

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016-17

Philosophy 3012F: Medieval Philosophy

Fall Term 2016

T 9:30-11:20 am

Th 10:30-11:20 am

Instructor: Benjamin Hill

StvH 3142:

519-661-2111 x80143

Office Hours: WTh, 11:30-12:20 pm

Email: Please use OWL

Emergency: bhill28@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

This is a topically structured survey of the main themes and debates constituting medieval European philosophy. The material will cover, roughly, the period from 400 CE through 1400 CE. Topics to be explored include the natures of theology, logic, and *Scientia*, the problem of universals, divine illumination, abstraction, knowledge and skepticism, the metaphysic structure of bodies, causation, human nature and the soul, essence and existence, God's essence and existence, the nature of goodness, freedom of the will, the virtues and happiness, and the divine and natural law. Figures to be studied include Augustine, Boethius, Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Averroes, Anselm, Ockham, Scotus, Buridan, Avicenna, and others. This course is perfect for students of philosophy as well as medieval studies students and will provide an introduction to basic issues and figures important for intellectual history in the medieval period, the history of the church in the medieval period, the history of universities, the history of theology in the medieval period, and the history of science in the medieval period as well as the history of philosophy.

Prerequisites: None

Antirequisites: None

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Attendance is mandatory for this course and unexcused absences will adversely affect the student's grade. See Methods of Evaluation for information about how attendance is graded.

While completing the course student will:

- 1) Develop an understanding of what constitutes "medieval" European philosophy and how it is typically demarcated from ancient, renaissance, and early modern European philosophy;

- 2) Develop a rudimentary understanding of the historical trends and tendencies of medieval European philosophy and its evolution;
- 3) Develop a rudimentary understanding of the non-philosophical factors affecting the development and character of medieval European philosophy;
- 4) Develop the capacity and confidence to independently and critically read and philosophically engage with the texts constituting medieval European philosophy;
- 5) Develop a familiarity with a variety of philosophical topics and texts constituting the main areas of philosophical thought and expression constituting medieval European philosophy;
- 6) Develop an understanding of several core primary and secondary sources in the history of medieval European philosophy;
- 7) Develop an understanding of what constitutes research in the history of medieval European philosophy;
- 8) Develop the capacity to identify a topic of research for a project in the history of medieval European philosophy;
- 9) Develop the capacity to transform a topic of philosophical research into a clear and defensible thesis;
- 10) Begin developing the capacity to construct a cogent and compelling argument in defense of a philosophically significant and interesting thesis in the history of medieval European philosophy;
- 11) Develop the capacity to clearly explain and articulate the philosophical content of complex primary and secondary source readings in the history of medieval European philosophy.

TEXTS

Klima, Gyula with Fritz Allhof and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, eds.. *Medieval Philosophy:*

Essential Readings with Commentary. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007. ISBN9781405135658

Marenbon, John. *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 9780415281133.

Pasnau, Robert. *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Available electronically via Weldon; see OWL for the link.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Attendance (10%) All students are required to attend every class. A sign-in sheet will be distributed. Attendance does not connote mere physical presence in the classroom. It requires paying attention and not engaging in rude, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior during the class. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to: texting, checking email, reading the newspaper, reading material for another class, chatting or joking during class, surfing the internet, internet shopping, etc.. The instructor reserves the right to strike any person's name from the attendance roll for engaging in the above, or any other such disruptive or disrespectful behavior. Students are awarded 2.70 points per hour of class attended.

Homework and Assignments (10%) There will be weekly quizzes self-administered via OWL and occasional homework or in-class assignments to be submitted for grading. The weekly quizzes will be short, timed quizzes covering material taken directly from class or

the assigned reading. The quizzes will be multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blanks, or short answer (max 1-2 sentences). The homework or in-class assignments will be announced in class and posted on OWL. The OWL quiz portal will open at 6:00 pm on Thursday following a week of classes and will close at 6:00 pm on Saturday. (Reading week will be the only exception.)

Mid-term Examination (20%) There will be one mid-term examination administered on Thursday **Oct xx** during the usual class time. The students' aims should be to display a mastery of the philosophical material presented in the readings and class discussion. The focus of the exam will be on the ideas, doctrines, and arguments presented in class and in the readings. Students will be expected to present the ideas, doctrines, or arguments, to highlight their philosophically salient features, explain in detail how they work or fit together, and identify any crucial unstated assumptions on which they rely. Students may also be asked to briefly assess an idea, doctrine, or argument and provide specific reasons in support of his or her assessment. Students may also be asked to compare and contrast ideas, doctrines, or arguments between or among various authors or texts.

Final Examination (30%) There will be a cumulative, three hour final examination worth 30% of the student's grade. The exam will be administered at the date, time, and location to be dictated by the Registrar's Office. Like the mid-term examination, the final examination will be devoted to displaying a mastery of the philosophical material presented in the readings and class discussion. Students will be expected to describe and present the ideas, doctrines, or arguments, to highlight their philosophically salient features, explain in detail how they work or fit together, and identify any crucial unstated assumptions. Students may also be asked to assess an idea, doctrine, or argument and provide specific reasons in support of that assessment. Students should also expect to be able to compare and contrast ideas, doctrines, or arguments between or among various authors or texts.

Term Paper (30%) All students are required to submit a 1250-1500 word term paper. The paper is due at 11:55 pm Tuesday Dec 6th. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the paper is uploaded or emailed *before* 11:55 pm according to the upload/email timestamp. Take steps to ensure that your paper is not refused or counted late because of a slight error in timing. Late papers are assessed a 5% deduction per day until midnight Wed Dec 7th. No papers can be accepted after midnight on Wed Dec 7th per departmental and Senate policy. As of Wed Dec 7th, all students who have failed to submit a paper will be awarded a score of 0. Papers failing to fall within the required word count will not be accepted and will not be considered submissions; they will be awarded a score of 0 for the assignment.

Each paper should *defend* a philosophically important and interesting *thesis*. What this means is that your papers should not be simply expository, but must be analytic papers in that they will present an argument in defense of a substantive philosophical claim. There are a variety of types of acceptable papers ranging from *analyzing* an argument or doctrine, philosophically *assessing* an argument or doctrine, *interpreting* the doctrine or argument of a certain figure, *critiquing an interpretation* that another has offered of a figure's doctrine or argument, or *defending an interpretation* against the critique of

another. Authors should clearly state their thesis, construct a clear, coherent, and plausible argument in support of their thesis, and anticipate and respond to one or two potential objections to their thesis or argument. Papers will be graded on the following grounds: the historical and philosophical significance of the thesis; the power and adequacy of the argument marshalled in defense of the thesis; the use of the primary texts; the nature of the secondary sources selected and how they are used in the argument; the significance, interest, and power of the potential objection(s) raised; and the clarity, coherence, and plausibility with which the authors dispatch the objection(s) raised. The foci should be on the thesis and the argument developed in defense of it, but in so far as clarity, grammatical and semantical ability, and style are necessary preconditions for the power or impact of the thesis and its defense, they will be taken into account in the grading of each paper. Because thesis selection and development are part of the philosophical process and will be graded here, topics and paper questions are not provided to the students. Students who have questions about this are strongly encouraged to ask for assistance or advice at the earliest possible time. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out and use only reliable, scholarly vetted and peer-reviewed sources. For example, wikipedia and self-published web or blog postings are prima facie frowned upon and should be used with extreme caution. Students choosing to use such material rather than peer-reviewed articles and books or webposting recommended by the instructor should be prepared to justify his or her selection and use of such material.

Non-medical absences will be accommodated by the instructors with sufficient explanation and documentation for the absence. Late assignments and missed deadlines will also be accommodated by the instructors with sufficient explanation and documentation. Documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

The Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness is here:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

For accommodations of work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, documentation and decanal approval is not necessary.

No electronic devices or printed materials are allowed during examinations.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at

<http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus

ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

The policy of the Department of Philosophy is that all written work must be submitted to turnitin.com. See <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)

AUDITING

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

TBA