PHIL 31002 : Medieval Philosophy
Fall 2015  TTh 12:30-1:45  Bowman 315

Professor: Gina Zavota
Office: 320 Bowman Hall, Room G
Office Hours:  T 11:30-12:30 and TTh 1:45-2:45
and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of the philosophy of the western world from the fall of Rome to the beginning of the
Renaissance. In addition to reading important Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and
William of Ockham, we will consider representative figures from both the Jewish and Islamic traditions. Our
reading of canonical figures from these traditions will be complemented by study of some of the important
“mystical” and/or “heretical” thinkers associated with them, and by an overview of major historical and cultural
developments that influenced the nature of philosophical speculation during this period.

Prerequisites: At least one of PHIL 11009, 21002, 41038 and at least one of PHIL 11001, 21001, or permission of
the instructor. Students without the proper prerequisites risk being deregistered from the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Text: Philosophy in the Middle Ages, 3rd edition, ed. Hyman, Walsh and Williams (Hackett)

In addition to this anthology, brief selections from other works will be handed out in class. These additional readings
are also required.

For each class meeting, you will be expected to read the designated selections and arrive prepared to discuss them.
Please bring the book to class each day. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and possibly some individual
and small-group work on specific textual questions.

Writing-Intensive Course Information: This course fulfills the University requirement for a Writing-Intensive
Course (WIC). It has thus been designed to help you develop your philosophical writing skills. A WIC requires a
substantial amount of writing, provides opportunities for guided revision, and focuses on writing forms and
standards used in the professional life of the discipline. You will be given two types of writing assignment: short
“micro” projects and longer “macro” projects. The micros will give you the opportunity to practice basic skills
such as writing a thesis paragraph, analyzing an argument, or constructing a bibliography; they are building
blocks which will help you to write the macros. Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write 6
micros and 3 macros. You will also have the opportunity to rewrite your second macro in its entirety; your final
grade for the project will be a combination of both the draft and final grades.

GRADING PRACTICES

Micro assignments will be graded on a scale of zero to ten points, macros on a scale of zero to twenty points,
participation on a scale of zero to ten points.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Toward Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro #1</td>
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<td>Micro #2</td>
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<td>Macro #1</td>
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<td>Micro #3</td>
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<td>Micro #4</td>
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<td>Micro #5</td>
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<td>Micro #6</td>
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<td>Macro #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Final grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>90-92</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>83-86</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
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<td>60-66</td>
<td>D</td>
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and so on...

**Class Participation:** For each class meeting, you will be expected to read the designated selections and arrive prepared to discuss them. I would suggest that you take notes while reading, especially if you have questions you would like to ask in class. While attendance and punctuality will be taken into account in the calculation of your participation grade, this grade will primarily reflect the extent to which you make meaningful contributions to class discussions (this includes asking questions about material that you don’t understand) and to any group work or writing exercises that take place during class meetings.

**Late or Missed Assignments:** I expect all students to complete all writing assignments in a timely fashion. Students who do not think they will be able to complete an assignment on time must see me before the assignment is due to discuss their situation and arrange an alternate schedule for completion of the work. Even if you contact me before class, this does not guarantee that you will receive an extension; you must have a good reason for needing one. Otherwise, **micros which are submitted late will be penalized one point for each class that they are late, and macros will be penalized two points per class.**

Assignments and other handouts will be made available online on BlackBoard; your grades for each assignment will also be posted there. Go to [https://learn.kent.edu](https://learn.kent.edu) and log on with your FlashLine ID and password, or access BlackBoard directly through Flashline. Once you’ve logged on, you’ll see this course in your course list, and you’ll have access to the handouts, any additional readings that are assigned, and other information about the course.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Students with Disabilities:** University policy 3-01.3 in the *University Policy Register* requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note that you must first verify your eligibility for these accommodations through Student Accessibility Services (call 330 672 3391 or visit [www.kent.edu/sas](http://www.kent.edu/sas) for more information on registration procedures).
**Academic Dishonesty:** University policy 3-01.8 in the *University Policy Register* deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. In accordance with this policy, cheating and plagiarism are punishable by several possible sanctions, including (but not limited to) refusal to accept coursework for credit, assigning a grade of “F” or zero to an assignment, assigning a grade of “F” for the course, expulsion from the university, or the revocation of a degree. It is recommended that students familiarize themselves with this policy, which can be viewed at [http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism](http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism). If you have any questions, please ask your instructor for clarification.

**Academic Complaint Procedure:** The Department of Philosophy’s Grievance Procedure for handling student grievances is in conformity with the Student Academic Complaint Policy and Procedures set down as University Policy 4-02.3 in the *University Policy Register*, viewable at [http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-and-procedure-student-academic-complaints](http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-and-procedure-student-academic-complaints). For information concerning the details of the grievance procedure, please see the departmental Chairperson.

**Add/Drop and Withdrawal Deadlines:** The official registration deadlines for this course can be found by doing a Detailed Class Search from the Schedule of Classes found at [https://keys.kent.edu:44220/ePROD/bwlkffcs.P_AdvUnsecureCrseSearch?term_in=201580](https://keys.kent.edu:44220/ePROD/bwlkffcs.P_AdvUnsecureCrseSearch?term_in=201580). University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

Please respect the intellectual property of your instructor by not posting class materials online.

## READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

### Part I: Platonism and Aristotelian Logic in Early Medieval Thought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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| Week 1 | 9/1 - 9/3  | Toward A Medieval Notion of the Self  
Augustine, *Confessions*, Book XI (p. 72-81) |
| Week 2 | 9/8 - 9/10 | The Soul’s Desire to Know  
Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Book X, Ch. 8-12 (handout) |
| Week 3 | 9/15 - 9/17| The Nature of the Good  
Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, I.1 (handout); III.9-12 (p. 103-112)  
Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* (handout) |
| Week 4 | 9/22 - 9/24| Faith and Reason: The “Ontological Argument”  
Anselm, *Proslogion*, Ch 1-4 (p. 161-164) and *Gaunilo’s Reply* (p. 173-175)  
Micro #2 will be completed in class on Thursday, 9/24 |
| Week 5 | 9/29 - 10/1| Anselm, continued |

### Part II: Greek Philosophy in the Jewish and Islamic Traditions

| Week 6 | 10/6 - 10/8  | Causes and Causality  
Avicenna (ibn Sina), *The Cure*, “Metaphysics” VI, Ch 1, 2 (p. 249-255)  
Macro #1 Due |
Week 7: 10/13 - 10/15  The Sufi Reaction to Aristotelian Philosophy and Neoplatonism  
al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, excerpt (p. 278-284)  
ibn Tufail, “The Experience of Total Self-Annihilation” (handout)

Week 8: 10/20 - 10/22  Material Intellect  
Averroes (ibn Rushd), *Long Commentary on “The Soul,”* Bk 3, Comment 5 (p. 306-16)

Week 9: 10/27 - 10/29  God’s Attributes  
Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Bk I, Ch 51, 52, 57, 58 (p. 364-369)

Week 10: 11/3 - 11/5  Jewish Responses to Aristotelianism  
Hasdai Crescas, *The Light of the Lord*, Book II, Part 6, Ch 1 (p. 401-408)

Part III: Aristotle and Neoplatonic Mysticism in the Christian West

Week 11: 11/10 - 11/12  Essence and Existence  
Bonaventure, *The Mind’s Journey into God*, Ch 5-7 (p. 430-436)  
Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, excerpts (p. 451-457)

Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, Q II, Art. 1-3; Q XIII, Art.2, 5 (p. 466-470)

Week 13: 11/24  Aquinas, continued  
NO CLASS THURSDAY, NOV 26: THANKSGIVING

Week 14: 12/1 - 12/3  German Mysticism  
Meister Eckhart, *Sermons* 48, 52, 53, excerpts (handout)

Week 15: 12/8 - 12/10  Faith and Reason: “The Metaphysical Argument”  

MACRO #3 WILL BE DUE BY 5:00 PM THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17th IN MY MAILBOX IN BOWMAN 320  
THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS COURSE
Explanation of Number Grades for Micro Writing Assignments

I) Comprehension / Working with Texts (out of 5 points = 50% of grade)

0  No evidence of comprehension of texts; no use of textual evidence to support argument
1  Evidence of serious deficiencies in comprehension; only minimal use of textual support
2  Evidence of some deficiencies in comprehension; consistent attempts to incorporate textual evidence, but most of the passages chosen fail to provide effective support
3  Evidence of good comprehension of the material; successful use of textual evidence in support of the argumentation, showing that the author has understood the texts:
   •  direct quotes and paraphrases chosen for inclusion in the essay provide adequate support for the argument
   •  quotes and paraphrases are used with appropriate frequency (neither too often nor too seldom)
   •  quotes are sufficiently contextualized to allow for maximum effectiveness
4  Evidence of superior comprehension of the material, shown (among other things) by exceptionally insightful and effective use of textual support; exceeds the standards described in (4) above in terms of both use of textual evidence and understanding of the ideas conveyed by the texts

II) Argumentation (out of 4 points = 40% of grade)

0  No argument given
1  Provides an argument, but only rarely meets the standards described in (3) below
2  Provides an argument which sometimes, but not consistently, meets the standards described in (3) below
3  Respects the standards of rigorous philosophical argumentation:
   •  explicitly spells out each step of the argument clearly and concisely
   •  uses persuasive techniques suitable for philosophical writing; avoids fallacies
   •  considers objections and alternate positions where appropriate
4  Provides an exceptionally interesting, challenging, and well-articulated argument; exceeds the standards described in (4) above in terms of the quality, rigor, and originality of the argumentative strategies employed

III) Organization / Presentation (out of 1 point = 10% of grade)

0  Significant sections of the essay have no or only minimal relation to the assigned topic, and/or significant portions of the assignment were not completed; mostly unacceptable or absent formatting; poor grammar and spelling
.5  Generally meets the standards described in (1) below, but occasionally exhibits significant digressions from the assigned topic, omits portions of the assignment, is much (~25% or more) longer or shorter than called for, or contains grammar and spelling errors that are significant enough to interfere with reader comprehension
1  Essay remains on the assigned topic, with no significant digressions or deficiencies; only minor or no problems with formatting or grammar

Notes

•  These standards are used for all Micro writing assignments, except where obviously not applicable (such as Micro 4, the research and bibliography-writing exercise)
•  Half-points (and on very rare occasions, quarter-points) are also used; in all cases, a half-point score corresponds to a standard halfway between what is listed for the two whole points
•  This information is meant to help you understand what is expected of you, so you can do your best on the assignments and concentrate on improving specific areas of your writing where you might need more practice. It is not meant to be intimidating or confusing in any way. If you have any questions about grading standards, just ask!
Explanation of Number Grades for Macro Writing Assignments

IV) Thesis (out of 2 points = 10% of grade)
0 No thesis statement or introductory paragraph
.5 Very unclear thesis statement and/or thesis (introductory) paragraph which provides little relevant information and has little or no connection to the rest of the paper
1 Unclear, poorly worded, or insufficient thesis statement/thesis paragraph
1.5 Clearly stated but not exceptionally challenging thesis; mostly successful thesis paragraph
2 Clearly stated, original thesis; effective thesis paragraph

V) Comprehension / Working with Texts (out of 8 points = 40% of grade)
0 No evidence of comprehension of texts; no use of textual evidence to support argument
2 Evidence of serious deficiencies in comprehension; only minimal use of textual support
4 Evidence of some deficiencies in comprehension; consistent attempts to incorporate textual evidence, but most of the passages chosen fail to provide effective support
6 Successful use of textual evidence in support of the argumentation, providing evidence that the author has understood the texts in question:
  • direct quotes and paraphrases chosen for inclusion in the essay provide adequate support for the argument
  • quotes and paraphrases are used with appropriate frequency (neither too often nor too seldom)
  • quotes are sufficiently contextualized to allow for maximum effectiveness
8 Evidence of superior comprehension of the material, shown (among other things) by exceptionally insightful and effective use of textual support; exceeds the standards described in (6) above in terms of both use of textual evidence and understanding of the ideas conveyed by the texts

VI) Argumentation (out of 7 points = 35% of grade)
0 No argument given
1 Provides an argument, but only rarely meets the standards described in (5) below
3 Provides an argument which sometimes, but not consistently, meets the standards described in (5) below
5 Respects the standards of rigorous philosophical argumentation:
  • explicitly spells out each step of the argument clearly and concisely
  • uses persuasive techniques suitable for philosophical writing; avoids fallacies
  • considers objections and alternate positions where appropriate
7 Provides an exceptionally interesting, challenging, and well-articulated argument; exceeds the standards described in (5) above in terms of the quality, rigor, and originality of the argumentative strategies employed

VII) Relevance / Completeness / Organization (out of 2 points = 10% of grade)
2 Significant sections of the essay have no or only minimal relation to the assigned topic, and/or significant portions of the assignment were not completed
2.5 Generally meets the standards described in (2) below, but occasionally exhibits significant digressions from the assigned topic or omits portions of the assignment
3 Essay remains on the assigned topic, with no significant digressions or deficiencies

VIII) Presentation (out of 1 point = 5% of grade)
0 Mostly unacceptable or absent formatting and documentation; poor grammar and spelling
.5 Generally meets the standards described in (1) below, but occasionally exhibits significant deviations, in the form of either unacceptable formatting, absent documentation of citations, or grammar and spelling that interfere with reader comprehension
1 Text and bibliography are properly formatted; citations in the text are correctly documented; text follows the rules of standard written English