

WESTERN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

RELG 321

*School of Religious Studies, McGill University*Fall Term 2022: August 31st to December 5th

Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:05pm – 5:25pm

Birks 111

Office: Birks 001

INSTRUCTORS:

Marco Dozzi marco.dozzi2@mcgill.caA.J. Smith adam.smith4@mcgill.ca*Office hours by appointment*

Course description: This course is a historical and philosophical introduction to the major canonical texts and figures that characterize the Western intellectual (and particularly, philosophical) tradition from antiquity to the late modern period. It focuses on the theme of inheritance, both conceptual and historical, with regards to problems in philosophy, religion, and theology—including the question of how these disciplines can or should be differentiated. In this course, we will attend to the historical and theoretical development of these disciplines by reading through primary sources from the classical period of ancient Greek philosophy, through the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, progressing to the early modern period, and then concluding in the late modern period (circa 1850). By carrying out this historical investigation across different epochs, students will engage with both the continuity and development of a wide-range of philosophical and religious themes that concern the Western intellectual tradition and the modes of reasoning used in these engagements, whether they be modes of acceptance, revision, or rejection.

Outcomes: Students are expected to become familiar with the works analysed and infer connections between them; placing authors, texts, and traditions in dialogue. Furthermore, students will be expected to be acquainted with the major questions in the Western philosophical tradition, propose tentative answers to them, and consider how these answers are - or at least may be - situated within their historical context.

Methods: Classes will consist of in-person lectures that are mandatory to attend (unless one is feeling ill - please let one of us know!). There is no textbook, and all the readings will be available ahead of time on MyCourses.

- Evaluation:** Evaluation will consist of two short papers and a final take-home exam (short answer and long answer hybrid). Attendance is essential to success in this class. Both the readings and final exam presuppose and assume the framework established by the lectures.
- Grades:** 25% First 5-page exegetical paper – 25% Second 5-page exegetical paper. – 40% final, written exam – 10% Attendance.
- Exam:** **To be scheduled.**
- Late work:** All late graded work is penalized one full letter grade (e.g., A- to B-) per day. There are no options for extra credit work. Extensions for papers will be granted at the discretion of the instructor and **must** be discussed **before** assignments are due.
- Communication:** Office hours are by appointment. In all written communication with the instructors, please use your McGill email address.

SCHEDULE

Dates & Assignments	Figure & Lecture Theme	Reading
1. August 31 Dozzi & Smith	Introduction: Review of the Syllabus	
<i>Part I: Ancient Sources</i>		
2. September 7 - Smith	Plato <i>The Foundations of Greek Philosophy</i>	<i>Meno</i> * Optional Reading: Diogenes Laërtius's <i>Lives of the Eminent Philosophers</i> , Prologue
3. September 12 - Smith	Plato (cont.)	<i>Euthyphro</i>
4. September 14 - Smith	Plato (cont.)	<i>The Republic</i> , Book 6
5. September 19 - Smith	Aristotle <i>What is Metaphysics?</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i> : Book Alpha & Little Alpha * Optional Reading: <i>Alexander of Aphrodisias's Commentary on Metaphysics Alpha II</i>
6. September 21 - Smith	Plotinus <i>The Beginning of Neoplatonism</i>	<i>Enneads</i> 1.1
7. September 26 - Smith	Plotinus <i>Beauty and Ascent</i>	<i>Enneads</i> 1.6

	<u>Part II - The Middle Ages</u>	
8. September 28 - Smith	Anselm <i>The Ontological Proof</i>	<i>Proslogion</i>
9. October 3 - Smith	Thomas Aquinas (cont.)	<i>Summa Theologica</i>
10. October 5 - Smith	Thomas Aquinas (cont.)	<i>Summa Theologica</i>
	FALL READING BREAK NO CLASSES	
11. Oct. 13 - Smith <i>(Make-up class)</i> <u>*First 5 page Assignment Due*</u>	Dante	<i>Paradiso</i> , Canto I and II
<u>Part III: The Early Modern Period (Rationalism, Pascal)</u>		
12. Oct. 17 - Dozzi	René Descartes <i>Doubt and the Mind (or Soul)</i>	<i>Meditation I-II</i>
13. Oct. 19 - Dozzi	René Descartes (cont.) <i>Arguments for God</i>	<i>Meditation III</i>
14. Oct. 24 - Dozzi	Spinoza <i>On God</i>	<i>Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being (P.1)</i>
15. Oct. 26 - Dozzi	Spinoza (cont.) <i>On Man</i>	<i>Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being (P.2)</i>
16. Oct. 31 - Smith	Blaise Pascal <i>The Wager</i>	<i>Pensées</i>
17. Nov. 2 - Smith	Leibniz <i>"Why is there something rather than nothing?"</i>	<i>Ultimate Origination of Things</i>
18. Nov. 7 - Dozzi	Leibniz (cont.)	<i>Principles of Nature and of Grace + The Monadology</i>
<u>Part IV: The Late Modern Period (German Idealism, Kierkegaard)</u>		
19. Nov. 9 - Dozzi	Immanuel Kant <i>Principles of a Critique of Pure Reason (A Priori Knowledge)</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> Introduction (§1-4)

20. Nov. 14 - Dozzi	Kant (cont.) <i>Critique of Proofs for God's Existence</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> The Ontological Proof and the Cosmological Proof
21. Nov. 16 - Dozzi <u>*Second 5 page Assignment Due*</u>	Kant (cont.) <i>Practical Religion</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> The Canon of Pure Reason (Section 2)
21. Nov. 21 - Dozzi	Hegel <i>Absolute Idealism</i>	<i>The Encyclopedia Logic</i>
22. Nov. 23 - Dozzi	Hegel <i>On God</i>	<i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 1 ('On God')</i>
23. Nov. 28 - Dozzi	Schelling <i>On Pantheism</i>	<i>The Freedom Essay</i>
24. Nov. 30 - Dozzi	Schelling (cont.) <i>Evil as Ground in God</i>	<i>The Freedom Essay</i>
25. Dec. 5 - Smith	Søren Kierkegaard <i>The Leap of Faith</i>	<i>Philosophical Fragments</i>
	Final Exam (Take-Home): TBD	

ASSIGNMENTS

Two 5-page exegetical papers. After the completion of Part I and halfway through Part II, students will choose one reading from the section just completed and write a five-page paper about it. The paper should reconstruct the argument of the text and make use of **one** or **two** academic secondary sources to aid in their interpretation. Students should identify a central claim (thesis statement) in the text selected, and then move through the manner in which the text's author seeks to justify this claim. While the student need not offer a rebuttal, it is possible to make a claim about whether or not the author's argument(s) succeed. This is not a matter of opinion or feeling, and the pronoun "I" should be avoided. At stake is understanding the text and engaging with its arguments on its own terms.

All papers submitted should use Chicago-Turabian style, with footnotes and bibliography (**not** the author-date system). <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html>

Final Exam (Written, Timed, and Take-Home). After the completion of the course, students will write a cumulative timed exam. The exam will consist of short answer essay questions with a long answer essay question. Like the essay assignments, the final exam portion is to judge the overall comprehension of the main claims in the texts and their relation to one another. It will be made available on MyCourses during the examination period.

POLICY STATEMENTS

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires.

(Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

This means, among other things, that you submit your own work prepared for this class (work done in previous courses will not be accepted), and that all material and information taken from other sources (not just quotations) is acknowledged in correct scholarly form.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

(Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)