Course Content

The medieval period of philosophy spans 1000 years, from the 4th to the 14th century. This vast stretch of time contains philosophy of many different kinds, some religious and some secular, some Aristotelian, some Platonic, some neither. Of the entire history of Western philosophy, this is the period that is least understood and, in most circles, least appreciated. This course will offer a survey of philosophy during this period.

Philosophy in the Middle Ages was studied by Christians, Jews, and Muslims, by Europeans, Africans, and Asians. These traditions were all in close contact – indeed, it would be more accurate to say that all these different peoples contributed to a single tradition, which we can speak of as medieval philosophy.

To some extent, the notion of a medieval period is an artificial construct. At one end of the period sit St. Augustine (354-430) and Boethius (480-524). They were citizens of the Roman Empire, and their intellectual milieu was the classical one of Greece and Rome. At the other end we think of the medieval era as being superseded by the Renaissance. But in philosophy there is no clear dividing line between these periods. What is known as the scholastic period, which began in the twelfth century, was prevalent throughout Europe into the seventeenth century. Moreover, Renaissance philosophy has no clear identity of its own. Indeed, if we are to speak of a "renaissance" in philosophy, then there are good reasons for situating it in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which were a far more important and exciting time for philosophy than were the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Course Material

All course materials will be made available on my web page (see URL above).

The readings will often be extremely difficult. Please note that, in every case, I have provided annotations to the pdf documents. Make sure you look for those, while you are reading, because in some cases they might be easily missed.

Please come to class with either a printout of the reading or an electronic device for looking at the reading. Please do not use your electronic device for activities unrelated to class! If you print the readings, bear in mind that my annotations may not be visible.
Course Requirements for PHIL 4030¹

Prospective students should understand that I aim at making my courses among the most difficult in the humanities. Readings will be long; assignments will be frequent. Much will be demanded on exams and papers. The payoff is that students who do the required work can be confident of receiving good grades. It will always be clear just what work is required to do well in the class, and students willing to do the work will be rewarded.

1. Daily reading notes. For each day on which there is a new reading – which will be each day on which there is not some other assignment due – students must submit at the start of class their reading notes from that day’s assignments.
   What are reading notes? Simply notes that you take, as you do the reading, about the key issues found in the reading. They can be hand-written or typed – they can be as messy and jumbled and fragmentary as you like. They can ask questions; they can express irritation or enthusiasm. They can be in complete sentences or not. I just want to see that you’re engaged in some way with the reading, and that you’re following the reading’s basic line of thought. How much do you have to write per day? That depends on how large your writing is, etc. But decent notes should be more than a page per day. You must attend class to hand in your notes; reading notes are intended to track attendance. But students with excused absences can submit their notes late, or electronically.
   Worth 30% of your final grade.

2. Tests. There will be four tests.
   The tests will have various formats: sometimes take-home, sometimes open book, sometimes in-class with questions announced in advance.
   Worth 40% of your final grade (10% each).

3. One term paper.
   You will research a topic in detail, reading both primary sources and secondary sources. The whole process will comprise a series of scheduled steps, from picking a topic to preparing an annotated bibliography to submitting an outline and then a rough draft, and then in the end a final draft that should be longer than 10 and shorter than 20 pages. The schedule for the paper will be announced later.
   Worth 30% of your final grade.

More Notes on the Requirements

a. Daily reading notes cannot be handed in late, unless permission is granted in advance.
b. Any other assignments can be made up late, but with a late penalty.

Schedule of Readings

Foundations: The Place of Philosophy
August 30. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, selections from bks. 1-2

September 4. Al-Ghazâlî, The Rescuer from Error, pp. 1-17
September 6. Ibid., pp. 17-27

¹ Graduate students, enrolled in PHIL 5020, will be subject to wholly different course requirements, to be announced.
**The Soul**
September 11. Avicenna, selections from *al-Shifā‘*, pp. 175-88
September 13. Ibid., pp. 188-202, 205-9
September 18. Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Human Nature (Summa theologiae 1a) Q75*
September 20. Ibid., Q76

**Ethics**
September 25. *Test #1 in class, closed book, questions in advance.*
September 27. Peter Abelard, *Ethics*

October 2. John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio II.6.2, III.34*
October 4. Scotus, *Ordinatio III.37*

**God**
October 11. Anselm, *Proslogion* chs. 1-5 and exchange with Gaunilo

October 16. Aquinas, *Summa theol. 1a q.q. 3-6.*
October 18. Ibid., q.q. 7-10. *Test #2. Take home.*

October 23. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, excerpts
October 25. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae 1a Q13* articles 1-6 and article 12
October 30. Scotus, *Ordinatio I.3.1*

**Freedom**
November 1. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, end of Bk. IV and Bk. V
November 8. Ḥasdai Crescas, *Light of the Lord*, treatise 2, excerpts

November 13. Scotus, *Questions on the Metaphysics* IX.15

**Material Substances**
November 27. William Ockham, *Summula philosophiae naturalis* chs. 1-2, ch. 9-14 (matter)
November 29. Ibid., chs. 15-20 (form)

December 4. Nicholas of Autrecourt, *Tractatus* ch. 1 excerpt
December 6. John Buridan, two questions on identity over time

**Knowledge**
December 11. Autrecourt, two letters to Bernard

**Final Exam: The Obligationes Game**
Mikko Yrjönsuuri, “Disputations, Obligations and Logical Coherence”
Further Important Information

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please share with me your accommodation letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you have any such conflict, please let me know in advance so that we can make a mutually acceptable accommodation. See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details regarding University policy.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.

CU Boulder is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.