

History 295 (Special Topics)
An Introduction to Medieval Intellectual History
T10-11:50am, Th 10-10:50am
Mears 115

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Course web page: <https://pioneerweb.grinnell.edu>

Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to the western intellectual tradition from roughly the end of the fourth century to the late fourteenth century. Students will learn about developments in educational institutions, philosophy, theology, mysticism, spirituality, science, magic, law, and political theory through the reading and analysis of key texts in these areas. The focus will be on Christian Europe. Nevertheless, since Christians in the Middle Ages did not exist in a vacuum, but also interacted with Jews and Muslims and drew inspiration from their writings, we will also spend time examining the Jewish and Muslim intellectual traditions.

It is recommended but not required that students have already taken the introductory survey to the Middle Ages (HIS 233) or have some background in medieval history.

Course Goals

1. To gain an understanding of the different types of intellectual history and how intellectual history differs from philosophy, theology, political theory, etc.
2. To become familiar with the major texts, ideas, and thinkers from the Middle Ages.
3. To understand why modern philosophers, theologians, mystics, historians of science, legal theorists, and political scientists continue to be interested in the medieval intellectual tradition.
4. To learn how to analyze and interpret primary sources in their historical context.
5. To improve writing skills.

Assignments and Grading

Students' grades will be based on:

1. Class participation (50%)
 - a. Quality will be emphasized over quantity.
 - b. As part of the participation grade, you will be required to make weekly contributions to the class wiki.
2. Final Paper (50%): Students should choose a topic in consultation with the instructor. To help ensure the timely submission of the paper, students will be required to submit short assignments at regular intervals. These are:
 - a. a 1-paragraph description of your topic and why it is worth researching, along with a preliminary bibliography

- b. an updated bibliography and a 2-page essay summarizing the historiography on your topic
- c. a 1-page summary of the argument of your paper
- d. a 5-page draft
- e. complete draft (15 pages)
- f. the final version (15 pages)

Grades for the Final Paper will be based on the following criteria: a clearly formulated and non-trivial thesis, critical thinking and argumentation, mastery of the subject matter, good writing, and correct citation practices. In order to get an A on this final paper, the paper will need to excel in each of these areas.

Class Wiki

Each week you will have to contribute one, 50-100 word entry to the class wiki in Pioneerweb. Each entry must have a bibliography section (which does not count towards the word count), where you provide the full citation information of one book or article – which does not have to be in English – relevant to your topic. Make sure that your citations are correctly formatted according to the guidelines of the Chicago Manual of Style for *bibliography* (as opposed to footnote or endnote) entries. Links to web pages are welcome, but cannot be substituted for printed resources.

Required Texts

Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, ed., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*.
 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics.
 Marcia Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*
 (LFL=) Louis Dupre and James A. Wiseman, eds., *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd edition, 2001.

Schedule

Weeks 1-4: The Classical and Patristic Traditions

Tuesday Jan. 20	Introduction + Ambrose and Jerome Colish 3-24 Ambrose, <i>On the Mysteries</i> Psalm 44 (45):11 Jerome, <i>Letter 22</i>
Thursday Jan. 22	The young Augustine Colish 25-37 Soliloquies
Tuesday Jan. 27	Augustine and Introspection <i>Confessions</i> 1-9
Thursday Jan. 29	Augustine and Introspection (continued) <i>Confessions</i> 10-13

- Tuesday
Feb. 3 The later Augustine
 Extracts from *On Free Will* and *Retractations* (Hyman 33-68)
- Thursday
Feb. 5 Boethius
 [*Consolation of Philosophy, Books 1-2*](#)
- Tuesday
Feb. 10 Boethius (continued)
 [*Consolation of Philosophy, Books 3-5*](#)
- Thursday
Feb. 12 Textbook Writers and the Seven Liberal Arts
 Colish 42-51
 Excerpts from Donatus, *Ars Maior*; Priscian, *Institutiones* (Handout)
 Excerpts from Boethius, *On Arithmetic* (E-Reserve)
 Excerpt from Boethius, *On Music* (Handout)

Weeks 5: Learning in the Early Middle Ages

- Tuesday
Feb. 17 Monasticism: Cassiodorus, Benedict, and Gregory
 Colish 51-55
 Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, Chs. 1-2
 (E-Reserve)
 [Rule of St. Benedict](#) (Read only the Prologue)
 [Gregory the Great, Pastoral Rule](#), Book 1
- Thursday
Feb. 19 The Carolingian Renaissance
 Colish 56-75
 Eriugena (Hyman 132-45)

Weeks 6-7: Mysticism and Spirituality

- Tuesday
Feb. 24 What is mysticism? Is it a form of knowledge or revelation? Is it a technique?
 Colish 225-44
 Origen; Gregory of Nyssa; Augustine; Pseudo-Dionysius (all in LFL)
- Thursday
Feb. 26 Imitation of Christ
 Bernard of Clairvaux; Francis of Assisi; Bonaventure (all in LFL)
- Tuesday
Mar. 3 German Mysticism
 Meister Eckhart; John Ruusbroec; Mechtild of Magdeburg (all in LFL)
- Thursday
Mar. 5 Female Mystics
 Catherine of Siena (LFL); Julian of Norwich (LFL); Marguerite Porete (E-Reserve)

Paper Topics and Bibliography Due

Week 8-10: Scholasticism

Tuesday
Mar. 10 What is Scholasticism? Why are modern scholars interested in it?
 Colish 265-273
 Colish, "Remapping Scholasticism"
 [Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1.2](#)

Thursday
Mar. 12 Anselm of Canterbury
 Hyman 147-62

-----**SPRING BREAK Mar. 14-29**-----

Tuesday
Mar. 31 *Logica vetus* and *logica nova*
 Colish 274-288
 [Porphyry's Isagoge](#)
 Hyman 164-188 (John of Salisbury and Peter Abelard)

Survey of Historiography Due

Thursday
Apr. 2 Islamic and Jewish Philosophy
 Hyman 293-297, 317-324 (Averroes), 369-390 (Maimonides)

Tuesday
Apr. 7 High Scholasticism
 Colish 289-301
 Hyman 461-469 (Bonaventure), 508-515 (Aquinas)

Summary of Argument Due

Thursday
Apr. 9 Late Scholasticism
 Colish 302-315
 Hyman 597-614 (Duns Scotus), 649-653, 690-700 (Ockham)

Weeks 11-12: Science and Magic

Tuesday
Apr. 14 What was Science in the Middle Ages?
 Colish 319-25
 Hyman 471-88 (Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon)
 [Durand, "Magic and Experimental Science"](#)
 [Pingree, "Hellenophilia versus the History of Science"](#)

Thursday
Apr. 16 Aristotelian Science
 [Overview of Aristotle's account of motion](#)
 Hyman 686-688 (Ockham), 766-771 (Buridan)

5-page draft due

Tuesday
Apr. 21 What was Medicine in the Middle Ages?
 Excerpts from *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (E-Reserve)

[Pellegrino, “Medicine, History, and the Idea of Man”](#)

Thursday
Apr. 23 Alchemy
 Excerpts from *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (E-Reserve)
 [Newman, “Technology and Alchemical Debate in the Late Middle Ages”](#)

Weeks 13-14: Law and Political Theory

Tuesday
Apr. 28 Natural Law
 [Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II](#), qq. 90, 91, and 94
 Duns Scotus, Excerpts on Natural Law (E-reserve)

Thursday
Apr. 30 Romano-Canonical Jurisprudence
 [Pennington, “The Spirit of Legal History”](#)
 Excerpt from Gratian (Handout)

Full draft due

Tuesday
May 5 Political Theory from Augustine to Aristotle
 Colish 335-51
 Hyman 89-111 (Augustine’s *City of God*), 714-747 (Marsilius of Padua)

Thursday
May 7 Just War
 Russel, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, Ch. 1 (E-Reserve)
 Gratian, C.23 qq.1-2 (Blackboard)
 [Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 40, a.1](#)

EOC Evaluations

**Thursday
May 14 Final Paper due**