

PHIL 205 IH-1  
**Medieval & Renaissance Philosophy**  
MICA - Fall 2013  
Course Syllabus

Wednesday 9-11:45 PM  
Bunting 460



The 4 Sciences: Phylosophia, Logyca, Ethica, Phisica

**Instructor: Michael Sizer**

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By doubting we come to examine,  
and by examining we reach the  
truth.

- Peter Abelard

### Course Description & Goals

In our contemporary age, faith and reason are separate spheres, but in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance it was not so. In these periods they were intertwined, as philosophers sought answers to the basic questions of human existence and the world's creation: why are we here? What should we do? What should we not do? What is evil? What is fate? what is it all for? In this course we will examine some of the questions and some of the answers these long-ago philosophers developed and hopefully in the process will get some answers ourselves to these still unanswered but perpetually asked questions. In the process we will learn about the social and cultural contexts from which this thought emerged, including the interplay between Jewish, Muslim, and Christian thinkers, the origins of the University (a medieval creation), and the relationship of philosophical inquiry and power. We will also investigate changes over time in the way that philosophical questions were asked and answered, and in this way critically assess the merits (or lack thereof) of traditional divisions of historical periods into medieval and Renaissance... and, thereby, the modern.

The class will be structured so that students will not only read these texts, but also will engage in activities so that they can recreate in basic contours a philosophical argument, and therefore understand how to use logic and rhetoric to advance opinions. As with all MICA Intellectual History courses, the students will research and write a research paper for the end of the class.

### Course Learning Objectives

Requirements in Intellectual history present the history of ideas in their development through and across cultures and historical periods. They focus on major intellectual movements in philosophy, religion, politics, economics, science and mathematics, art and literature, and their social and historical contexts. Intellectual history courses aim to

- Impart specific intellectual values: intellectual integrity and honesty
- Develop respect for the materials of historical inquiry
- Foster a capacity for dialogue with the past.
- Engender an understanding of good scholarly technique and practice.

In addition to these more general objectives, students in this course can expect:

- Engage in fruitful conversations about lofty ideas with your fellow students.
- Read some foundational texts in Western intellectual history.
- Learn to read and interpret primary sources, culminating in an original research paper.
- Appreciate and begin to construct philosophical arguments structured around logic and the presentation of evidence.
- Ask (and receive answers to!) some of the basic questions regarding human existence

### Course Format, Grading and Assignments

This course will emphasize class and small group discussion. Your participation will be evaluated not only based on the quality of your comments in open discussion, but also on alertness, energy, and preparedness. Various organized activities will also provide an opportunity to participate in class ways other than in large- or small-group discussion. (Note: this participation grade does not include your field study or group project presentation grades, which are evaluated separately; see below). **Class participation is crucial to this course, constituting 20% of your grade.**

The **readings** are vital, as they will form the basis of our discussions and activities. The amount of readings varies, but at times is quite heavy. It is important not only that you do the readings thoroughly, but that you **bring them with you to class**, either printed out or on your computer screen (see below for comments on bringing laptops to class), to use as a basis for discussion. **Failure to do so will result in a grade of 'F' for your class participation for that day.**

In addition to the regular class activities included as part of your class participation, there will be a **special class activity in week 11: an in-class debate** on Christine de Pisan. This activity will require particular preparation and participation, and is **worth 5% of your grade.**

There will be **one creative/speculative assignment** in this class, which you must be prepared to share briefly with the class. Students have **several options** during the semester for this assignment (see assignment schedule below for details), but may also opt to do a creative/speculative response **of their own** on their own topic at any point during the semester

(this can be a poem, a narrative, a visual piece, etc.) This will be described in more detail later in the semester. This assignment is **worth 10% of your grade**.

In weeks 4-6, during our reading of Augustine, students will be given some **study questions** based off of the reading to help orient you and to inspire class discussion. Students must **write informal responses** to these questions, which they will use in class discussion and will also hand into me. **Each set of responses to these questions is worth 5%** of your grade.

Each student will have **1 short (2-3 pp. double-spaced) informal paper** due during the semester. In these papers you will **comment on the readings for that day and raise issues that might be suitable for class discussion, making specific and concrete references to the text**. You may be asked to read or comment on your ideas from the paper in class discussion. The **due dates of the papers depend on the first letter of your last name**: these due dates are indicated in the syllabus below. This paper is **worth 10 % of your grade**.

There are two **short (2-3 pp.) formal paper assignments, on Augustine and Machiavelli respectively, due in week 10** of the semester. These assignments will be explained in more detail later in the semester. Each **paper is worth 10% of your grade**.

As in all MICA Intellectual History courses, for the **final project** for the course, students will write a **longer (8-10 pages) research paper**. In this course the paper will take the form of a scholastic argument. More details will be forthcoming during the semester. This paper will require original research as well as analysis. This **final paper represents 20% of your final grade**.

### Late Assignment Policy

In-semester paper assignments will be marked down a grade for each day late (A to A-, B- to C+, etc.) Presentations and final papers cannot be late. I do not accept computer submissions of work.

### Attendance Policy

There are only 16 meetings in the semester so we have to make the most of them.

An absence **will only be excused following a class meeting if the student provides a doctor's note or some other legitimate notification**. In some cases I will excuse an absence if a legitimate reason is given and I am notified before class time. In all cases, **I will excuse only 1 absence per term**. Any medical or other issue that requires any more missed time must be **verified by the appropriate MICA adviser**, and even then keep in mind **that too many absences – even “legitimate” ones – may make earning credit for the course inappropriate**.

Any **unexcused absence beyond 1** will result in a decrease of two grades from class participation (A to B+, B- to C, etc.). **2 late arrivals (> 10 minutes) equals 1 absence**.

### Classroom Laptop/Cellphone Policy

Because students in previous classes have abused the privilege of having laptops in class, I am going to set limits on their use in our class. **If there are no online or Moodle readings, an open laptop is not permitted in class, unless you receive special permission from me to take notes on it or for some other purpose**. If there are online or Moodle readings, you can have the

computer open. However, if you are observed using the computer for anything not related to classroom activity, **you will get an F for the day and your laptop privileges will be revoked.**

**Cell phones must be stowed away and turned off for the duration of the class.**

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations.

#### **Health and Safety**

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to practice health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify, within each art making process, and require personal protection equipment use, by each student for each class, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate to their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection is in place.

#### **Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)**

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify and require appropriate personal protective equipment for each art making process, for each student, in all of their classes, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate for their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.

#### **Plagiarism**

Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for students to cite or acknowledge sources and the ideas and material of others used in their own work. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with such processes and to carefully follow their use in developing original work.

#### **Policy**

MICA will not tolerate plagiarism, which is defined as claiming authorship of, or using someone else's ideas or work without proper acknowledgment. Without proper attribution, a student may NOT replicate another's work, paraphrase another's ideas, or appropriate images in a manner that violates the specific rules against plagiarism in the student's department. In addition, students may not submit the same work for credit in more than one course without the explicit approval of the all of the instructors of the courses involved.

## **Consequences**

When an instructor has evidence that a student has plagiarized work submitted for course credit, the instructor will confront the student and impose penalties that may include failing the course. In the case of a serious violation or repeated infractions from the same student, the instructor will report the infractions to the department chair. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the department chair may then report the student to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may choose to impose further penalties, including suspension or expulsion.

## **MOODLE**

MICA USES THE COMPUTER CLASSROOM SITE CALLED MOODLE. EVERYONE ENROLLED IN THE COURSE WITH THE REGISTRAR SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE SITE. BE SURE TO HAVE YOUR ENROLLMENT PAPERS AND YOUR LOG-IN AND PASSWORD INFORMATION CORRECT: IF THERE IS A PROBLEM, BE SURE TO SEE THE HELP DESK AT THE ART TECH CENTER ON MOUNT ROYAL AVE.

TO REACH THE MOODLE SITE, GO TO:

[WWW.CLASSROOM.MICA.EDU](http://WWW.CLASSROOM.MICA.EDU)

AND ENTER YOUR LOG-IN INFORMATION. THE REST SHOULD BE SELF-EXPLANATORY.

## **Readings**

- Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick. Oxford World's Classics.
- Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter Bondanella. Oxford World's Classics.
- Supplementary texts on Moodle class site, online, or handed out in class.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE: You are REQUIRED to use the above editions of Augustine and Machiavelli. \*\***

## **Course Schedule (Topics and Assignments) - Subject to change if necessary.**

Assignments are listed the day they are due, not the day they are assigned.

### **Week 1 – 9/4: Introduction to course**

- Introduction to course; introduction to each other.

### **Week 2 – 9/11: The Bible as Philosophy; Desert Saints**

- Discussion of the Bible and the Desert Saints.

Reading: > Bible: any edition is fine. Here is a good online version:

<http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>

- a. The Creation of the World and Adam & Eve: Genesis chapters 1-3
- b. The 10 Commandments: Exodus 20
- c. The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew chapters 5-7

> Desert Saint Readings (Moodle)

Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters A-C write short paper 1.

### **Week 3 – 9/18: Fortuna Day**

- Fortune, Time, and our lives.

Reading: > Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* (excerpt):

<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/con-phil.asp>

> *Carmina Burana* lyrics:

<http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/works/orff-cb/carmlyr.php>

> John O'Toole, *Confederacy of Dunces* (excerpt - Moodle)

> Augustine, *Confessions*, editor's introduction (p. ix-xxv)

Listen/Watch: > "O Fortuna" from *Carmina Burana*:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP\\_CSQgBPpQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP_CSQgBPpQ)

Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters D-F write short paper 1.

Creative Assignment (Option 1): Create something on the theme of Fortuna.

### **Week 4 – 9/25: Augustine 1**

- Augustine's wayward youth.

Reading: > Augustine, *Confessions*, Books 1-3, comments on beauty from Book 4 (3-53, 61-71).

Writing: Informal response (1-2 pg.) to questions.

### **Week 5 – 10/2: Augustine 2**

- Augustine straightens out.

Reading: > Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 6, conversion from Ch. 8, Monica's death (90-110, 150-4, 166-78).

Writing: Informal response (1-2 pg.) to questions.

### **Week 6 – 10/9: Augustine 3**

- What is time?

Reading: > Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 11 on "Time and Eternity" (221-245)

> Augustine, *City of God* (excerpt):

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aug-city2.asp>

Writing: Informal response (1-2 pg.) to questions.

### **Week 7 – 10/16: Augustine 4; Anselm's proof of God's existence; Hildegard**

- PAPER DUE! Final discussion of Augustine; Anselm and Hildegard.

Reading: > Hildegard of Bingen, reading TBA  
> Anselm's Proof of God's existence (just read the first 4 'chapters'):  
<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/anselm.asp>

Writing: Paper on AUGUSTINE DUE.

### **Week 8 – 10/23: The 1<sup>st</sup> Universities, and a Great Medieval Love Story**

- Isidore of Seville; Abelard & Heloise.

Reading: > Abelard, *Sic et Non*, prologue:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1120abelard.asp>  
> Heloise's 1<sup>st</sup> letter to Abelard (scroll down to letter):  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/heloise1.asp>  
> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* (excerpt on "Human Being and Portents" - Moodle)

Writing: Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters G-J write short paper.

Creative Assignment (Option 2): With 1-2 classmates, act out a scene of the Abelard & Heloise play, *In Extremis*, by Howard Brenton (on Moodle).

Creative Assignment (Option 3): Create a fanciful etymology in the style of Isidore of Seville.

### **Week 9 – 10/30: Muslim & Jewish Philosophy**

- Discussion of important Muslim and Jewish medieval thought.

Reading: > Al-Gazali, "Deliverance from Error" and "The True Nature of Prophecy and the Compelling Need of all Creation for it" (Moodle)  
> Averroes, "Philosophy Contains Nothing Opposed to Islam" (Moodle)  
> Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, excerpts Ch. 51 & 52 (Moodle)

Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters K-L write short paper.

### **Week 10 – 11/6: Scholastics and the Scholastic Method**

- We will review the scholastic method and begin to work on it in preparation for our final papers.

Reading: > TBA.

Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters M-O write short paper.

TOPIC SELECTION FOR FINAL PAPER.

### **Week 11 – 11/13: Christine de Pisan: First Feminist?**

- Structured class debate exercise on the writings of late medieval philosopher Christine de Pisan.

Reading: > Christine de Pisan, *City of Ladies*, excerpts (Moodle)  
> Machiavelli, *The Prince*, editor's introduction (p. vii-iii).

Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters P-S write short paper.

**Week 12 – 11/20: Machiavelli 1**

- Discussion of Machiavelli.

Reading: > Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1-39; 50-2).  
> Pico della Mirandola, “Oration on the Dignity of Man”:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/oration.asp>

**\*\*\* NO CLASS 11/27 THANKSGIVING BREAK \*\*\***

**Week 13 – 12/4: Machiavelli 2**

- Discussion of Machiavelli

Reading: > Machiavelli, *The Prince* (53-90)

Writing: PAPER on *The Prince* due.

**Week 14 – 12/11: Renaissance Philosophers**

- What was so new about the Renaissance?

Reading: > Erasmus, “In Praise of Folly” (excerpts – Moodle)  
> Copernicus, “The Revolution of Heavenly Bodies”:  
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1543copernicus2.asp>

Writing: Writing: Students with last names beginning with letters T-Z write short paper.

**Week 15 – 12/18: FINAL CLASS**

- Informal Presentations on Final Papers.

Assignments: Final Research Papers due today!!!