

HUMANITIES 3: Philosophy and Theology
(Ancient to Early Modern)

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Introduction

The course features a set of classic texts in philosophy and theology. The faculty has dictated that this course should address fewer works in greater depth, with emphasis on the skills related to careful analysis.

Therefore, each student will pick one work about which to write a carefully worded analysis of the work's argument* -- both its content and its form. Your paper should consider the intended audience of the work and how the form of the argument might be expected to appeal to that audience. Your paper may be critical as well – in other words, you may assess the strength of the document's argument – but your critical evaluation must follow, not replace or overwhelm, the analytical portion of the paper. The length should be six to ten pages (double spaced). The paper in rough draft form will be presented to the class at the beginning of the class period in which the reading is first discussed. It must treat one of the readings assigned for weekends 2, 3, 4 or 5. The final version of the paper will be due ten days after the discussion of the work is concluded. Late papers will be accepted but not graded.

A final paper is due on the Sunday of the last weekend of the semester. For this paper, choose one idea or topic which has been addressed by more than one author and which you find interesting and significant. Examine the ways in which at least two (and no more than three) of the authors have addressed this idea and how they have affected your views. Length: 8 – 12 pages. Late papers not accepted.

Let us not ignore those aspects of discussion that make our time together productive: good listening, careful preparation, mutual respect and open dialogue. Course materials touch the core of what we believe and what we hold to be true. Topics arising in class may well be emotionally weighed. Consider well how your comments may be taken when you address a fellow class member's concern. Simultaneously, keep an open mind towards how others may view a topic that seems self-evident to you. Above all, become aware not only of the assumptions of the authors we read, but of yours as well.

* The word "argument" is meant in the sense – what are the main points and how does the author support them, how does he/she "get there."

Grading

Analytical paper: 25%
Final paper: 25%
Discussion: 50% [Your grade could be reduced for missed classes]
[The instructor may drop you from the class if you miss four classes]

The Readings

Anselm, Prosologion
Augustine, Confessions
Bible, Genesis
Gospel According to John
Descartes, Meditations
Locke, Essay on Human Understanding
Pascal, Pensees
Paul, I Corinthians
Plato, Apology
Crito
Phaedo
Symposium
Teresa of Avila, Life of St. Teresa

Assignments

Weekend Reading

- 1 Apology, Crito, Phaedo
- 2 Symposium; Genesis, Chapters 1 – 36
- 3 Genesis, Chapters 37 – 50; The Gospel of John; I Corinthians
- 4 Augustine's Confessions
- 5 Anselm's Prosologion; Life of St. Teresa
- 6 Descartes' Meditations
- 7 Pascal's Pensees; Essay on Human Understanding, Book I, Book II (Ch. 1 & 2)