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RLST 335.01: Western Religious Thought - Christian Thought from Augustine to Aquinas

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RLST 335: Western Religious Thought
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT FROM AUGUSTINE TO AQUINAS

Spring, 2013
TTH 12:40-2:00
LA 105
3 credits

Paul A. Dietrich
Office: LA 150
Phone: x2805
Hours: MWF 11-12 & by apptmt.

An introduction to major works of five of the most notable and influential Christian thinkers from the formative era of late antiquity to the later medieval period. We will be able to read recent, acclaimed translations of the works of these figures.

Course Syllabus

- 1/29,31 Introduction – From Theologies to Thought: Forms (or Genres) of Christian Discourse
2/5,7 Augustine: Orientation [=Life & Works; Contexts & Sources; Major Themes]
2/12,14 “The Young Man and His Pain”: *Confessions*, the Philosopher (treatises), Bishop & Preacher (sermons), Exegete (commentaries)
2/19,21 “The Finished Man among His Enemies”: the Theologian (*On the Trinity*) and the Controversialist (Against the Manichees, Donatists, Pagans, and Pelagians)
2/26,28 Maximus Confessor: Orientation. Life between East and West – *The Trial*. The Wisdom of the Desert - *Four Hundred Chapters on Love and Commentary on Our Father*
3/5,7 The Byzantine Synthesis: Christian Gnosis and Mystagogy – *The Two Hundred Chapters on Knowledge* and *The Church’s Mystagogy*
3/12,14 Anselm: Orientation. The Revival of Dialectic and the Father of Scholasticism. Dialogues: *Monologion* and *Proslogion*
3/19,21 Anselm’s Christology: *Why Did God Become Man?*
3/26,28 Thomas Aquinas: Orientation. The Aristotelian Revolution and the Philosophy of the Schools: Thomas as Student and Master : early commentaries
4/1-5 Spring Break
4/9,11 Thomas as Systematic Theologian: the *Summae*
4/16,18 Thomas as Spiritual Theologian: the *Summae*, commentaries, and disputed questions
4/23,25 Bonaventure: Orientation. *The Soul’s Journey into God* : Scholastic Form , Mystical Content
4/30,5/2 Franciscan Augustinianism and Meditations on the Lives of Christ and Francis: *The Tree of Life* and *The Life of St. Francis*

Required Reading

Augustine in His Own Words, (Washington, 2010)
Maximus Confessor – Selected Writings, (New York, 1985)
Anselm of Canterbury – The Major Works, (Oxford, 2008)

Thomas Aquinas – Selected Writings, (London, 1998)

Bonaventure – The Soul’s Journey (et al.), (New York, 1978)

Course Requirements

1. In a small seminar attendance and participation in class discussion are crucial. Four unexcused absences (or persistent tardiness) will lower your grade one letter. More than six absences will result in failure of the course.
2. In a small seminar timely completion of assigned reading is also a necessity. Come to class prepared to discuss the material. Students will be expected to occasionally lead the class discussion. (1. and 2. will count for 20% of grade)
3. There will be a midterm exam on March 21st and a final exam on Wednesday, May 15th from 10 to 12. (40% each)
4. A term paper or research paper on an approved topic may be submitted in lieu of a final exam (12-15 pages, typed, double-spaced). (Consult Kate Turabian’s guides on writing research papers.) Due Wednesday, May 15. No extensions on written assignments. Evidence of plagiarism will result in failure of the course.