

Course Syllabus Medieval Philosophy (2020)



PHIL202, Medieval Philosophy

Meets: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9:00-9:50, 106 O'Connell; 3 credit hours

Instructor

Dr. Wm Mark Smillie, Professor, Philosophy Department

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Office Hours Spring 2020: MW, 3:30-4:30; TTh: 2:30-4:30; Th: 10:00-11:30; Fri, 2:00-4:00 & by appointment.

I will respond to email and phone inquiries within one business day (Saturdays and Sundays are not business days). I will post notifications about the course in the Moodle News Forum. Students should also be aware of the Moodle Calendar that announces assignment deadlines.

Course Description

**PHILOSOPHY IS
THE HIGHEST
MUSIC.**

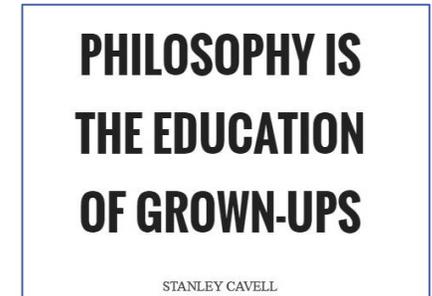
Plato

This course is an introductory survey of the philosophy of the “middle ages”—the period from 500 to 1400. The course will focus as much as possible on the “philosophical” aspects of medieval thought, though the student should be warned that medieval thinkers did not explicitly separate academic disciplines as we do today. The course first study a very influential philosophical “picture” of the world presented in Boethius’ work *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Then it will move on to consider recognized “big issues” of the middle ages—faith and reason, the nature of God, and the problem of universals. Significant medieval philosophers considered this semester include St. Augustine, Boethius, Dionysius, Peter Abelard, St.

Anselm, Avicenna, St. Thomas Aquinas, and William of Occam. An effort will be made to convey general medieval life and values and their connection to medieval philosophy, as well as to relate the thought of the middle Ages to the philosophy of other historical periods.

Course Procedure

The goal of the course is to introduce students to some issues in medieval philosophy, and have students read a small sampling of original philosophical texts. Students will be encouraged consider the truth and relevance of the philosophy they encounter, and to engage intellectually with the ideas. Class meetings will be interactive, and students should come having reviewed the readings, and with their own copies of the readings. Exams will cover all assigned readings.



COURSE ELEMENTS AND GOALS

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Define, differentiate, and evaluate key issues in medieval philosophy, including the relationship of faith and reason, nature of human happiness, the problem of evil, free will, and issues surrounding the nature of universals
2. Explain and analyze philosophical positions in medieval texts
3. Analyze and assess philosophical arguments presented by medieval thinkers
4. Develop and defend their own views on medieval philosophical views

Disclaimer regarding these objectives:

- 1) Students may vary in their competency levels on these abilities.
- 2) Students can expect to acquire these abilities only if they honor all course policies, attend class regularly, complete all assigned work on time and in good faith, and meet all other course requirements and expectations.

Required and Recommended Reading Materials

Joseph W. Koterski *An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy: Basic Concepts*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-4051-0678-8 \$43.95 (new; used 25.50) at the Saint's Shoppe. Required text.

Boethius (480-524). *Consolation of Philosophy*. Revised Edition. Translated by Victor Watts. Penguin, 1999. ISBN 978-0-14-044780-4. \$12.00 (used), Saints Shoppe. Required text.

Augustine (354-430). *The Essential Augustine*. Edited by Vernon J. Bourke. Hackett Publishing Company, 1964-74. ISBN: 0-915144-07-7. \$12.95 Saints Shoppe. Required text.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142). *The Story of my Misfortunes*. Translated by Henry Adams Bellows. N.p, N.d.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). *Thomas Aquinas Basic Philosophical Writings*, Edited and Translated by Stephen Baldner. Broadview Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-554813-72-8.

A couple of good resources for philosophy research

- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <https://plato.stanford.edu/>

General Descriptions of Assessment Activities

Reading Comments/Questions: 15% of Final Grade

Weekly comments related to one of the readings submitted by Wednesday each week. You will turn them in online, at least one hour prior to the start of class.

Tests: 45% of the Final Grade

Two tests during the semester (worth 15% each) and a final comprehensive exam (worth 15%). Study guides for these tests will be circulated prior to the tests. The final exam occurs on the date scheduled by the College registrar—Tuesday, May 5 at 800am.

Written assignments: 40% of the Final Grade

- Analysis of a philosophical argument (10%). (Process will be introduced in class, on Feb 10)
- Analysis and critical evaluation of a medieval philosophical argument (15%). (Process will be introduced in class, on Mar 30)
- Student research of medieval philosopher (15%)

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

93-100:	A
90-92:	A-
87-89:	B+
83-86:	B
80-82:	B-
77-79:	C+
73-76:	C
70-72:	C-
60-69:	D
Below 60:	F
P/F Grade:	D (60)

Proposed Course Schedule

C	DATE	Topic/Assignment	
1	Jan 13	First day of class!	
	Jan 15	What was philosophy (and intellectual activity) like in the middle ages? Video: "The Philosopher" from Terry Jones' <i>Medieval Lives</i> series.	
	Jan 17	The Medieval Universe. Links to readings are posted on Moodle	
	Jan 20	<i>Martin Luther King Day—No Class</i>	
	Jan 22	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Books I-II	
	Jan 24	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book II	
	Jan 27	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book III	
	Jan 29	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book IV	
	Jan 31	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book IV-V	
	Feb 3	Boethius. <i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> , Book V Review for test	
	Feb 5	TEST 1: Covers Medieval Universe and Boethius (No Comments/Questions due this week)	
	Feb 7	Video: "Inside the Medieval Mind: Knowledge." By medievalist Robert Bartlett	
	2	Feb 10	The process of analyzing arguments. Read "Writing Philosophical Arguments" (Moodle). <i>Begin working on Argument Analysis</i>
		Feb 12	Faith and Reason. Background Reading <i>An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy</i> (MP), Ch 1.
Feb 14		Faith and Reason: Augustine's insights, <i>Confessions</i> VI-VII. (Avail on moodle)	
Feb 17		Faith and Reason. Essential Augustine (EA), pages 19-40.	
Feb 19		Philosophy and Theology: Thomas Aquinas. Read Basic Philosophical Writings (BPW) pages 61-62.	
Feb 21		Proving God's existence. Anselm. Read Thomas Aquinas, pages 185-187	
Feb 24		Proving for God's existence: Cosmological Arguments. BPW pages 62-70	
Feb 26		Proving for God's existence: Cosmological Arguments. BPW pages 62-70	
Feb 28		God: Immanent and Transcendent God. Background Reading; Chapter 2 of MP. Argument Analyses are Due (Feb 28)	
Mar 2-6		SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS. Grades posted March 10	
3	Mar 9	Peter Abelard and 12 th Century Scholasticism. Video: "The saint and the scholar: portrait of Abelard" Background reading: <i>The Story of my Misfortunes</i>	
	Mar 11	The Divine Attributes: Why think God is Simple? Read BPW , pages 71-78	
	Mar 13	Other attributes of God (as time allows) Perfection, Infinity, Immutability. BPW: pages 71-79.	
	Mar 16	The Divine Ideas: The Augustinian Perspective. Background reading: MP Ch 3 and Bertrand Russell, "The World of Universals" (From <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> , on moodle)	
	Mar 18	The Divine Ideas: St Augustine's Big Idea. Read "Divine Ideas as Prototypes," pgs 62-63	
	Mar 20	The Divine Ideas: Dionysius and Negative Theology. Read Dionysius reading from Moodle	
	Mar 23	The Divine Ideas: Aquinas on Divine Ideas (See moodle)	
	Mar 25	Review for Test #2 (No Comments/Questions due this week)	
	Mar 27	TEST 2: Covers Faith and Reason, God, Divine Ideas	

4	Mar 30	The process of evaluating arguments. Reread “Writing Philosophical Essays,” and “Writing in Philosophy.” (Moodle). <i>Begin working on Argument Evaluations AND Research Projects</i>
	Apr 1	The Problem of Universals. Introduction. Background reading: Chapter 4 of MP, pages 87-107 (skip section 4)
	Apr 3	The Problem of Universals: Boethius’ Realism. Boethius, Second Commentary on Porphyry’s Isagoge, chs 10 and 11 (on moodle)
	Apr 6	The Problem of Universals: Rise of nominalism and Abelard’s conceptualism . Abelard reading on Moodle
	Apr 8	The Problem of Universals: Aquinas moderate realism. Thomas Aquinas reading “On Being and Essence,” (Moodle)
	Apr 10	GOOD FRIDAY: NO CLASS
	Apr 13	EASTER MONDAY: NO CLASS
	Apr 14	(Monday Schedule) No Class: Dr. Smillie is out of town
	Apr 15	No Class: Dr. Smillie is out of town
	Apr 17	No Class: Dr. Smillie is out of town Evaluation Papers are due Sunday, Apr 19
5	Apr 20	Cosmos, Nature and Natural Law. Background reading is Chapter 6 of MP.
	Apr 22	Cosmos and Nature. Read Thomas Aquinas, pages 171-183 (No Comments/Questions due this week)
	Apr 24	SURF DAY—No Class
	Apr 27	Break down of the exemplarist picture: Scotus Reading TBA
	Apr 29	Break down of the exemplarist picture: Ockham Reading TBA (No Comments/Questions due this week)
	May 1	Last Class Day. Video: “The circles of light: the Divine comedy” Research Papers are due
6	May 5	Final Exam: 8:00-9:45am (TUES)

COURSE POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Please be on time for class! Please stay alert (and awake!) in class, respect others, and limit private conversations. Please, eat food and use tobacco products some place other than class.

Please attend class regularly (see “Attendance Policies” in the Carroll College Catalogue). I keep attendance regularly and expect to be informed if some legitimate excuse keeps you from attending class.

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”

-Woody Allen

Please note: I will only grade the assignments of students who regularly attend class. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences.

Submit your assignments electronically on Moodle, observing the deadlines posted there. Students having good reasons for missing a deadline or test should contact me in advance of the deadline. I reserve the right to penalize late assignments.

Carroll College’s policy on Academic Integrity: “Students at Carroll College are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes on examinations or assignments, falsifies college

records, or fails to give requested academic information on admission documents is subject to dismissal or other appropriate disciplinary action by the College.” Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, deception, and complicity are wrong and undermine our ability to enjoy and profit from this class. I will investigate all suspected cases of plagiarism, and will penalize all verified instances; the penalty can be as severe as immediate failure in the course. If you are unsure about whether some actions constitute plagiarism, please ask me.

My goal is to grade and/or return all assignments within 2 weeks of their due dates, if not sooner.

*Tests and exams should be taken on the dates and place assigned. Tests missed for legitimate reasons should **be** made up at the Testing Center. Please see <https://www.carroll.edu/academic-services/testing-center> for more information.*

If you do not understand a grade you received, please seek clarification! If you want to appeal a grade, please submit your appeal first in writing, explaining your point, or if you think your answer was correct, documenting that belief with evidence from the text. In the case where there is a rubric, please identify the assessments of the rubric that you believe are incorrect and why. After receiving your written request, I will review your documentation and the assignment and decide if a grade change is warranted, and return the test with some written comments. If your concern remains after that, then I will meet with you. Under no condition will a grade review result in a lowered grade.

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

-Thomas A. Edison

Please see my office hours on page one of this syllabus.

Everyone is welcome to my *office hours* to discuss assignments, your progress in the class, bioethical topics, or whatever. *Make an appointment if you wish, or drop by during the posted times!*

I am a full professor in the Philosophy Department. I received my Ph.D. in 1992, from the University of Notre Dame. I came to Carroll College in 1995. My research interests are in Medieval Philosophy, especially the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and applied ethics. I have given papers/presentations on: Thomas Aquinas, Catholic Identity, God’s Omnipotence, End of Life Decision-Making, using technology in the classroom. I’ve been married almost 35 years and have eight kids (one Carroll grad; two at Carroll right now!). I am involved in various community organizations in Helena and enjoy visiting historical sites, hiking, and photography.

The college is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you believe that you may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability, please contact Dr. Kathleen Gilboy, Accessibility Services Coordinator, in order to discuss your specific needs and disability documentation requirements and to determine a reasonable accommodation plan. You may schedule a meeting through Handshake with Dr. Gilboy. Her office is located in O’Connell Hall room 126 and her extension is 406-447-4376.

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are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students.