

## **MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY**

*Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal*

*Last updated: June 24, 2025*

### **1. Course Description**

In this course we pursue a careful study of some key writings of Augustine (354-430), the most influential figure of Medieval Philosophy (the label “Medieval Philosophy” applies to the phase of Western philosophy in-between Ancient and Modern Philosophy, from approximately the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.) The core of the course consists of a close reading of Augustine’s *Confessions*, the first autobiography in world literature, which contains philosophical meditations on a large number of topics, including God, the problem of evil, the meaning of life, free will, sexuality and love, the human mind, the afterlife, and the nature of time.

Throughout the course we pursue multiple digressions on how themes in Augustine’s thought impacted, and were reacted to, in subsequent Medieval philosophy (e.g. Aquinas), Renaissance philosophy (e.g. Petrarch), and Early Modern Philosophy (e.g. Descartes). We will also look at how they were anticipated by earlier Greek and Roman Ancient Philosophy.

### **2. Lectures.** MWF

**3. Instructor.** Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)

**4. Instructor Office Hours.** TBA

**5. Instructor Email Policy.** Instructor will read and reply to emails weekdays

**6. Teaching Assistant.** TBA. (The TA will be marking exams and papers, and will answer questions about marked work via email.)

**7. Required Texts.** Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Chadwick (Oxford: OUP, 2008). (Or any other edition.) (Will be available in the UBC bookstore.)

### **8. Course Requirements**

*In-Class Exam (x3):* In the in-class exams, you will be asked to provide answers to questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. If a student misses an in-class exam, for whatever reason, the weight of that exam will be transferred to their final exam. TA’s are entitled to judge from case to case if and how much feedback to give on an in-class exam beyond the mark itself; students asking TA’s for feedback should be aware that each TA has

limited time allotted for each exam and may not be able to provide as much feedback as the student asks for.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will be held during UBC's final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned 0p unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be a standing deferred final exam). Finals are not handed back to students, as per department policy.

There will be no makeup exams for students who performs poorly on exams.

### ***9. Learning Outcomes***

At the end of the course the student will be expected to i) be familiar with some main themes in Medieval Philosophy; ii) have more detailed knowledge of some central themes in Augustine's *Confessions*; iii) be aware of problems and prospects attaching to the above themes, and be able to reflect critically and constructively on them

### ***10. Missed Lectures***

Students who miss classes are encouraged to ask classmates for notes.

### ***11. Marking Parameters***

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors: i) your performance on the examinable momenta relative to your peers, ii) your comprehension of the course material, iii) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

### ***12. Marking Scale***

**A+** 90-100% / **A** 85-89% / **A-** 80-84% / **B+** 76-79% / **B** 72-75% / **B-** 68-71%

**C+** 64-67% / **C** 60-63% / **C-** 55-59% / **D** 50-54% / **F** 0-49%

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to *aim* at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years. Scaling may be used to this effect.

### ***13. Policy on Review of Marked Work***

Marks on exams and papers will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions. Any concerns about the marking of a paper or exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) via email, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) via email.

### ***14. Plagiarism (quoting from the UBC Academic Calendar)***

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

#### ***15. UBC Values and Policies (quoting from the UBC Academic Calendar)***

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>).

#### ***16. Schedule***

*A more detailed schedule will be published on canvas.*