

## History/Religious Studies 208

### WESTERN INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY TO 1500

Spring 2014

TTh, 1:00-2:15 p.m., 1313 Sterling Hall

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Office hours: Tues, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.; Thurs, 9-10 a.m.; and by appointment

This course explores how a variety of thinkers from classical antiquity to Renaissance Europe grappled with some of the central questions of human existence: Who are we? Why are we here? How should we live? Does the divine exist? If so, what is its nature and what are the implications for humans? Is it even possible to find answers to such questions? We will read some defining works in Western intellectual history, starting with a selection of philosophical writings from the Greco-Roman world. We then turn to ancient Judaism and early Christianity and consider some central themes in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. In the last section of the course we analyze various ways in which medieval and Renaissance thinkers drew on biblical and classical sources to deal with the questions of existence as they confronted them in their diverse historical settings.

The course has two main goals. The first to familiarize you with some key thinkers, texts, and movements that have exerted a profound influence on how people in the West have thought about themselves, the world, and God. The second goal is to hone your skills as a historical thinker and interpreter of writings from the past. You will be asked to read closely, reflect on, discuss, and write about an exceedingly rich set of texts and ideas. Class discussions will provide the opportunity to voice your insights and to engage with those of your classmates. Writing exercises will give you the chance to synthesize your thinking into clear and persuasive arguments.

#### **Course Requirements**

1. Attend and participate in class meetings. In opting to take this course you are committing yourself to attend all class sessions. I will take attendance throughout the semester. If an illness or emergency forces you to miss a class, please email me in advance. More than two unexcused absences will lower your final grade in the course. Most meetings will include some class discussion of assigned readings. You are expected to have read all texts closely in advance and to participate actively in our discussions. Be sure to bring a copy of relevant texts, including those posted on Learn@UW, to each meeting. (You may bring electronic versions of texts on a laptop or tablet.) Attendance and class participation count for 10% of your final grade.

2. Write four response papers of 250-300 words each, answering a specific question about assigned readings. Questions will be posted on Learn@UW. You may choose which readings you respond to, but the first paper must be turned in by February 4, the second by March 4, the third by April 3, and the fourth by May 6. To get credit for a response paper, you must leave an electronic copy in the Dropbox on Learn@UW before the start of the class period when the reading is due; the Dropbox closes at 1:00 p.m. sharp. No late papers accepted. Together the four responses make up 10% of your final grade.

3. Write two analytical papers of 1400-1600 words (about five pages) each, due in both paper and electronic copy at the beginning of class on February 13 and April 17, respectively. Each paper will address a question based on assigned texts and themes that we will have discussed in class. You will meet with the course's teaching assistant, Paul Grant, as you write both papers. Late papers will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (e.g., a B paper becomes a BC if turned in the day after it's due, a C the next day, etc.). The first paper is worth 15% and the second 20% of your final grade.

4. Write an in-class midterm exam on March 11 and a final exam on May 15. The midterm will include several short (one-paragraph) identifications and a longer essay. The final will take a similar format but will include an additional essay or text analysis section. A study guide with potential identifications and essay questions will be distributed in advance. The midterm counts for 15% and the final for 30% of your final grade.

### **Teaching Assistant**

While this course does not have separate discussion sections, we are privileged to have an advanced graduate student in History, Paul Grant, who will serve as a special resource for students. You will meet individually with Paul as you write the longer papers and he will be available to help as you prepare for exams. Paul's office is 4260 Mosse Humanities (tel. 890-3308); his email is [pgrant@wisc.edu](mailto:pgrant@wisc.edu). Paul will hold office hours on Thursdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m.; Fridays, 9-10 a.m.; and by appointment.

### **Communication and Office Hours**

I enjoy talking with students outside of class. If you have questions related to any aspect of the course or if you just want to explore an idea, please don't hesitate to come to office hours, which I hold on Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-12 noon and Thursdays, 9-10 a.m. If you have a schedule conflict during those times, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet. Generally the best way to reach me is via email ([ewcarlss@wisc.edu](mailto:ewcarlss@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.

### **Disabilities and McBurney Students**

If you are a McBurney student or have a disability that requires special accommodations, please let me know at the beginning of the semester and I will be happy to make arrangements.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Please arrive to class meetings on time and silence any cell phones and electronic devices before the session begins. Once class has started, please give your full attention to matters at hand. Computers are allowed for note-taking and for accessing course texts, but not for surfing the web, playing games, checking Facebook, and other purposes unrelated to class.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

In this course, as in all your UW courses, you must do your own work and cite sources carefully. Plagiarism—representing somebody else's work, including material found on the internet—as your own is a serious ethical violation. 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](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>.

## Course Texts

The following books are available for purchase at local and online bookstores. The primary sources come in multiple English translations and editions; please use 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 UP, 1992)

G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The Dumb Ox"* (Doubleday, 1956)

Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Adams (Norton, 1989)

You will also need an English translation of the Bible. Any modern scholarly version will do, but the following edition is recommended:

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, College Edition, 4th Edition (Oxford UP, 2010)

In addition to the texts listed above, a number of readings will be posted on Learn@UW. See the schedule below for details.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Reading assignments marked with an asterisk (\*) are posted as links or documents on our Learn@UW course website.

Jan 21      Course Introduction

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

Jan 23      The Break with Myth  
\*Homer, *The Iliad*, Book I  
\*Fragments from Xenophanes

Jan 28      Socrates and the Sophists  
Plato, *Apology*

Jan 30      Plato: Knowledge and the World of Ideas  
\*Plato, "Parable of the Cave," from *The Republic*  
Plato, *Phaedo*, 116-45

Feb 4      Plato: The Soul and the Afterlife      RESPONSE #1 DUE  
Plato, *Phaedo*, 145-99      MEETINGS WITH PAUL GRANT THIS WEEK  
\*Plato, "The Myth of Er," from *The Republic*

Feb 6      Aristotle's World  
\*Aristotle, selections from *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*

Feb 11 Skepticism and Materialism  
\*Lucretius, selections from *On the Nature of Things*

Feb 13 NO CLASS PAPER #1 DUE

Feb 18 Stoicism: Philosophy and the Good Life (I)  
Epictetus, *Discourses*, Book I  
\*James B. Stockdale, "The Stoic Warrior's Triad"

6:30-9:00 p.m.: Viewing of *The Gladiator*

Feb 20 Stoicism: Philosophy and the Good Life (II)  
Epictetus, *Discourses*, Book II, 2-5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22

## II. The People of God and the Goal of History

Feb 25 Monotheism and Election  
Genesis 1-4; 6-9; 11-13; 15:1-18:15; 21-22; 25:19-34; 26:34-28:4; 37; (39-49 recommended); 50

Feb 27 Israel and the Covenant  
Exodus 1-7, 11-20, 32; Leviticus 16, 23; Deuteronomy 1-6, 27-31, 34

Mar 4 God's Kingdom? RESPONSE #2 DUE  
Joshua 1, 23-24; 1 Samuel 8, 12; 2 Samuel 5-7, 11-12; 1 Kings 1-3, 8, 11-12; 2 Kings 21-25

Mar 6 Exile and Return  
Hosea 1-3; Isaiah 1:1-2:4; 9:1-7; 11; 40; 52-53; Jeremiah 30-33; Ezekiel 37; Malachi 1-4

Mar 11 MIDTERM EXAM

Mar 13 Jesus and the Kingdom of God  
The Gospel of Matthew (entire); The Gospel of John, 1-4

--SPRING BREAK--

Mar 25 Paul, the Gentiles, and Christian Eschatology  
Acts of the Apostles, 1-2, 8-11, 14-15, 17; Galatians (entire); 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 21

Mar 27 The Parting of the Ways  
\*Selections from the Talmud

## III. Athens and Jerusalem: The Making of an Intellectual Tradition

Apr 1 Christianity and Classical Culture

Apr 3	<u>Saint Augustine (I)</u> St. Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , Books I-V	RESPONSE #3 DUE
Apr 8	<u>Saint Augustine (II)</u> St. Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , Books VI-IX	MEETINGS WITH PAUL GRANT THIS WEEK
Apr 10	<u>Monasticism and Mysticism (I)</u> * St. Benedict, selections from <i>Rule for Monasteries</i>	
Apr 15	<u>Monasticism and Mysticism (II)</u> * Hildegard of Bingen, selections from <i>Scivias</i> * Julian of Norwich, selections from <i>Revelations</i>	
Apr 17	<u>Jewish Philosophical Theology</u> * Moses Maimonides, selections from <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i>	<b>PAPER #2 DUE</b>
Apr 22	<u>Scholasticism (I)</u> G. K. Chesterton, <i>Saint Thomas Aquinas</i> , chs. 1-4 * St. Thomas Aquinas, selections from <i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i> and <i>Summa Theologiae</i>	
Apr 24	<u>Scholasticism (II)</u> G. K. Chesterton, <i>Saint Thomas Aquinas</i> , chs. 5-8	
Apr 29	<u>Renaissance Humanism: The Individual and Human Nature</u> * Petrarch, <i>The Ascent of Mount Ventoux</i> * Pico della Mirandola, selections from <i>Oration on the Dignity of Man</i>	
May 1	<u>Humanism and Religious Reform (I)</u> H. R. Trevor Roper, "Desiderius Erasmus" in Adams, ed., <i>Praise of Folly</i> , 267-85 Desiderius Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i> , 3-32	
May 6	<u>Humanism and Religious Reform (II)</u> Desiderius Erasmus, <i>The Praise of Folly</i> , 32-87; <i>Paraclesis</i> , 118-27	RESPONSE #4 DUE
May 8	<u>Retrospect and Prospect</u>	

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2:45-4:45 P.M.