

**FAITH AND REASON IN THE MIDDLE AGES**  
(BLHS 105)

**Professors Lamm and Ray** (3<sup>rd</sup> instructor TBA)

**Provisional Syllabus, Fall 2009**

*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, close reading of assigned texts, and active class participation (20%).
2. Weekly 1-2 page papers on assigned texts (30%).
3. A take-home final examination (50%). Students are to submit one hard copy and one electronic copy via TurnItIn. **No incompletes accepted.**

*Books To Purchase* (in order of their place on the syllabus):

Wippel, John, *Medieval Reactions to the Encounter between Faith and Reason*  
Boethius of Dacia, *On the Supreme Good, On the Eternity of the World, On Dreams*, trans. J. Wippel  
Jantzen, Grace M., *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*  
Swanson, R. N., *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-c. 1515*

*Julian of Norwich: Showings*, trans. Colledge & Walsh

Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, trans. Kavanaugh & Rodriguez

Frank, Daniel and Oliver Leaman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*

Other materials will be made available on Blackboard.

## Provisional Course Outline

### Week 1 (Sept. 8): Introductions

#### I. Scholasticism

### Week 2 (Sept. 15): Setting the Scene: Early Scholasticism in St. Anselm

#### Topics:

1. Anselm: *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. The roles of inquiry for a believer, the guiding role of authorities of various types. Discussion of Anselm on faith and reason.
2. Rise of Universities and reception of Aristotle

#### Readings:

##### *Primary text:*

- Anselm, *Proslogion*, preface, chapters 1, 2, 3, 15-18.

##### *Secondary text:*

- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Anselm on Faith and Reason”, pp. 32-60 in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, eds. B. Davies and B. Leftow.

### Week 3 (Sept. 22): The condemnation of 1277: Aquinas on Faith and Reason

#### Topics:

1. Discussion on Thomas Aquinas’s balance between faith and reason.
2. The condemnation of 1277 in Paris: reasons for the ecclesiastical reaction to the naturalism and authority of the ‘worldly wisdom’ of Aristotle.

#### Readings:

##### *Primary texts:*

- Aquinas, Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, q. 2 art. 3; *Summa theologiae*, q. 1; *Summa contra Gentiles*, book I, cc. 4-6. (The electronic copy available on internet)

##### *Secondary texts:*

- Wippel, *Medieval Reactions to the Encounter between Faith and Reason*, 1-33; and a selection of theses condemned (10 pages; on Blackboard).
- Wippel, “The Condemnations of 1270 and 1277 at Paris”, pp. 169-185 in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7, 1977. (Blackboard)

## **Week 4 (Sept. 29): The Condemnation of 1277: Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia**

### Topics:

Two alternative views on the relation of faith and reason from the Arts Faculty of the University of Paris. Discussion of Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia based on Wippel (see below) and introduction to works of Boethius of Dacia in textual focus. Specific topics to discuss: controversy over the eternity of the world, the philosopher's life is the best life, the immortality of the soul not provable by reason, a naturalistic account of dreams.

### Readings:

#### *Primary text:*

- Boethius of Dacia, *On the Supreme Good, On the Eternity of the World, On Dreams*, pp. 1-23, 27-35, 68-78.

#### *Secondary texts:*

- Wippel, "Medieval Reactions to the Encounter between Faith and Reason," 33-72.
- Wippel, "The Condemnations of 1270 and 1277 at Paris", pp. 185-201, in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7, 1977. (Blackboard)

## **Week 5 (Oct. 6): Condemnation of 1277: William of Ockham and the Aftermath in the 14th Century.**

### Topics:

1. The philosophical and theological repercussions of the condemnation: Ockham on the relation of faith and reason in comparison to Thomas Aquinas, the restriction of reason in matters of faith and God's absolute power.
2. The political repercussions: Ockham on Franciscan poverty and the limits of papal power.

### Readings:

*Primary texts:* TBA

#### *Secondary texts:*

- Freddoso, "Ockham on Faith and Reason" in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. Paul Vincent Spade, 1999, pp. 327-349
- J. Kilcullen "The Political Writings" in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, pp. 302-325.
- Ph. Boehner, "Ockham's Political Ideas" in *Collected Articles on Ockham*, ed. E. Buytaert, 1992, 442-468.

## II. Christian Mysticism &amp; Vernacular Theology (Prof. Lamm)

**Week 6 (Oct. 13): 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, 12<sup>th</sup> Century); refinements in Aquinas and Bonaventure (13<sup>th</sup> century).
2. Vernacular theology, Monastic theology, and Scholastic theology. Changes in the thirteenth century: 'democratization' and 'secularization' of the ideals of the apostolic life with the growth of cities and growing literacy.
3. Introduction to the Beguines and Hadewijch of Antwerp.

Readings:*Primary texts:*

- Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*
- Bernard of Clairvaux, *Treatise on Loving God*

*Secondary texts:*

- Jantzen, chap. 4: "Mystical theology and the erotic other," in *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*.
- <sup>E</sup>Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbott as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing," *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Available online through George: <http://0-ets.umdl.umich.edu.library.lausys.georgetown.edu:80/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb01494>
- Swanson, chap. 3, "Access to the Faith," and chap. 7, "Priests, people and power," in *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-c. 1515*.

**Week 7 (Oct. 20): "The School of Love" and the Charge of Heresy (13<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup>-century England.

Readings:

*Primary texts:*

- *Hadewijch: The Complete Works:*  
Letters 1, 2, 4, 8, 18, 22  
Poems in Stanzas: 14, 16, 23, 30  
Visions 1, 9  
Poems in Couplets 13, 16

*Secondary Texts:*

- Jantzen, chap. 5, “‘Cry out and write’: mysticism and the struggle for authority”, and chapter 7, “Heretics and witches,” in *PGCM*.

**Week 8 (Oct. 27): Julian of Norwich (14<sup>th</sup> Century)**

Topics:

1. Julian of Norwich’s Social Critique: A Theology of Courteous Lordship, Divine Motherhood, and the Equality of Souls.
2. Transition to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and debates on free will and grace.

Readings:

*Primary Text:*

- Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (Long Text)

*Secondary Text:*

- <sup>E</sup>Julia A. Lamm, “Revelation as Exposure in Julian of Norwich’s *Showings*,” *Spiritus* 5/1 (Spring 2005); read short section on “Three Kinds of Showings,” 56-59.  
For html version: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/spiritus/v005/5.1lamm.html>  
or for pdf: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/spiritus/v005/5.1lamm.pdf>.

**Week 9 (Nov. 3): The Crisis over Nature & Grace (16<sup>th</sup> 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* (focus on Book IV)
- Martin Luther, *The Freedom of A Christian*

### III. Judaism (Prof. Ray)

#### Week 10 (Nov. 10): 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 Saadia and Maimonides

##### Readings:

###### *Primary texts:*

- Saadia Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* in Alexander Altmann ed., *Three Jewish Philosophers*, 25-47 and 93-114
- Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, in I. Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader*, 341-349

###### *Secondary texts:*

- “Background and Context,” in D. Frank and O. Leaman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 3-68
- Daniel Frank, “Maimonides and Medieval Jewish Aristotelianism,” in idem and O. Leaman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 136-156

#### Week 11 (Nov. 17): Jewish Theology

##### Topics:

1. Saadia and Maimonides on the “world to come”
2. The issue of rabbinic authority
3. Observance of the commandments

##### Readings:

###### *Primary texts:*

- Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Theodicy*, Translation and Commentary on the Book of Job, ed. and trans. L. E. Goodman, introduction, 123-149
- Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, in I. Twersky, *A Maimonides Reader*, 93-95; 145-146; 222-227
- Maimonides, *Commentary to the Introduction to Mishnah Sanhedrin* ch. 10, in I. Twersky ed., *A Maimonides Reader*, 402-17

#### Week 12 (Nov. 24): 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
- “The Crusaders in Mayence,” in *The Jew in the Medieval World*, ed. J. R. Marcus, 128-133

*Secondary texts:*

- Ivan G. Marcus, “The Politics and Ethics of Pietism in Judaism,” *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 81(1980): 227-258

**Week 13 (Dec. 1): 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:*

- Hasdai Crescas, *The Light of the Lord*, in *With Perfect Faith*, ed. J. David Bleich, 466-91

*Secondary texts:*

- Idit Dobbs-Weinstein, “The Maimonidean Controversy,” in *History of Jewish Philosophy*: 331-345
- James Robinson, “Hasdai Crescas and anti-Aristotelianism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, ed. D. Frank and O. Leaman, 391-413

**Week 14 (Dec. 8): Group Round-Up**

This syllabus is subject to revision.

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 *Undergraduate Bulletin*) 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. (IV.3.b)

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 you mind; and again as review while writing a paper or preparing for an examination. We do not practice grade inflation.

A = superior; B+ = very good; B = good; C = fair; D = minimum passing; F = Failing

**Faculty Access/Student Access:** 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 lap top computer.

**No lap tops are permitted in class** without express written permission by professor.

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