FAITH AND REASON IN THE MIDDLE AGES
(BLHS 105)

Professors Lamm, Paasch, and Ray
Syllabus, Spring 2015

| Mon., 6:00-9:35 p.m. | Prof. J.T. Paasch, Ph.D. | Research Associate
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Course Description:
The relation between faith and reason is one of the perennial issues in Western thought. With the renaissance of the twelfth century and the founding of universities throughout Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the question of faith and reason was dramatically recast. The rediscovery of Aristotle—and so, the use of Aristotelian logic, grammar, physics, and metaphysics—led to the development of new methods of inquiry, categories of thought, and modes of expression. This course begins with the twelfth-century renaissance; the cross-fertilization among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars; the rise of the universities as important institutions; and the development of scholasticism. It focuses in particular on the development of the scholastic method, resistance to it, and, in particular, discussions and sometimes fierce debates about “faith and reason” in Christianity and Judaism. The course also looks at the issue of authority and alternative approaches to faith and reason (e.g., mystical texts and vernacular theologies), the category of “heresy” and its ramifications (social, political, religious).

Course Goals:
1. To learn how to read a variety of medieval texts (monastic, scholastic, mystical, and vernacular) on the topic of faith, reason, and religious experience.
2. To understand these difficult primary texts in historical/cultural context.
3. To deepen understanding of medieval European thought, life and culture.
4. To develop a sophisticated sense of all the main themes and sub-themes that are central to the BALS core, especially competing claims to authority, their interplay and repercussions.
5. To develop skills in analytical writing.
6. To gain an appreciation of long-standing debates about faith and reason and thereby gain further conceptual clarity when addressing contemporary debates.
7. To address issues of intellectual and religious pluralism.

Course Requirements:
1. Attendance. Each weekly class meeting is the equivalent of four 50” class hours. Missing a class may, and missing more than one entire class (or more than a total of four class hours) will definitely, result in a lowering of your final grade. Missing a third class may be grounds for failure or dismissal. Habitual tardiness will also lower your final grade.
2. Close reading of all assigned texts and active class participation (20%).
3. Weekly written assignments on assigned texts (35%). 1-2 pages, 500-750 words. Electronic submission of papers (to SafeAssign or TurnItIn via Blackboard) is due before the beginning of every class (6:00 p.m.). No late assignments accepted.
4. Weekly quizzes (20%).
5. A final examination on Monday, May 4, 2015, 7:00-9:00 p.m. (25%). There are no exceptions to this date and time for the final examination. You must take the examination at the appointed time, or you will receive an “F” for the course. Be sure to clear your calendar now.
Books To Purchase (in order of their place on the syllabus):


Other materials will be made available on Blackboard.

Some notes on integrity and responsibility

A Note on Academic Integrity: It is expected that all students are familiar with Georgetown’s Honor System (see [http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53516.html](http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53516.html)) and that students abide by the Standard of Conduct outlined therein. Note especially the section on plagiarism, which is quoted here:

*Plagiarism, in any of its forms, and whether intentional or unintentional, violates standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another. While different academic disciplines have different modes for attributing credit, all value the contributions of individuals to the general corpus of knowledge and expertise. Students are responsible for educating themselves as to the proper mode of attributing credit in any course or field. Note that plagiarism can be said to have occurred without any affirmative showing that a student's use of another's work was intentional.*

It is also expected that you have already completed the online tutorial on scholarly research and academic integrity and that you are familiar with Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College*.

Keep in mind the Honor Pledge, which is as follows:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

A Note on Studying and Grading: It is the University’s expectation that you will devote at least 8 hours per week to studying for each four-credit course such as this one. Each text should be read at least three times: once as preparation for class discussion; once as soon as possible after class discussion, while the ideas are still fresh in your mind; and again as review while writing a paper or preparing for an examination. We do not practice grade inflation.

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(further notes and information on back page of syllabus)
Course Outline

Week 1 (Wednesday, Jan. 7): Introductions

I. Scholasticism (Prof. Paasch)

Week 2 (Monday, Jan. 12): Early scholasticism

Topics:
1. The beginnings of institutionalized education; the rise of medieval universities; what it was like to be a student and a professor at a medieval university; the development of the scholastic method.
2. What “faith and reason” means in our own day, and what it means for medieval Latin scholastics.
3. A case study in “faith seeking understanding”: Anselm’s so-called ontological argument for God’s existence.

Readings:
- “Anselm and Abelard” (Blackboard).

Week 3 (Jan. 19) No Class: MLK, Jr. Holiday

Week 4 (Jan. 26): Aquinas on Theology and Science

Topics:
1. The discovery of Aristotle and his Arabic commentators.
2. The nature of science according to Aristotle.
3. Thomas Aquinas on theology as a scientific discipline.

Readings:
- Thomas Aquinas, “Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius.” (Blackboard)

Week 5 (Feb. 2): John Duns Scotus on our natural knowledge of God

Topics:
1. Various medieval approaches to what we can know about God by natural means: the via negativa; incidental knowledge of God; knowing God through creatures; knowing God by analogy.
2. Scotus’s criticisms of those various approaches.
3. Scotus on what we can know about God by natural means.

Readings:
- John Duns Scotus, “Commentary on the Sentences.” (Blackboard)

Week 6 (Feb. 9): William Ockham on Church and State

Topics:
1. The life and times of William Ockham.
2. A scholastic approach to Faith and Reason as institutions: Ockham on the legal rights of church and state.

Readings:
- William Ockham, “A Short Discourse on Tyrannical Government.” (Blackboard)
II. Christian Mysticism & Vernacular Theology (Prof. Lamm)

Week 7 (Feb. 16): No Class: Presidents' Day Holiday

Week 8 (Feb. 23): Setting the Scene: Intellectual & Affective Strains of Mysticism, and the Emergence of Vernacular Theology

Topics:
1. Two forms of mysticism (affective and intellectual), the tensions between them as well as their interrelations: the intellectual mysticism of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and the rise of affective spirituality and affective ways of knowing God (Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th Century); refinements in Aquinas and Bonaventure (13th century).
3. Introduction to the Beguines and Hadewijch of Antwerp.

Readings:
Primary texts: (on Blackboard)
- Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*
- Bernard of Clairvaux, *Treatise on Loving God*

Secondary texts:

Week 9 (Mar. 2): The Authority of Visions, “The School of Love,” and the Charge of Heresy (13th Century)

Topics:
1. Hadewijch of Antwerp: the “School of Love” (as a critique of the universities and the scholastic method) and a theology of exile. Comparison of her visions with those of Hildegard of Bingen.
2. Backlash against the Beguines and the growth of the charge of heresy. Marguerite Porete, her theology, her condemnation, and her death by burning. The Council of Vienne, 1312.
3. Introduction to Julian of Norwich: The Lollards, the Pre-Reformation, and Persecution in 14th-century England.

Readings:
Primary texts: (on Blackboard)
- Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, “Declaration” and Vision One of Book I
- Hadewijch: *The Complete Works:*
  - Letters 1, 2, 4, 8, 18, 22
  - Visions 1, 9
  - Poems in Stanzas: 14, 16, 23, 30 & Poems in Couplets 13, 16

Secondary Texts:
- Jantzen, chap. 4, pp. 133-46; chap. 5, “‘Cry out and write’: mysticism and the struggle for authority,” and chapter 7, “Heretics and witches,” in *PGCM.*
- Required Film: “Vision” (a motion picture about Hildegard of Bingen, streamed through Bb).
Week 10 (Mar. 16): Julian of Norwich (14th Century)

Topics:
2. Transition to the 16th century and debates on free will and grace.

Readings:
Primary Text (book to purchase):
- Julian of Norwich, Showings (Long Text)

Secondary Text (on Blackboard):
- Julia A. Lamm, “Revelation as Exposure in Julian of Norwich’s Showings,” Spiritus 5/1 (Spring 2005); read at the very least short section on “Three Kinds of Showings,” 56-59.

Week 11 (Mar. 23): The Crisis over Nature & Grace (16th Century)

Topics:
1. Teresa of Avila on knowing God through ‘oral prayer’ and ‘mental prayer’.
2. Martin Luther on justification by faith alone.
3. Concluding comments on vernacular theology, mysticism, and problems of religious and intellectual authority

Readings:
- Teresa of Avila, The Interior Castle (book to purchase; focus on Book IV)
- Martin Luther, The Freedom of A Christian (Blackboard)

III. Judaism (Prof. Ray)

Week 12 (Mar. 30): Jewish Theology

Topics:
1. Halevi on being a “chosen” people
2. The issue of rabbinic authority
3. Observance of the commandments

Readings:
Primary texts:
- Judah Halevi, The Book of Kuzari, 27-49
- Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, in I. Twersky, A Maimonides Reader, 93-5

Secondary texts:
- “Maimonides,” in J. Baskin, ed., Dictionary of Judaism and Jewish Culture, 410-11
Week 13 (Apr. 6): No Class: Easter Break/Passover

Week 14 (Apr. 13): Jewish Rationalism
Topics:
1. Why Jews sought to reconcile human reason and divine revelation
2. Classic treatments of the soul, free will, and the afterlife in Saadya and Maimonides
Readings:
Primary texts:
Secondary texts:

Week 15 (Apr. 20): Jewish Pietism
Topics:
1. Pietist movement in Ashkenazi (German) Jewry
2. New views on Jewish martyrdom
Readings:
Primary texts:
- Judah ben Samuel (he-Hasid), *Sefer Hasidim*, in *Rabbinic Fantasies*, David Stern and Mark J. Mirsky ed. and trans., 215-238
Secondary texts:

Week 16 (Apr. 27): The Critique of Maimonidean Rationalism
Topics:
1. The Maimonidean Controversy and the attempt to ban philosophical study
2. Crescas’ argument for the importance of divine love
Readings:
Primary texts:
Secondary texts:

Final Examination, Monday, May 4, 2015, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
This syllabus is subject to revision.

A note on learning and other disabilities:
If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Faculty Access/Student Access/MyAccess: Students are responsible for checking the email account they have registered with the Registrar’s Office & School of Continuing Studies; messages sent to students will be sent through GU’s Faculty Access or through Blackboard.

Blackboard: Students are responsible for accessing articles and assignments on Blackboard and/or reserve (regular and electronic) at Lauinger.

No audio or video recording is allowed without express written permission by professor. This includes recording via a laptop computer.

No laptops are permitted in class without express written permission by professor.

All other electronic devices should be turned off. Anyone text-messaging or emailing in class will be asked to leave and will be listed as absent.

Instructional Continuity
During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university’s Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.