

Philosophy 362
Philosophy in the High Middle Ages
Syllabus, 2018

Prof. Steven Baldner
NH 706, 867-2115
sbaldner@stfx.ca

Office Hours: Monday, 10:15-12:00.
Wednesday, 9:15-11:00.
Thursday, 2:15-4:00.

General: This course is an introduction to the philosophy in the High Middle Ages or in the period of scholastic philosophy. This is the period of the 13th to the 15th century (1200—1600 A.D.), but in this course we will focus on the most important part, from 1200 until 1350. In particular, we will examine the principal doctrines of the three most important philosophers: Thomas Aquinas (1225—1274), John Duns Scotus (1265/66—1308), and William of Ockham (c. 1287—1347). The philosophy in this period is characterized by a revival of the philosophy of Aristotle, but Aristotle came into the Latin West with a throng of commentators and interpreters (for example, Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, in the Islamic and Jewish traditions) and with the Neo-Platonic philosophical tradition in its baptized forms (for example, in Augustine and Anselm). All of the philosophers of this period were also – and foremost – theologians who were attempting to give a rigorous explanation of their Christian faith. Philosophically, Thomas, Scotus, and Ockham were very creative thinkers who advanced the Western philosophical project in major ways. All three of these thinkers, however, like their other scholastic contemporaries, regarded themselves as carrying on a philosophical tradition. They did not think of themselves as innovators, nor would they have regarded novelty as an unquestionably good thing. They were all committed to providing philosophical and theological explanations of the world, of human nature, and of God, and in doing so they naturally built on the collected wisdom of Aristotle, of the Aristotelian interpreters (especially from the Arabic world), of previous Christian philosophers, and of the truths of the faith. There is thus a delightful and two-fold paradox in these scholastic thinkers: while devoting themselves primarily to theology they each produced compelling and independent *philosophies*; while attempting to be faithful to a tradition, they were each creatively novel.

List of Readings. All of the readings for this course will be taken from *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Third Edition, Edited by Arthur Hyman, James J. Walsh, and Thomas Williams. In what follows, I have provided the text and page numbers to this edition. You are required to prepare the assigned reading for each class meeting. I was tempted to print the preceding sentence in a larger font, in bold, and with exclamation points. Instead, let me just say calmly how important it is to prepare for each class, if learning is the goal.

Thomas Aquinas (1225—1274)

- 3 January Introduction: Some Scholastic Terms
- 8 January Essence/Existence; Problem of Universals. Text #38, pp. 451-457
- 10 January Essence/Existence; Problem of Universals. Text #38, pp. 451-457.
- 15 January Existence of God. Text #39, pp. 466-472.
- 17 January Existence of God. Text #39, pp. 466-472.
- 22 January Names of God; Analogy. Text #39, pp. 472-478.
- 24 January Creation. Text #40, pp. 483-493.
- 29 January Soul/Body. Text #41, pp. 494-504.
- 31 January Soul's Powers; Intellect & Will. Text #41, pp. 504-518.
- 5 February Happiness; Virtue. Texts #42-43, pp. 518-528.
- 7 February Law; Natural Law. Text #44, pp. 528-538.
- 12 February Review of Thomas Aquinas.
- 14 February Quiz.

John Duns Scotus (1265/66—1308)

- 26 February Proof of God's Existence. Text #46, pp. 556-566.
- 28 February Knowledge of God; Univocity. Text #47, pp. 567-570.
- 5 March Contra Illuminationism & Skepticism; Intuitive/Abstractive Knowledge. Texts #48-49, pp. 571-581.
- 7 March Universals & Individuation. Text # 50, pp. 582-591.
- 12 March Contingency, Divine Will, Human Freedom. Texts #51-52, pp. 592-599.

14 March Morality. Texts #53-54, pp. 599-604.

William of Ockham (c. 1287—1347)

12 March Universals & Individuation. Text # 56, pp. 616-624.

14 March Intuitive & Abstractive Cognition. Text #57, pp. 624-630.

19 March Relations. Text #57, pp. 631-636.

21 March Motion; Causality. Texts #59-61, pp. 636-643.

26 March Morality. Text #62, pp. 643-649.

28 March Morality. Text #62, pp. 643-649.

2 April John Buridan – Texts will be assigned, if there is time for them.

4 April Review

Required Text: *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, edited by Arthur Hyman, James J. Walsh, and Thomas Williams. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 2010.

Grading for Course.

Quiz (14 February):	20%
Term Essay (4 April):	40%
Final Exam:	40%

Term Essay. You are to write a term essay of 10-12 pages. The essay can be on any topic relevant to the material covered in this course, with the approval of your instructor. A list of possible topics will be circulated separately. Due Dates:

5 February: Title, Thesis, Preliminary Bibliography. I am looking for a paragraph plus a list of works you intend to use.

4 April: Essay is due.

Late Essays

Late essays are penalized at the rate of one percentage point of the essay grade deducted per day late (counting weekends also).

Academic Integrity

Please note the information given about the University Academic Integrity Policy in the *Academic Calendar*, 3.8. You are completely free to use any academic sources, including those found on the internet, to aid you in the writing of your essays. **If you do use any academic sources by citing, quoting, paraphrasing, or by using information or terminology, you must give a full reference to any such source. Failure to cite your sources can result in severe academic penalties, including dismissal from the University.** If you have any doubts about what might or might not be appropriate, please get in touch with me. In addition, the instructors in the Writing Centre can help you to understand what is permissible and what is not.

Classroom Courtesy

It is a great convenience, for some, to use electronic devices for note-taking and communicating. If you bring electronic devices to this classroom, please do not disturb your fellow students by the use of them for activities other than classroom work. Do not surf the internet, text your friends, or make or receive phone calls. Classes are short and intense. Be present and concentrate. Do not do anything to disturb others.