion being either proscribed or disadvantaged. Islamic polities also adopted this pattern. The concern with adherence to norms of religious belief and practice among Christians, Muslims, and also Jews, resulted in a tension between religion and thought that provides the greatest focus of intellectual drama of medieval times.

Both the Christian and Islamic civilizations, as well as Jewish culture, of the middle ages, were heirs to the intellectual constructions of classical antiquity. Almost all medieval philosophy consists of a blend of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, a blend already achieved by the Neoplatonists of antiquity. Yet in spite of its derivative nature, medieval philosophy developed a striking distinctiveness, the result both of the tension with the demands of religious orthodoxy and of the project of assimilating and completing the inheritance of antiquity with ever greater skill and success.

Medieval philosophy, although it ventures into Islamic civilization, in this course begins and ends in Christian Europe, and its ethos there was largely overthrown in the 15th and 16th centuries by the twin catastrophes of the Protestant Reformation, which opened up the spectrum of allowable religion, and the Copernican revolution, which overthrew the Aristotelian paradigm in physics (and thus in theology).

Textbooks (texts for sale in the University Bookstore—some of the texts will be available either online or from Electronic Course Reserve, as indicated below in the “Schedule of Topics and Readings”):

	Author/Translator	Title	Publisher
1	St. Augustine/Pine-Coffin	Confessions	Penguin
2	Spade	Five Texts on the Medieval Problem of Universals	Hackett
3	Boethius	Consolation of Philosophy	Penguin
4	St. Anselm	Basic Writings	Hackett
5	Abelard/Clanchy/Radice	Letters of Abelard and Heloise	Penguin
6	Abelard	Ethical Writings	Hackett
7	Maimonides	Guide for the Perplexed	Dover
8	Aquinas/McInerny	Selected Writings	Penguin
9	McEvedy	New Penguin Atlas of Medieval History (Optional)	Penguin

STUDENT COURSEWORK

The course will consist mainly of detailed reading and analysis of the philosophical works listed in the "Schedule of Topics and Readings" below.

There will be five components of student coursework:

I. Regular class attendance and participation.

II. Short answers to study questions from the "Schedule of Readings and Assignments" below to be handed in each class day.

III-IV. Two (2) midterm writing assignments. These should be philosophical disputations (debates) on one of the topics from the Disputation Topic List, to be handed out next week. Each disputation is to be at least 1500 words in length (six typewritten pages @ 250 words / page). The two disputations will be due respectively on Friday, March 11 (the last day of classes before Spring Break) and Wednesday, May 11 (Final Exam date).

V. Final exam with questions handed out one week in advance. Approximately 250-word answers to a choice of two out of ten or more possible essay questions, and additionally a multiple choice / matching / fill-in-the-blank section, which

altogether will be worth as much as one essay question. These non-essay questions will be either based on the daily study questions or of such a general nature that knowledge of the answers could plausibly be considered a requisite for basic "literacy" in medieval philosophy. Written without notes. This will take place during the scheduled final exam period for this block, which is Wednesday, May 11, 1-3 pm. The questions will be handed out on Monday, April 25. Reading the assignments, paying close attention to the study questions, and attending class regularly will be good preparations for this exam. Answers will be evaluated on factual knowledge of philosophical arguments and positions and clarity of philosophical analysis.

Each of the five components of student coursework will be worth 20% of your grade.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Topic #	Date	Topic	Reading	Where to obtain text	Number of pages in reading	Difficulty of reading	Study question(s)
1	Wed, Jan 19	Syllabus and Introduction					
2	Fri, Jan 21	Pagan Neoplatonism (in particular, Plotinus) I	Plotinus, <i>Ennead I</i> , Tractates 6, 7	Online	Approx. 25 pages in Loeb Classical Library Edition	Intermediate	According to Plotinus, what is the fountain and principle of beauty? (Group A)
3	Mon, Jan 24	Pagan Neoplatonism II	<i>Ennead I</i> , Tractate 8	Online	Approx. 20 pages	Intermediate	According to Plotinus, what is the cause of evil? (Group B)

Plotinus reading: http://oaks.nvg.org/ennb.html#6							
4	Wed, Jan 26	St. Augustine of Hippo (<i>Confessions</i>) I	<i>Confessions</i> , Books I-III	Bookstore	Approx. 50 pages	Easy	How did Cicero's <i>Hortensius</i> turn Augustine's prayers to God? (Group A)
5	Fri, Jan 28	St. Augustine II	<i>Confessions</i> , Books IV-VI	Bookstore	Approx. 60 pages	Easy	How did Augustine lose his firm belief in the doctrines of the Manichees? (Group B)
6	Mon, Jan 31	St. Augustine III	<i>Confessions</i> , Books VII-VIII	Bookstore	Approx 59 pages	Easy	According to St. Augustine, what is evil? (Group A)
7	Wed, Feb 2	Boethius I	Boethius, <i>De Hebdomadibus</i> (located in Aquinas anthology [edited by McInerny], item 7) NOTE: You need only to read the quoted work of	Bookstore	Approx. 5 pages	Difficult	What is the problem that Boethius addresses in this work? (Beginning of Section 3) (Group B)

			Boethius at this point (in the smaller print).				
8	Fri, Feb 4	Boethius II	Spade, <i>Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals</i> , selection from Boethius	Bookstore	6 pages	Difficult	Whose view on universals does Boethius expound as his solution (according to him), Plato's or Aristotle's? (Group A)
9	Mon, Feb 7	Boethius III	<i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Books I and II	Bookstore	about 40 pages	Easy	What is Boethius' complaint to Lady Philosophy in Section IV? (Group B)
10	Wed, Feb 9	Boethius IV	<i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book III	Bookstore	about 40 pages	Intermediate	What is the difference between the mild and stronger nourishments that Lady Philosophy offers Boethius for his woes, respectively in

							Books II and III? (Group A)
11	Fri, Feb 11	Boethius V	<i>Consolation of Philosophy, Book IV</i>	Bookstore	30 pages	Intermediate	Why, according to Lady Philosophy, is all fortune good? (Group B)
12	Mon, Feb 14	Boethius VI	<i>Consolation of Philosophy, Book V</i>	Bookstore	20 pages		What is the problem regarding divine foreknowledge and human will? (Group A)
13	Wed, Feb 16	Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite	Pseudo-Dionysius, <i>Mystical Theology</i>	Online	Approx. 10 pages	Intermediate	What is the Divine Gloom? (Group B)
Pseudo-Dionysius reading: http://www.monachos.net/content/patristics/patristictexts/348-denys-mystical-theology-link							
14	Fri, Feb 18	John Scottus (or "Scotus") Eriugena (or "Erigena")	Eriugena, <i>On the Division of Nature</i> , to p. 61	ECR (Electronic Course Reserve)	Approx. 12 pages	Intermediate	What is the fourfold division of nature? (Group A)
Mon, Feb 21: PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY							
15	Wed, Feb 23	John Scottus Eriugena II	<i>On the Division of Nature</i> to middle, p. 85	ECR	Approx. 12 pages	Intermediate	What are "theophanies"? (p. 47) (Group

							B)
16	Fri, Feb 25	Islamic Aristotelian-Neoplatonism: Al-Farabi I	Al-Farabi (cca. 872-950), <i>The Principles of Beings (or The Political Regime)</i> , Part I, Sections 1 and 2	ECR	Approx. 32 pages	Intermediate	How many levels of principles of beings are there, and what are they? (Group A)
17	Mon, Feb 28	Al-Farabi II	<i>The Principles of Beings</i> , Part I, Sections 3, 4, and 5	ECR	Approx. 23 pages	Intermediate	What is the Active Intellect? (Group B)
18	Wed, Mar 2	Al-Farabi III	<i>The Principles of Beings</i> Part II (<i>The Political Regime</i>), Sections 1-2	ECR	Approx. 25 pages	Intermediate	What is the definition of the excellent city? (Group A)
19	Fri, Mar 4	Al-Farabi IV	<i>The Principles of Beings</i> Part II (<i>The Political Regime</i>)	ECR	Approx. 30 pages	Intermediate	What are the kinds of the ignorant city? (Group B)
20	Mon, Mar 7	Islamic Aristotelian-Neoplatonism: Avicenna I	Avicenna (cca. 980-1037), "Metaphysics" of <i>Al-Shifa</i> , Book 8	ECR	Approx 25 pages	Difficult	Briefly, why can there not be an infinite chain of causes? (pp. 258-9 through Section 8) (Group A)

21	Wed, Mar 9	Avicenna II	Avicenna, "Metaphysics", Book 9	ECR	Approx 25 pages	Difficult	What kind of cause is the only one possible of a motion coming into being after non-existence? (Group B)
22	Fri, Mar 11	Islamic Occasionalism: Al-Ash'ari	Al-Ash'ari, <i>The Elucidation of Islam's Foundations</i> , selection	ECR		Intermediate	How is the story of the believer, the unbeliever, and the infant a paradox if God is just? (Group A)
March 14-18: Spring Break							
23	Mon, Mar 21	The Spiritual Quest of an Islamic Thinker: Al- Ghazali I	Al-Ghazali: <i>Confessions</i> , or <i>Deliverance from Error</i>	Online	Approx. 55 pages	Easy	What are the three propositions on which the philosophers are guilty of irreligion? (Group B)
<i>Deliverance from Error</i> : http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/1100ghazali-truth.html							
24	Wed, Mar 23	Al-Ghazali's accusations of infidelity against the philosophers	Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), <i>The Incoherence ("Destruction")</i>	ECR	Approx. 18 pages	Difficult	What, in summary, according to Al-Ghazali, is

		(Aristotelian-Neoplatonists)	<i>of Philosophy, First Discussion</i>				the first proof of the philosophers that it is impossible that the world came into being at a certain time? (Group A)
25	Fri, Mar 25	St. Anselm of Canterbury I	<i>Proslogion, Chapters I-XIV</i>	Bookstore	Approx 15 pages	Intermediate	According to Chapter II, what is it that must exist in reality as well as in the understanding? (Group B)
26	Mon, Mar 28	St. Anselm of Canterbury II	<i>Proslogion, Chapters XV-end</i>	Bookstore	Approx. 15 pages		How does Anselm prove that God is greater than can be conceived? (Group A)
27	Wed, Mar 30	Life of Peter Abelard	Peter Abelard (1079-1142), <i>History of My Calamities (Letters of Abelard and</i>	Bookstore	44 pages	Easy	Why did Fulbert have Abelard castrated? (Group B)

			<i>Heloise, Letter 1)</i>				
28	Fri, Apr	Abelard on universals	Five Texts..., Abelard selection	Bookstore	31 pages	Difficult	How does Aristotle define the universal in <i>On Interpretation 7?</i> (Group A)
29	Mon, Apr 4	Abelard on sin	Abelard, <i>Ethics</i> , in <i>Ethical Writings</i>	Bookstore	59 pages	Intermediate	According to Abelard, what is sin? (Group B)
30	Wed, Apr 6	Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy	Averroes, <i>Decisive Treatise</i> , selection	ECR		Intermediate	According to Averroes, what are the three means of assent available to people of differing abilities? (Group A)
31	Fri, Apr 8	Averroes against Al- Ghazali on the philosophers	Averroes (1126-1198), selection from <i>Incoherence ("Destruction") of the Incoherence ("Destruction")</i> ,	ECR	68 pages	Difficult	According to the first sentence of the First Discussion, what is the aim of Averroes' book? (Group

			First Discussion				B)
32	Mon, Apr 11	Maimonides (Rabbi Moses ben-Maimon) I	Maimonides (1135-1204), <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i> , Part I, "Introduction," and Chapters XXXI-XXXVI, L-LX, and LXXI-LXXVI	Bookstore	Approx. 60 pages	Intermediate	What is the purpose of Maimonides' book? (Group A)
33	Wed, Apr 13	Maimonides II	<i>Guide</i> , Part II, "Introduction," and Chapters I and XIII-XXV	Bookstore	Approx. 30 pages	Intermediate	What is the one proposition of Aristotle that Maimonides does not accept? (Group B)
34	Fri, Apr 15	Maimonides III	<i>Guide</i> , Part III, "Introduction," and Chapters XXVII-XXVIII and LI-LIV	Bookstore	25 pages	Intermediate	What class of creatures is encompassed by divine providence, according to Maimonides? (Group A)
35	Mon, Apr 18	St. Thomas Aquinas I	<i>Exposition of "On the Hebdomads" of Boethius</i> from	Bookstore	21 pages	Difficult	What does Aquinas think "Hebdomads" means? (First

			<i>Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings</i>				page) (He is wrong.) (Group B)
36	Wed, Apr 20	St. Thomas Aquinas II	McInerny Item 14, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I, 5-6	Bookstore	17 pages	Intermediate	How do goodness and being differ in account? (Group A)
37	Fri, Apr 22	St. Thomas Aquinas III	McInerny Item 15, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I, 44	Bookstore	7 pages	Intermediate	Is God the final cause of all things? (Group B)
38	Mon, Apr 25	St. Thomas Aquinas IV	Proof of God's Existence— <i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> I, 1 and 9-14	Bookstore	14 pages	Difficult	According to Aquinas, what is the role of the wise man with regard to divine truth of the kind that exceeds the reach of reason? (Group A)
39	Wed, Apr 27	St. Thomas Aquinas V	<i>On the Eternity of the World</i>	Bookstore	8 pages	Difficult	According to Aquinas, is it heretical so say that something caused by God has always

							been? (Group B)
40 and 41	Fri, Apr 29, and Mon, May 2	John Duns Scotus	<i>Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals</i> , Duns Scotus selection	Bookstore	57 pages	Difficult	No more questions
42 and 43	Wed, May 4 and Fri, May 6	William of Ockham	<i>Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals</i> , William of Ockham selection	Bookstore	100 pages	Difficult	No more questions
	Wed, May 11	FINAL EXAM, 1-3pm					

POLICIES

Plagiarism or cheating are unacceptable and if detected may result in the student plagiarizing or cheating receiving a failing grade for the course.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

This course counts towards satisfaction of the “Arts and Humanities” requirement, with a focus on Europe.

OFFICE DATA

Location: Mather Mansion 104

Hours: MW 2:00-3:45
Phone: 687-3902

INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE POSTED ON SYLLABI REGARDING THE GEN ED REQUIREMENTS:

Criteria for Arts and Humanities Courses:

1. Courses must be offered at the 100/200 level in an arts and humanities discipline including but not limited to English, History, Philosophy, Art History, Music History, Religious Studies, or Modern Languages. Courses offered in other disciplines may be approved if they meet the other conditions indicated below.
2. Courses must provide students with background knowledge and analytical skills that will allow them to:

Demonstrate understanding of how human beings interpret, translate, and represent diverse experiences of the world through language, literature, the historical record, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances.

Apply that understanding to the study of the human condition, cultural heritage, cultural artifacts, creativity, and history.

****Additional criterion for courses NOT specifically focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa or the Middle East:**

Courses must be survey courses that provide an overview of a broad topic or field of knowledge.

****Additional criteria for courses focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East:**

The primary focus of the course must be on a society or societies in Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East. Courses that compare these societies to those of North America and/or Europe may be approved only if the majority of the course material concerns the first group of societies and the principal purpose of the course is to improve students' understanding of those societies.

Content must be presented from the perspective(s) of the societies being studied, not simply European and/or American perceptions of those societies.

Criteria for the “Writing” skill area:

To qualify in the skill area of writing a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of writing.
2. Include writing assignments that directly relate to the course goals.
3. Include instruction in writing-to-learn and/or writing-to-communicate . While writing-to-learn emphasizes the student's experience, writing-to-communicate highlights the reader's experience. Both are necessary to produce a thoughtful text that observes academic writing's conventions. 4
4. Require that students write a total of 2,000 words (8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1” margins) in multiple assignments.
5. Assign writing throughout the semester.

Criteria for the “Critical Thinking” skill area:

To qualify in the skill area of critical thinking a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
2. Require students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring:
 1. higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); **OR**
 2. skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem); **OR**
 3. the recognition of the importance and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the course (e.g. recognize the ability to and importance of working with others to solve intellectual problems).