

Prof. Jonathan Ray  
[Jsr46@georgetown.edu](mailto:Jsr46@georgetown.edu)  
New North 128

**Faith and Reason in the Middle Ages  
(BLHS 105)**

**Fall 2018**

***Course Description:***

The relation between faith and reason is one of the perennial issues in Western thought. With the rediscovery of Aristotle by medieval intellectuals—and so, the use of Aristotelian logic, grammar, physics, and metaphysics—the question of faith and reason was dramatically recast. This course traces the intricate and often tense relationship between “faith and reason” in medieval Christianity, Judaism and Islam from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Along the way, we will explore the various ways in which medieval peoples drew upon and reshaped the religious and philosophical heritage of the ancient world. We will consider topics ranging from scholasticism and the birth of universities, to the role of theology and philosophy in public life, the question of heresy, and the proliferation of different forms of mysticism.

**Required Readings:**

All required readings are available on **Canvas** under the “Files” link

***Course Goals:***

- To learn how to read a variety of medieval texts on the topic of faith, reason, and religious experience.
- To understand these difficult primary texts in their historical/cultural contexts.
- To deepen understanding of medieval thought, life and culture.
- 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.
- To develop skills in analytical writing.
- To gain an appreciation of long-standing debates about faith and reason and thereby gain further conceptual clarity when addressing contemporary debates.
- To address issues of intellectual and religious pluralism

***Course Requirements:***

- Attendance and active class participation (20%)
- Weekly writing assignments (35%)
- Weekly quizzes (20%)
- Final exam (25%)

**Grading Scheme:**

A	<b>superior</b> (94-100%)
A-	(91-93)
B+	<b>very good</b> (88-90%)
B	<b>good</b> (84-87%)
B-	(81-83%)
C+	(78-80%)
C	<b>adequate</b> (74-77%)
C-	(71-73%)
D+	(68-70%)
D	<b>poor</b> , minimum passing (64-67%)
F	<b>Failing</b> (<64%)

**Office Hours:**

My regular office hours are Fri. 10-12, but I'm happy to find other times to meet students if need be, or to discuss matters related to the course via email ([Js46@georgetown.edu](mailto:Js46@georgetown.edu)) or phone (202-687-4459)

**Schedule of Classes:**

Wednesday, August 29: **No Class** – Georgetown Follows Monday Schedule

**Week 1 (September 5): Course Introduction and Overview**

**Week 2 (September 12): Athens and Jerusalem: The Legacy of Late Antiquity**

- Mark Edwards, "The Beginnings of Christianization," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, pp. 137-154
- St. Augustine, Account of His Conversion, from his *Confessions*, Book 3, ch. 1
- St. Ambrose and the Jews; and Pope Gregory I on Conversion, in *The Jew in the Medieval World*, pp. 120-23, 124-27

**\*Week 3 (September 19): No Class – Yom Kippur**

- WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENT STILL DUE\*
- Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, selections

**Week 4 (September 26): Scholasticism Part 1**

- Steven P. Marrone, "Medieval Philosophy in Context," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 10-50
- Anselm of Canterbury, ontological proof of God, *Proslogion*, selections

- Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*; and Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*, selections, trans. J. T. Paasch

### **Week 5 (October 3): Scholasticism Part 2**

- Marcia Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*, pp. 265-273
- St. Thomas Aquinas, “Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius,” selections, trans. J. T. Paasch
- William Ockham, “A Short Discourse on Tyrannical Government,” selections, trans. J. T. Paasch
- John Duns Scotus, “Commentary on the *Sentences*,” trans. J. T. Paasch

### **Week 6 (October 10): Christianity in the Age of the Crusades**

- Jonathan Riley Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, pp. 13-45
- John Tolan, “Conquest and its Justifications,” in *Europe and the Islamic World*, ed. J. Tolan, et al., 27-48
- *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, selections

### **Week 7 (October 17): Medieval Christian Mysticism**

- Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, introduction
- Meister Eckhart, “Teaching,” in R. Anderson ed., *Medieval Worlds*, pp. 303-305
- Julian of Norwich, “Revelations of Divine Love,” in *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, ed. B. McGinn, pp. 238-245

### **Week 8 (October 24): Medieval Islamic Theology**

- Karen Armstrong, “Unity: The God of Islam,” in *A History of God*, ch. 5
- *Qur’an*, trans. M. Pickthall, selections
- Abu’l-Hasan al-Ash’ari, *Explanation of the Fundamentals of Religion*, in R. J. McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ash’ari*, selections
- Ibn Khaldun on the hidden Imam, in *Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. F. E. Peters, pp. 388-393

### **Week 9 (October 31): Medieval Islamic Philosophy**

- Averroes, *The Decisive Treatise*, selections
- “Islamic Philosophy,” in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Hyman and J. Walsh, pp. 203-209
- Selections from al-Ghazali and Ibn al-Arabi, in *Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. F. E. Peters, pp. 1116-1123
- Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale*

**Week 10 (November 7): Medieval Jewish Theology**

- Judah Halevi, *The Book of Kuzari*, 27-49
- Judah ben Samuel (he-Hasid), *Sefer Hasidim*, in *Rabbinic Fantasies*, David Stern and Mark J. Mirsky ed. and trans., pp. 215-238
- Maimonides, Commentary to the Introduction to *Mishnah Sanhedrin* ch. 10, in I. Twersky ed., *A Maimonides Reader*, 402-07

**Week 11 (November 14): Medieval Jewish Philosophy**

- “Background and Context,” in D. Frank and O. Leaman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 3-68
- Saadia Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* in Alexander Altmann ed., *Three Jewish Philosophers*, 25-47
- Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, in I. Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader*, 72-4, 344-45

**Week 12 (Wednesday, November 21): Thanksgiving Break – No Class**

**Week 13 (November 28): The Spirit of Reform**

- Steven Ozment, “On the Eve of the Reformation,” in *The Age of Reform*, pp. 182-222
- Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, selections
- St. Ignatius of Loyola, “Rules of Thinking with the Church”

**Week 14 (December 5): Faith and Reason at the End of the Middle Ages**

- Readings TBD

**Final Exam – December 19**

**N. B. – Syllabus Subject to Change**

DISABILITIES—If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu).

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM—All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor), and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown 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.*

**POLICY ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES—**

The following is university policy: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.