



GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM, Part II: The Medieval Period

Spring Semester 2025

February 17-May 31, 2025

(Orientation Week: February 10-16)

Instructor: Dr. Georgia Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is a survey of the principal philosophical works of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. It includes discussion not only of the Western canon, but also of classical Arabic philosophy. Class will be discussion-based; it will require careful preparation of the reading material ahead of class and active participation in class discussion. By the end of the semester, students will have a good overview of the history of philosophy from the 5th to the 13th century.

BOOKS

The following books are required for this course:

1. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (Penguin Classics)
2. McGinnis, Jon & Reisman, David C. (2007) *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
3. Williams, Thomas (2007) *Anselm: Basic Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
4. Pines, S. trans. (1963) *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

All other materials will be provided in electronic format by the instructor.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS TAKING THE COURSE FOR CREDIT:

Course Requirements:

The final grade for the course will be based on class participation, oral reports, and mid-term and final exams. Oral report topics will be determined on the basis of students' interests; presentations must be accompanied by a handout.

Attendance and participation: 30%

Oral Report: 10%

Mid-term exam: 30%

Final exam (including term- and passage IDs): 30%

Student Attendance:

Daily attendance is expected. If you have to miss class for a good reason, please notify the instructor **ahead of time**.

Unexcused absences negatively affect a student's final grade for the course. Even if you have to miss class, you should still turn in your work on time. In extreme circumstances arrangements can be made, but generally speaking *late work will receive no credit*.

Students with disabilities:

To insure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to meet with the instructor as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity:

Please familiarize yourselves with the university's academic integrity policies discussed on this page:

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/learn/research/academicintegrity.html>

It is your responsibility to know and abide by these policies.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: 5th century CE

Augustine, *The City of God* (selections)

Week 2: 5th century CE

Proclus, *Elements of Theology*

Week 3: 6th century

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

Week 4: 6th century

John Philoponus, *De opificio mundi (On the Creation of the World)*

STUDENT REPORTS

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Week 5: 9th century

Al-Kindi

Source book: Adamson, P. and Pormann, P.E. trans. (2012) *The Philosophical Works of al-Kindi*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Week 6: 10th century

Al-Farabi

Source book: Jon McGinnis & David C. Reisman (2007) *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 7: 11th century

Avicenna (Ibn Sina), *The Cure (Or The Book of Healing)*

Book: *The Metaphysics of Avicenna (al-Ilahiyyat min Kitab al-Shifa')*, ed./tr. Michael Marmura, Provo, 2004.

Week 8: 11th century

Anselm of Canterbury

Book: Williams, Thomas (2007) *Anselm: Basic Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

STUDENT REPORTS

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Week 9: 12th century

Averroes (Ibn Rushd)

Book: Ibn Rushd, *Faith and Reason in Islam [al-Kashf]*. I. Najjar (trans.). (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001).

Week 10: 12th century

Maimonides

Book: Pines, S. (trans.), *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

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Week 11: 13th century

Albertus Magnus

His works are available here: <http://albertusmagnus.uwaterloo.ca/Downloading.html>

Week 12: 13th century

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (selections)

Translation available online: <https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/TOC.htm>

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Week 13
FINAL EXAMINATION