

PL 407 01 : HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

Spring 05

DAY / TIME : T & TH 3:00 - 4:15 P.M.

INSTRUCTOR : PROF. J.-L. SOLÈRE

OFFICE : DEP. OF PHILOSOPHY, # 390
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OFFICE HOURS : T & TH 4:30 – 5:15

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COURSE DESCRIPTION :

Far from being monolithic and repetitive, the Middle Ages were intellectually an experimental period during which multiple solutions were tried to give sense of the world, combining philosophic and ‘scientific’ knowledge with religious views. The aim of the course is to provide a precise image of this diversity of thoughts, through a study of their fundamental orientations and choices, the main problems they faced and the issues at stake.

This will be the opportunity to study a wide range of Christian authors, from S. Augustine and Boethius to Ockham, as well as to take in account Byzantine, Islamic and Jewish thoughts. The course will also highlight the essential concepts that were formed in the Middle Ages and that have been transmitted to modern philosophy, in metaphysics and ontology, theory of knowledge and consciousness, ethics, etc.

READINGS :

Required textbook : *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Arthur Hyman & James J. Walsh, Indianapolis, Hackett Pub., 2^d ed. 1973 (sq.). Available at the bookstore.

It will be our main sourcebook. Some other primary sources will be photocopied from the out-of-print *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by John F. Wippel & Allan B. Wolter, New York, The Free Press, 1969 (sq.).

Texts assigned in the syllabus should of course be read in advance, so as to make the best out of each class.

Helpful complementary readings (sometimes requested) will be indicated in the *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. III : *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by John Marenbon (London & New York, Routledge, 1998, sq.) = O'Neill B51.R68 1998 Reserve shelves.

Other valuable books on the history of philosophy are for instance:

– Chronological ones :

Frederick J. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, University of Notre-Dame Press, 1990.

Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, Random House, 1954.

– Thematical ones :

The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy, ed. by Arthur S. McGrade, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, New York, Ch. Scribner's sons, 1940, sq.

A more detailed bibliography will be given further.

As Medieval authors very often refer to Ancient authors and pursue their lines of thought, studying philosophy in Middle Ages will be easier if you have some knowledge of philosophy in Antiquity. I then advise you to consult for example the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (not to be confused with the *Routledge History...*) – Printed : O'Neill Reference B51 .R68 1998 ; CD-ROM : O'Neill Media Center Reference B51 .R68 1998 ; or electronic version – when you need some information about Ancient philosophy : authors, e.g. Porphyry or Proclus; topics, e.g. “Immortality” or “Forms, Platonic”; concepts, e.g “Nous” or “Pneuma”...

I would particularly recommend that you read the contributions on “Aristotle”, “Platonism”, “Plotinus”, “Neoplatonism” and “Stoicism” if you feel you have some lacks there. Besides, as you will see, I will request the reading of some articles.

COURSE CREDIT

Class participation	10%	
Midterm exam	30%	Take-home exam ; due on Tuesday March 15
Final exam	30%	
Final paper	30%	Due on Tuesday May 3

SYLLABUS

Abbreviations:

HW = *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Arthur Hyman & James J. Walsh

WW = *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by John F. Wippel & Allan B. Wolter (photocopies)

REP = *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

RHP = *Routledge History of Philosophy* vol. III (Reserve shelves)

Req. = requested readings

Opt. = optional readings

Opt.* = optional but strongly recommended readings

WEEK 1

Jan. 18 – Class 1 : Introduction

Jan. 20 – Class 2 : S. Augustine, part 1

Req. : HW p. 15-20 & 33-64

WEEK 2

Jan. 25 – Class 3 : S. Augustine, part 2

Req. : HW p. 68-74 , 75-88 & 89-111

Opt. : E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy*, p. 9-64, or F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. II, p.13-39.

Jan. 27 – Class 4 : Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagites

Req. : *On the Divine Names*, chap. I, II, IV § 19-34 (Electronic version : <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/rolt/dionysius.pdf> – the introduction may be helpful as well)

Opt.* : “Proclus” in REP

WEEK 3

Feb. 1 – Class 5 : Byzantine thought

Req. : “Patristic Philosophy” in REP ; S. Bonaventure, WW p. 314-326 (complement to classes 2 & 3)

Opt.* : “Platonism”, “Forms, platonic”, “Neoplatonism”, “Plotinus” in REP

Feb. 3 – Class 6 : Syriac philosophy and the beginnings of Arabic philosophy

Req. : “Alexander of Aphrodisias”, “Aristotle Commentators”, “Philoponus”, “Simplicius”, “Themistius” in REP

Opt. : “Ash‘ariyya and Mu‘tazila”, “Islamic Theology”, “Science in Islamic philosophy” in REP

WEEK 4

Feb. 8 – Class 7 : Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi

Req. : HW p. 211-232

Opt.* : “Aristotle” §§ 7-14 & 16-17 in REP

Feb. 10 – Class 8 : Avicenna, part 1

Req. : HW p. 234-255

Opt. : “Causality and necessity in Islamic thought”, “Ethics in Islamic philosophy” in REP

WEEK 5

Feb. 15 – Class 9 : Avicenna, part 2

Req. : HW p. 255-262

Opt. : “Illuminationist philosophy” in REP

Feb. 17 – Class 10 : Al-Ghazzali

Req. : HW p. 264-291

Opt.* : “Law, Islamic philosophy of”, “Mystical philosophy” in REP

WEEK 6

Feb. 22 – Class 11 : Averroes, part 1

Req. : HW p. 293-317, WW p. 235-240

Opt. : “Ibn Bajja”, “Ibn Tufayl” in REP

Feb. 24 – Class 12 : Averroes, part 2

Req. : HW p. 324-334, WW p. 241-243

WEEK 7

Mar. 1 – Class 13 : Maimonides

Req. : HW p. 369-419, WW p. 246-262

Opt.* : RHP chap. 4

Mar. 3 – Class 14 : Boethius, part 1

Req. : HW p. 114-127, “Porphyry” in REP

Opt.: “Language, Medieval theories of”

MIDTERM VACATION

WEEK 8

Mar. 15 – Class 15 : Boethius, part 2

Req. : HW p. 128-130, WW p. 94-96, RHP chap. 5

Mar. 17 – Class 16 : John Scotus Erigena, part 1

Req. : WW p. 111-117 ; Roger Bacon, WW p. 273-297

WEEK 9

Mar. 22 – Class 17 : John Scotus Erigena, part 2

Req. : HW p. 132-145, WW p. 131-137

Mar. 24 – No class

WEEK 10

Mar. 29 – Class 18 : Anselm of Canterbury, part 1

Req. : HW p. 147-162

Mar. 31 – Class 19 : Anselm of Canterbury, part 2

Req. : Peter Lombard & Richard of Saint-Victor, WW p. 204-226

WEEK 11

Apr. 5 – Class 20 : Peter Abailard, part 1

Req. : HW p. 164-188

Opt.* : RHP chap. 7

Apr. 7 – Class 21 : Peter Abailard, part 2

Req. : HW p. 188-202 ; RHP chap. 8

Opt. : RHP chap. 9

WEEK 12

Apr. 12 – Class 22 : Thomas Aquinas, part 1

Req. : HW p. 503-515, 523-541

Opt.* : RHP chap. 10

Apr. 14 – Class 23 : Thomas Aquinas, part 2

Req. : HW p. 541-564, 569-579

Opt.* : RHP chap. 12

WEEK 13

Apr. 19 – Class 24 : John Duns Scotus, part 1

Req. : HW p. 606-622

Apr. 21 – Class 25 : John Duns Scotus, part 2

Req. : HW p. 624-631, 639-646

WEEK 14

Apr. 26 – Class 26 : William of Ockham, part 1

Req. : HW p. 651-662, 668-670, 671-679, 686-688

Apr. 28 – Class 27 : William of Ockham, part 2

Req. : HW p. 693-700

WEEK 15

May 3 – Class 28 : Perspectives