

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY: FROM THE EARLY COMMON ERA TO THE WORKS OF CUSANUS

PHIL XXX-XX · Semester Year · Meeting Time · Meeting Place

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Required Texts: Copleston, Frederick (1993). *A History of Philosophy, Volume 2: Medieval Philosophy from Augustine to Duns Scotus*. New York: Doubleday. ISBN 038546844X

McGrade, A.S., ed. (2003). *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521000637

Schoedinger, Andrew, ed. (1996). *Readings in Medieval Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0195092937

Suggested Text: Gilson, Etienne (1991). *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*. South Bend, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press. ISBN 0268017409

Course Description: The aim of this course is to introduce the student to the major threads of philosophical thinking in medieval philosophy. Since the course is an historical introduction to the time period, our approach will be to confront the major issues in medieval thought by reading the major historical figures chronologically. The scholasticism of medieval philosophy is largely a response to the works of Aristotle. So, we will begin with a summary of his views. After a brief overview of Aristotle, we will explore the philosophy of Augustine, philosophy during the “dark ages,” early scholasticism, the “golden age” of scholasticism, and the decline of scholasticism. Neither fluency in nor a passing acquaintance with philosophy is presupposed for this course; curiosity is.

Requirements: Actually doing philosophy involves class discussion, in which students dialogue back and forth with the instructor and with each other. This class will be a seminar style course that places a premium on class discussion. Since this is the case, attendance is vital for success in the course.

Presentation. The student will complete a one-page summary of a reading designated by the instructor. The student should outline at least one argument in the reading and demonstrate that s/he has a command of the argument. If too confused by the argument, then summarize what you think the main argument of the reading is and present a few questions or criticisms of the main argument.

Examinations. There will be one take home mid-term examination, and one in-class final examination. The final exam will be comprehensive. The instructor also reserves the right to give an unannounced quiz at any time, though this is uncommon.

Final Paper. The student will be expected to complete one 10-12 page paper on a topic of the student's choice. More information, i.e., suggested topics, will be distributed sometime toward the middle of the semester. The student must submit a brief prospectus of the paper by DUE DATE, a bibliography by DUE DATE, and a detailed outline by DUE DATE.

Failure to complete any of these requirements will severely effect the your grade.

Policies:

Cheating. Cheating on any course requirement shall not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying from one's own clandestine notes, from someone else's paper, or quoting or paraphrasing an author without crediting the source (plagiarism). If the student is caught cheating, then s/he will receive a 0 on the work and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric impairments. Please contact the instructor at the beginning of the course to discuss any such accommodations that you may require for this course. For more information, the student should contact the Center for Disability Services.

Notice. The student is advised. All material contained herein, including course design, content, lectures, correspondence, Internet content, and written material, is the intellectual property of the instructor. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to change, revise, or alter any portion of this syllabus at any time, at his sole discretion, for any reason, without further notification to the student. This syllabus is in accordance with the [university or college handbook].

Grading:

There are no averages in this class, so put your calculators away. Grades will be determined according to a linear point scale. The more points you accumulate the higher your grade. In-class participation is worth a total of 100 points, each presentation is worth 50 points (100 total points available), each one-page summary of the major argument in an assigned paper is worth 25 points (250 total points available), and the final paper is worth a total of 200 points. The total number of points available equals 650.

The grading scale is as follows: 585 for an A-, 520 for a B-, 455 for a C-, 390 for a D-. Anyone who fails to earn 390 points fails the class.

Course Schedule & Assignments:

The table below outlines the approximate dates on which each topic will be discussed. Some topics will require additional time, particularly more discussion time, so this is not a schedule set in stone. This fact emphasizes the importance of attending class regularly as well as the importance of participating in class discussion.

Title of Lecture & Readings for the Week	Week of:
<p>Aristotle and the Problems in Classical Philosophy. Handouts; Copleston, Introduction; McGrade, “Introduction,” in McGrade</p> <p>Christianity and the Christological Problem. Copleston, The Patristic Period; Marrone, “Medieval Philosophy in Context” in McGrade</p>	Week 1
<p>Augustine on Metaphysics. Augustine, “The Free Choice of Will,” in Schoedinger, “The Immortality of the Soul,” in Schoedinger.</p> <p>Augustine and Creatio Ex Nihilo. Copleston, St. Augustine-I, III, IV; Sylla, “Creation and Nature” in McGrade</p>	Week 2
<p>Augustine on Revelation and the Concept of Illumination. Augustine, “The Trinity,” in Schoedinger, pp. 427-438; Copleston, St. Augustine-II.</p> <p>Boethius. Boethius, “The Consolation of Philosophy, Book V,” Schoedinger pp. 191-202; (optional) Boethius, “On Division,” in Schoedinger; Copleston: The Pseudo-Dionysius, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore (omit Cassiodorus and Isidore).</p>	Week 3
<p>The Carolingian Renaissance. Copleston, “The Carolingian Renaissance”</p> <p>Erigena and Peter Damian. Copleston, “John Scotus Erigena-I and II;” John Scotus Erigena, “On the Trinity” in Schoedinger; St. Peter Damian “Letter on Divine Omnipotence”</p>	Week 4
<p>Anselm. Anselm and Gaunilon, “Preface and Chapters I-IV; An Appendix in behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon and Anselm’s Apologetic” in Schoedinger.</p> <p>Commentaries on Anselm. Copleston, “St.</p>	Week 5

Anselm of Canterbury.”	
Carry-over from Weeks 5.	Week 6: Mid-Term Examination distributed
Medieval Islamic Thought: Avicenna’s Concept of Being. Avicenna, “The Proof of God’s Existence,” Copleston, “Islamic Philosophy.”	Week 7
Medieval Islamic Thought: Averroes’s Concept of Being. Averroes, “On God’s Knowledge” in Schoedinger; Druart, “Philosophy in Islam” in McGrade; Menn, “Metaphysics: God and Being” in McGrade	
Medieval Jewish Thought: Maimonides on Faith, Reason, and Metaphysics. Maimonides, “Laws Concerning Character Traits” in Schoedinger; Copleston, “Jewish Philosophy;” Dobbs-Weinstein, “Jewish Philosophy” in McGrade.	Week 8: Mid-Term Examination due
Early 13th Century Philosophy. William of Auvergne, “The Trinity, or the First Principle” in Schoedinger; Robert Grosseteste, “On Light” in Schoedinger; (optional) Copleston, “William of Auvergne, Robert Grosseteste, and Alexander of Hales.”	
Bonaventure: Creation, Exemplarism, and Consummation. St. Bonaventure, “Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity” in Schoedinger; (optional) Copleston, “St. Bonaventura I-V”	Week 9
Aquinas: The Essence-Existence Distinction. St. Thomas Aquinas, “Summa Theologica Part I: Question I, Articles 1 and 2; Question II, Articles 1, 2, and 3” in Schoedinger; St. Thomas Aquinas, “Concerning Being and Essence”	
Aquinas: Metaphysics. Copleston, “St. Thomas Aquinas I-IV (and carry-over).	Week 10
Aquinas on Knowledge and the Proof of God’s Existence. St. Thomas Aquinas, “Disputed Questions Concerning Evil” in Schoedinger; Copleston, “St. Thomas Aquinas VI-VIII.”	
Reaction to Thomism: Latin Averroism. Copleston, “St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle:	Week 11

<p>Controversies.</p> <p>Scotus's Metaphysics. John Duns Scotus, "The Principle of Individuation" in Schoedinger; Copleston, "Scotus IV-VII." (handout)</p>	
<p>Scotus and Natural Theology. John Duns Scotus, "On the Existence of God" in Schoedinger; John Duns Scotus, "God and Creatures: the Quodlibetal Questions" in Schoedinger.</p> <p>Ockham on God, Knowledge, and Universals. William of Ockham, "God's Causality and Foreknowledge" in Schoedinger; Copleston, "Ockham II-IV." (handout)</p>	Week 12
<p>The Ockhamist Movement and the Philosophy of Jean Buridan. Copleston, "The Ockhamist Movement: John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt;" Jean Buridan, "Sophismata" in Schoedinger.</p> <p>Meister Eckhart and Speculative Mysticism. Copleston, "Speculative Mysticism" (handout).</p>	Week 13
<p>Cusanus: The New Concepts of God and of Creation. Nicholas of Cusa, "Concerning Experiments in Weight" in Schoedinger.</p> <p>Implications of Medieval Philosophy. Fitzpatrick and Haldane, "Medieval Philosophy in Later Thought" in McGrade; Williams, "Translation and Transmission" in McGrade.</p>	Week 14: Final Examination