

# MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY (7AAN6018/2045)

AUTUMN 2022

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Zita Toth	<b>Office:</b>	Philosophy building, 709
<b>Time:</b>	Fridays 16:00–17:00	<b>Office hrs:</b>	Thursdays 15:00–16:00 & by appt.
<b>Place:</b>	Strand, 3.05	<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:zita.v.toth@kcl.ac.uk">zita.v.toth@kcl.ac.uk</a>

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**Course Description.** In this course, we will look at philosophy from around the 4th to the 14th centuries. We will especially consider how thinkers of the period characterized free will, whether they thought we had any, and some related philosophical and theological difficulties.

## Expectations and Assignments.

**Attendance and in-class participation:** Conversation is essential to philosophy.

Everyone, even if they are bored or shy or anxious is expected to participate in the seminar. To prepare for the class, when you do the assigned readings, make notes about: (1) the main thesis or idea of the reading; (2) the main argument (if any); (3) the main examples the reading uses to illustrate the point; and (4) any questions or remarks you have about the reading.

**Presentation:** Everyone will be expected to give a presentation of one of the readings for the class. If you cannot be there for your presentation, please let me know in advance so that we can make arrangements.

**Formative assessment:** A specific argument-reconstruction exercise, based on one of the first readings for the class. Details will follow.

**Summative assessment:** A research paper on a topic of your choice, ca. 3500 words. Detailed guidelines will follow.

**Electronic devices:** While you may use your computer to take notes and have the readings at hand, you should be aware that according to plenty of research, electronic note-taking and reading on screen adversely affects deep understanding. Thus, students are strongly encouraged to use analog means instead.

**Outside resources:** With the exception of the final paper, you will not have to do outside research beyond the assigned readings. If you feel you must read more than what is assigned, please do not rely on wikipedia (which tends to be rather unreliable in philosophy). Instead, I recommend the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: [plato.stanford.edu](http://plato.stanford.edu). An up-to-date, reliable catalogue of philosophy papers can be found at [philpapers.org](http://philpapers.org) (but please note that they do not store the papers; you will still have to find them in the library). If interested in the pre-history of the medieval debates, Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011) provides a very nice and accessible introduction.

**Plagiarism:** If you use or copy a source without properly citing it, whether this act is intentional or not, you commit plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It is very easy to detect, and will result in your automatic failure of the course.

**Lateness:** Late assignments will not be considered unless for very serious reasons. If you have such reasons, please let me know as soon as you can.

**Special Accommodations:** Students with special needs requiring accommodations should please get in touch with Student Services Disability Support ([disability@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:disability@kcl.ac.uk)) as soon as possible.

**Tentative Schedule of Readings.** The schedule is tentative, but we will make every reasonable effort to stick to it unless major reasons dictate otherwise. All the readings will be made accessible to students once enrolled.

**Week 1, 30/09:** Introduction; The historiography of medieval philosophy; the role of Faith and Reason in medieval philosophy.

Reading: Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (sel.); Aquinas on Faith and Reason.

**Week 2, 07/10:** Augustine: Free will and the origin of evil; the first evil choice.

Reading: Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, book 1.

**Week 3, 14/10:** Boethius: The problem of foreknowledge and theological determinism.

Reading: Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (sel.).

**Week 4, 21/10:** Anselm and the fall of the devil. The puzzle of the first evil choice continues.

Reading: Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil* (sel.).

**Week 5, 28/10:** Free will in Arabic philosophy; Al-Ghazali on the origin of the will.

Reading: Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence* (sel.).

**04/11:** Reading week (no class)

**Week 6, 11/11:** Aquinas on free choice.

Reading: Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 83.

**Week 7, 18/11:** Henry of Ghent on the will and the intellect; the primacy of the will.

Reading: Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* I, q. 14.

**Week 8, 25/11:** Duns Scotus on the willing of happiness.

Reading: Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV, supp. d. 49, qq. 9–10.

**Week 9, 02/12:** Will and virtues in some medieval women thinkers.

Reading: Marguerite Porete, *The Mirror of Simple Souls* (sel.).

**Week 10, 09/12:** Free will in Jewish philosophy: a case study of Josef Albo.

Reading: Albo, *Book of Principles*, IV.25, 27.