

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

History/Religious Studies 208

WESTERN INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY TO 1500

Fall 2018

TTh, 1:00-2:15 p.m., 2280 Grainger Hall

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 11-12; Thursdays, 9-10; and by appointment

Course Description

This course explores some central themes in the history of Western religious thinking from the ancient Greeks to the dawn of the modern era. We will consider how two distinct and multifaceted intellectual traditions—the classical and the Judeo-Christian—arose in the ancient Mediterranean world and how those traditions interacted to shape European thought about the divine, humans, and the cosmos from late antiquity to the Renaissance.

Course Texts

The following required books are available for purchase at local and online bookstores and are also on reserve at College Library in Helen C. White Hall. These texts come in multiple English translations and editions, but *please use and cite these particular versions*:

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. and ed. Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant (Penguin, 2003)

Epictetus, *Discourses and Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Robert Dobbin (Penguin, 2008)

Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 1992)

The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, trans. and ed. Betty Radice, rev. by M. T. Clanchy (Penguin, 2003)

Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, trans. Betty Radice and ed. A. H. T. Levi (Penguin, 1993)

You will also need an English translation of the Bible, including both the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the New Testament. Any modern scholarly version will do, but this edition is recommended: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, 5th Edition (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Learning Outcomes

The main objective of this course is to spark and nourish your fascination with pre-modern Western intellectual history and religious thought. If you invest time, thought, and hard work in the course, by semester's end you will also be able to:

- identify and explain the significance of some main ways in which pre-modern thinkers posed and answered central questions of meaning and human existence
- interpret complex writings from the past contextually, critically, and empathetically
- construct strong historical arguments based on textual evidence and careful reasoning
- compose clear analytical and argumentative written prose

Course Credit

This three-credit course meets for two 75-minute periods each week over the fall semester and carries the expectation that you will spend *an average* of three hours outside of class for each class meeting. In other words, plan to allot about six hours per week for reading, writing papers, studying for exams, and preparing for class meetings. Some weeks the work load will be heavier; other weeks it will be lighter.

Course Requirements

1. Attend and be prepared to participate in all class meetings. I will take attendance throughout the semester. If an illness or emergency forces you to miss a class, please email me in advance. Unexcused absences will lower your class participation grade.

Most meetings will include some writing exercise, class activity, and/or class discussion. You are expected to have read all texts closely in advance and to participate actively in class. *You must bring a copy of relevant texts, including those posted on Canvas, to each meeting.* I recommend that you print out posted readings and bring your annotated hard copies to class. If you prefer, you may bring electronic versions of texts on a laptop or tablet, but not on a phone. You will receive a participation grade (on a 10-point scale) three times during the semester: on October 4, November 8, and December 11. Attendance and class participation count for 10% of your final grade.

2. Write four responses of 250-300 words each, answering a specific question about assigned readings. Questions will be posted on Canvas. You have the option of writing on most assigned texts and may choose which readings you respond to. However, the first response must be turned in by September 20, the second by October 18, the third by November 8, and the fourth by December 11.

Responses will be graded based on the following criteria: (1) Did you answer the question clearly and directly? (2) Does your response reflect a close, careful reading of the relevant text(s)? (3) Is your response based on the text itself rather than generalizations or things you may have read about the text elsewhere? (4) Is it written in clear prose, free of errors?

To get credit for a response paper, you must leave a copy on Canvas before the start of the class period when the reading is due; the submission folder closes at 1:00 p.m. sharp. No late papers accepted. Together, the four responses make up 15% of your final grade.

3. Write two analytical essays of 1500-1700 words (4-5 pages) each. You will submit two versions of each essay. On September 27 you will turn in a complete, polished draft of your first paper (hard copy in class and e-copy on Canvas). The following week you will meet individually with a Writing Fellow (WF) for comments and feedback on your draft (see below for more on WFs). On October 11 you will submit a revised version of your essay that takes your WF's feedback into account. The schedule for the second paper is similar: first draft due on November 15, meeting with your WF the week after Thanksgiving, revised version due on December 4. Each part of the process (draft, meeting, revision) will form part of your final grade on each essay. Details about the process and evaluation criteria will be given with the first essay assignment. The first paper counts for 15% and the second for 20% of your course grade.

4. Write an in-class midterm exam on October 30 and a final exam on December 15. The midterm will include several short (one-paragraph) identifications and a longer essay. The final will be similar but will include an additional essay or text analysis section. You will receive a study guide with potential identifications and essay questions one week before each test. The midterm counts for 15% and the final for 25% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

All assignments and your final course grade will be calculated using the following scale:

93-100%=A	83-87%=B	70-77%=C	0-59%=F
88-92%=AB	78-82%=BC	60-69%=D	

Honors Credit

Students taking the course for Honors credit should consult with me by October 2 to discuss options for an Honors project. These include expanding one of the analytical papers, writing a research paper on another topic, or doing a project involving art, media, or another form of public presentation. For Honors students, the course grade will be determined as follows: class participation 10%; responses 15%; first essay 15%; midterm 15%; Honors project 25%; final exam 20%.

Communication and Office Hours

I welcome meeting with students outside of class time. You are strongly encouraged to come to office hours at any time during the semester, whether to discuss a question or problem you've encountered in the course, to get help on a paper, to explore an idea, or simply to chat. I hold regular office hours on Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m., but if you have a schedule conflict during those times, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet. In general the best way to reach me is via email (eric.carlsson@wisc.edu). I check email regularly and will try to respond within 24 hours. Often I can reply sooner than that, but on weekends response time may be up to 48 hours.

Writing Fellows

We are very fortunate to have four Writing Fellows (WFs) working with us this semester: Emily Atseff (atseff@wisc.edu), Julia Knecht (knecht3@wisc.edu), Cameron Lane-Flehinger (laneflehinge@wisc.edu), and Claire Powling (cpowling@wisc.edu). These undergraduates are skilled writers who have been chosen through a campus-wide selection process and given intensive training on how to offer constructive criticism during the writing process. Each of you will work with one of the WFs individually on your two papers. Your WF will read your polished drafts closely, offer detailed comments, and meet with you individually to make suggestions for how your drafts can be improved.

Experienced writers know that all good writing involves extensive revising. The most effective way of re-seeing one's work is by getting thoughtful feedback from an intelligent reader. That is what the WFs provide. They are not experts in the subject matter of the course and will generally not offer substantive critiques of your paper. Nor will they grade your papers. Instead, they will help you see where your argument and presentation could be clearer and more effective and they will flag logical and conceptual problems in your prose. All of us, no matter how much experience we have as writers, can benefit immensely from the kind of thoughtful engagement with our work that the WFs will offer you. I urge you to make the most of this opportunity.

Policy on Late Papers

Because the Writing Fellows will be reading papers on a tight schedule, you must submit them on time. If you face an emergency that makes it impossible for you to complete your paper on schedule, please contact me immediately. Unless arrangements for an extension have been made with me at least 24 hours before the due date, late papers will be deducted one half grade for each day they are late (e.g., an AB paper becomes a B the next day, a BC the following day, etc.).

The History Lab

The History Lab (located in 4255 Mosse Humanities Building) is an excellent resource specifically for undergraduates writing history papers. Trained Ph.D. students in history will help you regardless of your stage in the writing process—formulating a thesis, developing your argument, citing sources, revising your drafts, or even paragraph and sentence composition. You can sign up for a one-on-one consultation at <https://advising.wisc.edu/content/history-lab#info>.

Electronic Devices

A growing body of research suggests that students process information more thoughtfully, grasp concepts better, focus their attention more sharply, and—unsurprisingly—earn better grades when they take notes with pen and paper rather than on a computer. And who of us with an open laptop is not tempted to surf, engage social media, play games, etc.? For these reasons, and because this course runs on face-to-face interaction, I strongly encourage you not to use computers in class. Cell phones should be silenced and put away during class.

Academic Integrity

UW-Madison takes academic integrity very seriously. No form of cheating or plagiarism—representing somebody else’s work as your own—will be tolerated in this course. In your papers you must cite sources carefully, whether you repeat someone else’s exact words or paraphrase or draw on her or his ideas. If you have specific questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html. Penalties for plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and other forms of cheating range from failing an assignment or a course to being expelled from the university. For university policies on academic misconduct, see <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>.

Students with Disabilities

UW-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. If you have a disability that requires accommodations, please inform me of this need by the end of the third week of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

UW-Madison Statement on Diversity

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. UW-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background—people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Reading assignments marked with an asterisk (*) are posted as PDFs on Canvas.

Sep 6 Course Introduction

I. The Greeks, the Gods, and the Good Life

- Sep 11 The Break with Myth
*Homer, *The Iliad*, Book I
*Xenophanes, fragments
- Sep 13 Socrates and the Sophists
Plato, *Apology* (entire)
- Sep 18 Plato: Knowledge and the World of Ideas
*Plato, "Parable of the Cave," from *The Republic*
Plato, *Phaedo*, 116-45
- Sep 20 Plato: The Soul and the Afterlife RESPONSE 1 DUE
Plato, *Phaedo*, 145-99; you may read only the editor's summaries on pages 145-175
*Plato, "The Myth of Er," from *The Republic*
- Sep 25 Aristotle's World
*Aristotle, selections from *Metaphysics*
- Sep 27 Skepticism and Epicureanism ESSAY 1 POLISHED DRAFT DUE
*Lucretius, selections from *The Nature of Things*
- Oct 2 Stoicism: Philosophy and the Good Life MEET WITH WRITING
FELLOW THIS WEEK
Epictetus, *Discourses*, Book I: 1-3, 6, 9, 12-21, 24; Book II: 2, 5
8, 10, 14, 18, 22

II. The People of God and the Goal of History

- Oct 4 Torah: Monotheism and Election
Genesis 1-4, 12, 15, 17; recommended: chs. 22, 25, 27, 28, 37, 39-50
- Oct 9 Torah: Israel and the Covenant
Exodus 1-7, 11-14, 19-20, 32; Deuteronomy 1-3, 6, 27-30, 34
- Oct 11 God's Kingdom? REVISED ESSAY 1 DUE
Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Joshua 1, 23; 1 Samuel 8, 12, 16, 17; 2 Samuel 5-7, 11, 12;
1 Kings 1-3, 8, 11-12; 2 Kings 17, 21-25
- Oct 16 Exile and Return
Hosea 1-3; Isaiah 1:1-2:4; 9; 11; 40; 52-53; Jeremiah 30, 31; Ezekiel 36, 37; Psalm 72
- Oct 18 Jesus and the Kingdom of God RESPONSE 2 DUE
The Gospel According to Matthew (entire); The Gospel According to John 1-3
- Oct 23 Paul and the Gentile Mission
Acts of the Apostles 1, 2, 9, 10, 15, 17; Paul's Letter to the Galatians (entire); Paul's First
Letter to the Corinthians 15

Oct 25	<u>The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism</u> *Selections from the Mishnah and the Talmud	
Oct 30	<u>MIDTERM EXAM</u>	
	III. Athens, Jerusalem, and the Making of an Intellectual Tradition	
Nov 1	<u>Christianity and Classical Culture</u> St. Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , 3-34	
Nov 6	<u>Saint Augustine (I)</u> St. Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , 35-110	
Nov 8	<u>Saint Augustine (II)</u> St. Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , 111-78	RESPONSE 3 DUE
Nov 13	<u>Monasticism and Mysticism (I)</u> *St. Benedict, selections from <i>Rule for Monasteries</i>	
Nov 15	<u>Monasticism and Mysticism (II)</u> *Hildegard of Bingen, selections from <i>Vita and Scivias</i> *Julian of Norwich, selections from <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i>	ESSAY 2 POLISHED DRAFT DUE
Nov 20	<u>Revelation and Reason</u> *Moses Maimonides, selections from <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i> *St. Thomas Aquinas, selections from <i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> and <i>Summa Theologiae</i>	
Nov 22	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!	
Nov 27	<u>Scholastic Culture and the Individual</u> Peter Abelard, <i>The Story of His Misfortunes</i> , 3-43 Heloise, Letter to Abelard, 47-55	MEET WITH WRITING FELLOW THIS WEEK
Nov 29	<u>Renaissance Humanism: The Individual and Human Nature</u> *Petrarch, <i>The Ascent of Mont Ventoux</i> *Pico della Mirandola, selections from <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>	
Dec 4	<u>Artistic Expressions</u> *Giorgio Vasari, selections from <i>The Lives of the Artists</i>	ESSAY 2 REVISED VERSION DUE
Dec 6	<u>Humanism and Reform (I)</u> Desiderius Erasmus, <i>Praise of Folly</i> , 3-49	
Dec 11	<u>Humanism and Reform (II)</u> Desiderius Erasmus, <i>Praise of Folly</i> , 50-134	RESPONSE 4 DUE

FINAL EXAM: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 12:25-2:25 P.M.