

**XIANTHE 834: The Thought of Augustine of Hippo. Class meets Thursdays 2:30 – 5:00 pm, 28 August 2014 - 20 November 2014, in 042 Langford, Duke Divinity School. Instructor: Paul J. Griffiths (056 Langford; [pgriffit@gmail.com](mailto:pgriffit@gmail.com)). Preceptor: Jennifer Benedict ([jlbenedicta@gmail.com](mailto:jlbenedicta@gmail.com)).**

*non solum non peccemus adorando, sed peccemus non adorando*

Paul's office hours will be made available to you in a google document; it will explain itself. Jen is available for appointments as needed, and she, too, is always happy to see you. Please email her for an appointment.

### **What this course is for & how it'll be done**

In this course we'll read, in English, selections from the correspondence between Augustine and Jerome, and (parts of) fifteen works by Augustine, avoiding, mostly, his more well-known works, which are treated in other Divinity School courses, or which are likely to be known to you anyway. The works treated cover the span of Augustine's writing life, most of the topics that interested him, and most of the genres in which he wrote.

The course's principal purpose is to give you a reasonably broad and deep exposure to his words and thoughts if you haven't read him before; and 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: First, how should these works be read? Second, is what they claim true? The first question will prove challenging enough, but we may occasionally have time and energy for the second.

Each class will begin with a lecture by Paul or Jen in which an interpretation will be offered of all the reading set for that week, both required and recommended, together with whatever other issues seem important to address. After a break, the second half of the class will be devoted to (mostly) instructor-driven Q&A, as described in #2 under 'what you'll need to do.'

### **What you'll need to do**

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

1. Read, take notes on, and think about the required reading for each class before the class to which it relates. The schedule for this reading is given below. It's divided into required and recommended reading; you need read only what's listed as required, of which there is never more than fifty pages in any one week; you will, however, understand both the required reading and the lecture with which each class will open more fully if you have time to read some or all of the recommended reading.
2. Be prepared, when called on, to discourse intelligently on any part of the required reading. An intelligent discourse should include: (1) a brief summary of what the passage you're asked to comment on argues or depicts; (2) a location of the passage's argument in the trajectory of the work to which it belongs; (3) an identification of points of special difficulty or special interest in the passage; and possibly (4) a critique. We'll identify passages for comment by section number (not page number); you should take notes accordingly. Some of the works we'll be studying have two layers of sectional division. In such cases, use the layer that yields the smallest divisions.
3. Write about the works we're reading. The default for this is that you'll write a final paper of 4K words (= approximately sixteen doublespaced pages), plus or minus 10%, due by noon on 8 December 2014 (the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception). This paper will be on a topic to be cleared in an individual face-to-face meeting with either Paul or Jen which must have happened by, at latest, 10 October 2014, which is the Friday before the fall reading period. If there's some other way of writing about the material that might serve your needs better than the paper option (a couple of well-turned homilies? instructional materials to be used in a parish setting? other possibilities?), please feel free to suggest that when you meet with Paul or Jen. We're entirely and

enthusiastically open to such suggestions. Each of you will be allotted to either Paul or Jen for clearance of your paper topic, advice about its progress, and so on. The person you've been allotted to will also grade and comment on your completed paper.

4. Approximately one-third of your grade will come from participation in class. The other two-thirds will come from your written work. Paul & Jen will together determine final grades.

**Latin Option:** if there are any takers, I'll be happy to schedule a weekly Augustine-in-Latin session in which we'll read something, or some selection of somethings, from the texts studied during the course. This will be supererogatory – that is, it'll have nothing to do, positively or negatively, with your grade for the course, and there may be people not in the course who'll do it. Please let me know if you'd like to do this & I'll see if it can be worked out. [If, on looking at the following sentences, you can make nothing of them, you probably ought not consider doing this: *Mendaciorum genera multa sunt, quae quidem omnia universaliter odisse debemus. Nullum est enim mendacium quod non sit contrarium veritati. Nam sicut lux et tenebrae, pietas et impietas, iustitia et iniquitas, peccatum et recte factum, sanitas et imbecillitas, vita et mors; ita inter se sunt veritas mendaciumque contraria.*]

Texts by Augustine available to you in English  
(listed in approximate chronological order of completion)

1. De beata vita/The Happy Life <386-387, in Trilogy>
2. De ordine/Order <386-387 – available to you as a PDF file>
3. De utilitate credendi/The Use of Believing <391-392, in Trilogy>
4. De mendacio/Lying <394-395(?) – made available to you as a PDF file>
5. Ad simplicianum (Book One only)/To Simplician <396-398, in Selected Writings>
6. De fide rerum invisibilium/Faith in Unseen Things <400, in Trilogy>
7. De bono coniugali/The Good of Marriage <401, in Marriage>
8. De sancta virginitate/Holy Virginity <401, in Marriage>
9. Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on I John <406, in Homilies>
10. De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum/The Punishment & Remission of Sins and the Baptism of Children <411-413, in Selected Writings>
11. De spiritu et littera/The Spirit & the Letter <412-413, in Selected Writings>
12. De bono viduitatis/The Good of Widowhood <414, in Marriage>
13. De natura et gratia/Nature & Grace <415, in Selected Writings>
14. De adulterinis coniugiis/Adulterous Marriages <419-420, in Marriage>
15. De continentia/Continenence <418-420(?), in Marriage>
16. De trinitate/The Trinity <399-426, in Trinity>
17. De praedestinatione sanctorum/The Predestination of the Saints <428-429, in Selected Writings>
18. De dono perseverantiae/The Gift of Perseverance <428-429, in Selected Writings>
19. Letters, various – these will be made available to you as PDF files.

Books in which English versions of the texts listed above are to be found  
(all available for purchase at the Divinity School's bookstore)

1. Hill, Edmund. (transl.) The Trinity. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 0911782966 (paper).
2. Kearney, Ray. (transl.) Marriage and Virginity. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 1-56548-222-0 (paper).
3. Ramsey, Boniface. (transl.) Homilies on the First Epistle of John. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 978-1-56548-289-0 (paper).

4. Ramsey, Boniface. (ed) Trilogy on Faith and Happiness. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 9781565483580 (paper).
5. Teske, Roland. (transl) Selected Writings on Grace and Pelagianism. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press. ISBN 9781565483729 (paper).

### Topics & Schedule

- 28 Aug: Introductory: Augustine's life, times, & controversies; Augustine as writer and theologian; Augustine on what there is, what there isn't, and why; Augustine's reception by and significance for the Church — no required & no recommended reading. However, if you've time & interest, it wouldn't hurt to read the biographical studies by Brown & Lancel, listed under 'books on library reserve' below.
- 4 Sep: Correspondence with Jerome; and the treatise on lying
  - Required: letters 40, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 75 [available as a PDF file]
  - Recommended: letters 28, 39, 75, 81, 82, AND the treatise De mendacio [available as a PDF file]
- 11 Sep: Augustine on what life is and is for
  - Required: De beata vita/The Blessed Life, all (§§1-36)
  - Recommended: De ordine/Order, all [available as a PDF file]
- 18 Sep: Augustine on knowing, believing, testimony, authority
  - Required: De utilitate credendi/The Usefulness of Believing, all (§§1-36)
  - Recommended: De fide rerum invisibilium/Faith in Unseen things, all
- 25 Sep: Augustine on the triune Lord (1)
  - Required: De trinitate/The Trinity, books four (§§1-32) & seven (§§1-12)
  - Recommended: De trinitate/On the Trinity, books one, two, three, five, six
- 02 Oct: : Augustine on the triune Lord (2)
  - Required: De trinitate/The Trinity, books eight (§§1-4), nine (§§1-18), thirteen (§§1-26)
  - Recommended: De trinitate/On the Trinity, books ten, eleven, twelve, fourteen, fifteen
- 09 Oct: Augustine on 1 John (1)
  - Required: Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on 1 John, first (§§1-13), second (§§1-14), and third (§§1-13) homilies
  - Recommended: Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on 1 John, fourth & fifth homilies
- 16 Oct: no class – fall reading period
- 23 Oct: Augustine on 1 John (2)
  - Required: Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on 1 John, eighth (§§1-14), ninth (§§1-11), and tenth (§§1-10) homilies
  - Recommended: Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos/Homilies on 1 John, sixth & seventh homilies
- 30 Oct: Augustine on body, sex, gender, desire, marriage, virginity (1)
  - Required: De bono coniugali/The Good of Marriage, all (§§1-35)
  - Recommended: De sancta virginitate/Holy Virginity, all (§§1-57)
- 06 Nov: Augustine on body, sex, gender, desire, marriage, virginity (2)
  - Required: De continentia/Continenence, all (§§1-32), AND De bono viduitatis/The Good of Widowhood, all (§§1-29)
  - Recommended: De adulterinis coniugiis/Adulterous Marriages, all
- 13 Nov: Augustine on nature, grace, freedom, predestination (1)
  - Required: Ad Simplicianum/To Simplician, Book 1 (two questions treated in Book One: §§1.1-1.17, §§2.1-2.22), AND De spiritu et littera/The Spirit & the Letter, §§1-6, 52-66

- Recommended: Ad Simplicianum / To Simplician, Book 2, AND De spiritu et littera / The Spirit & the Letter, §§7-51
- 20 Nov: Augustine on nature, grace, freedom, predestination (2)
  - Required: De dono perseverantiae / The Gift of Perseverance, all (§§1-68)
  - Recommended: De praedestinatione sanctorum / The Predestination of the Saints

### 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. If you're looking for an introduction to Augustine's thought, then read either Wetzel's Guide for the Perplexed or Harrison's Augustine. If you want a biography, read Brown's. The Stump & Meconi volume is a recently (2014) updated & very useful set of essays on key aspects of Augustine's thought. The Pollmann volumes are an essential guide to the reception of Augustine.

- 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.
- Ebbeler, Jennifer. Disciplining Christians: Correction and Community in Augustine's Letters. Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780195372564 (cloth).
- 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.
- Pollmann, Karla, et al. (ed) The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN 9780199299164 (set). BR65.A9 O9 2013.
- 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 & David Meconi. (ed) The Cambridge Companion to Augustine. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- 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.