

**Philosophy 305 A**  
***Early Medieval Philosophy***  
 (4th to the 12th Century CE)

This course begins with a brief presentation of the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus insofar as these were influential on medieval philosophical thought. It then considers major thinkers in the Christian traditions from the 4th to the 12th century CE, and includes a brief introduction to major Islamic and Jewish philosophers within that time period insofar as their speculations were influential on medieval Christian philosophy.

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**Text:** Arthur Hyman, James J. Walsh, & Thomas Williams, eds. *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (3rd ed.) Cambridge, MA: Hackett.

**Formal Course Requirements and Grading Procedures**

Grades will be based on two mid-terms and a final examination. The mid-term examinations are fifty minutes long and the final examination is three hours in length. The mid-term examinations are each worth 20% of the course grade; the final examination is worth 60%. Students who have taken (and received a grade for) both mid-term examinations have the option of having the final examination count for 100% of their course grade. The mid-term examinations cover only the material that has not been tested before in the semester; the final examination is cumulative and covers all of the material dealt with in the course. Students are encouraged to discuss their mid-term examination with the instructor.

Significant dates:

- Mid-term examination #1: app. October 1
- Mid-term examination #2: app. November 1
- Final examination: scheduled by the University

Exceptions from course requirements, adjustments for taking examinations at set examination dates, etc. will only be made in accordance with UVic regulations as published in the Calendar. It is the responsibility of the students to acquaint themselves this fact and the relevant dates. The mid-term examinations will be returned as soon as they are graded. Final examinations are the property of the University and will not be returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office at a time designated by the University.

Grades will be assigned on a percentile basis with letter grade equivalents as follows: F=0-49; D=50-59; C=60-64; C+=65-69; B-=70-72; B=73-76; B+=77-79; A-=80-84; A=85-89; A+=90-100.

The criteria for assigning grades may be found in the University Calendar. Students are encouraged to discuss their examinations with the instructor.

### **Study Aids**

All of the instructor's slides will be posted on CourseSpaces. The instructor's lecture notes may be posted on CourseSpaces as well.

### **(Inappropriate behaviour and contraventions of academic integrity**

Inappropriate behaviour and violations of standards of academic integrity as defined in the University Calendar will be dealt with in accordance with University Regulations.)

## **Tentative Outline of Lectures**

It is estimated that each section will take approximately one to two weeks. However, this may vary, depending on class discussion and the familiarity of students with relevant philosophical material from other courses in the history of philosophy

### **Introduction**

#### **A. Greek Background of Medieval Philosophical Thought**

##### **1. Plato**

- a. Forms and Reality
- b. Epistemology (Theory of knowledge)
- c. Eschatology

##### **2. Aristotle**

- a. Ontology
- b. Theory of change (causality)
- c. Substantial forms and souls
- d. Epistemology

##### **3. Plotinus**

- a. Emanation
- b. The structure of reality
- c. Matter and evil

### **Christian Philosophers from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century**

#### **B. St. Augustine of Hippo**

- a. Nature and origin of the universe
- b. Humanity
  - (a) nature of humanity
  - (b) epistemology
    - (i) humanity's knowledge of the world
    - (ii) humanity's knowledge of God
  - (c) humanity and the state

- c. God, humanity and the problem of evil
  - (i) natural evil
  - (ii) moral evil
  - (iii) predestination and free will.
- d. Reason and faith

### **C. Pseudo-Dionysius (Dionysius the Areopagite)**

- a. Negative and positive ways (*via negativa* and *via positiva*)
- b. Neoplatonic currents
- c. Problem of evil

### **D. Boethius**

- a. Historical importance
- b. Free will vs. fate
- c. God's foreknowledge

### **E. John Scotus Eriugena**

- a. Nature and origin of the universe
- b. Humanity and God
- c. Reason and faith

### **F. St. Anselm of Canterbury**

- a. Reason and faith
- b. Ontological argument for the existence of God

### **G. Abelard and the Problem of Universals**

- a. Introduction
- b. Porphyry and Boethius
- c. Roscelin of Compiègne
- d. Peter Abelard

## **Islamic Philosophy** An Introduction

### **H. Al-Farabi**

- a. Metaphorical nature of revelation
- b. Ethics

### **I. Ibn Sina (Avicenna)**

- a. Nature and origin of the universe
  - (a) emanation
  - (b) essence and existence
- b. Argument for the existence of God
- c. Humanity
  - (a) nature of humanity
  - (b) theory of knowledge
    - (i) sensible knowledge

- (ii) intellectual knowledge
- (c) eschatology: the fate of humanity

**J. Al-Ghazālī (Algazel)**

- a. Importance for Islamic and Christian philosophy
- b. Argument for the existence of God
- c. Mystical scepticism

**K. Ibn Rushd (Averroes)**

- a. Reason and faith
  - (a) types of intellects
  - (b) theory of double truth
- b. Humanity and the universe

**L. Conclusion and Review**