

XIANTHE 288: The Thought of Augustine of Hippo. Mondays 2:30 – 5:00 p.m. Fall 2011, beginning 29 August 2011. In (room TBA). Instructor: Paul J. Griffiths 056 Langford. 919-660-3413. pgriffit@gmail.com. Preceptor: Sean Larsen (sean.c.larsen@gmail.com) -- office hours Wednesdays 11:45-1:15 in 0047L.

Office Hours: I don't keep regular office hours but I am in my office most afternoons Mon - Fri, so please feel free to drop by unannounced: if the door's open, I'm happy to see you. If you would like to set up an appointment to ensure a meeting time, you may contact me by phone or email (preferably the latter).

Course Objectives: In this course we'll read, in English, ten complete works by Augustine, avoiding, mostly, his more well-known works. The works treated cover the span of his writing life, and most of the topics that interested him; we'll deal with them approximately in the chronological order of their composition. The course's principal purpose is to give you a reasonably broad and deep exposure to Augustine's words and thoughts if you haven't read him before; or to deepen your understanding of the patterns of his thought if you have. We shall throughout study Augustine as a thinker making complex and interesting claims about a wide range of topics. In reading him you should constantly have two questions in mind: What does he mean? Is it true? The first question will prove challenging enough, but we may occasionally have time and energy for the second.

Course Assignments and Grading:

If you take this course for credit you'll be expected to do the following things:

1. Read the required material for each class, think about it, and be prepared to participate intelligently in class discussion, seminar-style, of that material. The class meets thirteen times, and there is reading required for each meeting. **This reading should be done before the meeting to which it belongs -- this includes the first meeting (29 August 2011), by which time you should have read De beata vita/The Blessed Life.**
2. Write about the works we're studying, in one of two ways:
 - a. Write a final paper of between four and six thousand words in which you address either a particular work by Augustine, or a particular topic of interest to him. *The exact topic of your paper should be cleared by me by, at latest, four weeks before the semester's end. Your paper should be a roughly equal mix of exegesis and normative argument.* This paper is due 12/12. **OR:**
 - b. Write three short pieces, each of between 1500 and 2000 words in length, and each to provide a summary of the content of one of the works by Augustine we'll be studying together with an identification of the principal points of theological interest or difficulty in them. The texts we'll study fall into four groups, as below; you'll write a paper on a text drawn from exactly three of these groups (in the case of group iii it'll be a text-part rather than a whole text).
 - i. texts studied 8/29-9/12 <due 9/19>
 - ii. texts studied 9/19-9/26 <due 10/3>
 - iii. text studied 10/3-31 <due 11/7>
 - iv. text studied 11/21-28 <due 12/5>.
3. *Approximately one-half of your grade will come from participation in class, and the other half from your written work.*
4. All written work to be submitted as a Word document via email attachment to Sean Larsen.

Texts to be studied, and the order of study (with approximate dates of composition)

- <8/29> De beata vita/The Blessed Life (386-387) in Trilogy on Faith and Happiness
- <9/5> De utilitate credendi/The Usefulness of Believing (391-392) in Trilogy
- <9/12> Ad Simplicianum/To Simplician (396-398) in Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism

- <9/12> De fide rerum invisibilium/Faith in Invisible Things (400) in Trilogy
- <9/19> De bono coniugali/The Good of Marriage (401) in Marriage and Virginity
- <9/26> De sancta virginitate/Holy Virginity (401) in Marriage and Virginity
- <10/3-17-24-31> De trinitate/The Trinity (399-426) in The Trinity
- <11/7> De dono perseverantiae/The Gift of Perseverance (428-429) in Selected Writings
- <11/14> De praedestinatione sanctorum/The Predestination of the Saints (428-429) in Selected Writings
- <11/21-28> Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on I John (406) in Homilies on the First Epistle of John

Books available for purchase at the bookstore

These contain English versions of all ten texts. There are other versions available, and you should feel free to make use of those as well (or even instead) of those in the volumes listed below. But the translations contained in these volumes will form our main point of reference in class. I will have the Latin always to hand, as you also should if you can read the language. A convenient online source for Augustine's works in Latin is: <http://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm>.

- Hill, Edmund. (transl) The Trinity. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 0911782966 (paper).
- Kearney, Ray. (transl.) Marriage and Virginity. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 1-56548-222-0 (paper).
- Ramsey, Boniface. (transl.) Homilies on the First Epistle of John. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 978-1-56548-289-0 (paper).
- Ramsey, Boniface. (ed) Trilogy on Faith and Happiness. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 9781565483580 (paper).
- Teske, Roland. (transl) Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 9781565483729 (paper).

Books on library reserve

The following volumes will prove helpful for matters of reference, and to take interest in particular topics further. It's always a good idea to begin with the Fitzgerald volume: it will usually provide further bibliographic guidance.

- Ayres, Lewis. Augustine and the Trinity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. BR65.A9 A98 2010.
- Bright, Pamela (ed & transl). Augustine and the Bible. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999. The Bible Through the Ages, vol.2. BS410.B5355 v.2. Based on Bible de tous les temps, vol.3, Saint Augustin et la Bible, ed. Anne-Marie La Bonnardière. On A. as exegete.
- Brown, Peter. Augustine of Hippo: A New Edition with an Epilogue. Berkeley & Los Angeles, 2000. BR1720.A9 B7. First pub. 1967. New ed. differs only in the addition of a new preface and a lengthy review of recent literature through early '99. The best first biography to read.
- Cary, Phillip. (two volumes) Inner Grace: Augustine in the Traditions of Plato and Paul. Oxford University Press, 2008; Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Dobell, Brian. Augustine's Intellectual Conversion: The Journey from Platonism to Christianity. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Dodaro, Robert & George Lawless. (ed) Augustine and His Critics. London; Routledge, 2000. BR65.A9A83. A useful collection of essays on particular topics in A's thought; it shows the state of play in (mostly) Anglophone scholarship in the 1990s about A's thought.
- Dodaro, Robert. Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. BR65.A9 D63. A recent treatment of A's thought about politics.

- Evans, G. R. Augustine on Evil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. BJ1401 .E77 1982 c.1. A brief, elegant, and lucid analysis of A's view that malum [evil] is privatio boni [absence/lack of good].
- Fitzgerald, Allan D. (ed) Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999. B655.Z69 A84. The standard English-language reference on A. -- entries on all the texts, and on most of the topics of interest to A. Start with this if you have questions about A.
- Fredriksen, Paula. Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism. New York: Doubleday, 2008. BR65.A9F74.
- Gioia, Luigi. The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. [BR65.A69752 G56 2008](#).
- Harrison, Carol. Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity. Christian Theology in Context. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. BR1720.A9 H337 2000 c.1. A first-rate broad-scope introduction to A's thought.
- Kolbet, Paul. Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010. BM535 .C475 v.17.
- Lancel, Serge. Saint Augustine. Translated by Antonia Nevill. London: SCM Press, 2002. French original published in Paris by Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1999. BR1720.A9 L3613. This biography pays more attention than Brown's to material culture, and therefore to the fabric of A's day-to-day life.
- Stock, Brian. Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1996. BR65.A62 S76. A puzzlingly opaque book that nonetheless contains very important observations on A's practices of reading.
- Stump, Eleonore & Norman Kretzmann. (ed) The Cambridge Companion to Augustine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. B655.Z7 C35. A useful work of reference, better on philosophical than theological or historical topics.
- Wetzel, James. Augustine and the Limits of Virtue. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. B655.Z7 W47. On the central nexus of A's thought: will, freedom, grace, and goodness.
- Wetzel, James. Augustine: A Guide for the Perplexed. New York: Continuum, 2010. Probably the best thing to read if you know nothing about Augustine.