



Augustine and Medieval Theology

Syllabus

Scott T. Carroll, Ph.D.
Professor of Ancient History
Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids, MI)

INSTITUTE OF
THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES



Updated 2006



Syllabus

Course Description

He is the most influential theologian in church history. His teachings have shaped the understanding of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth. In this course, learners study a comprehensive introduction to St. Augustine: his life, his works, and his legacy in the medieval church. The course details his youth, conversion, literary works, and his important battles against the day's emerging heresies. Surveying Augustine's life as a pastor, teacher, and writer, students are encouraged to evaluate his contribution to the development of medieval theology and to apply those contributions to their own lives and ministries.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:

1. Express an appreciation for the value of historical theology as it relates to ministry.
2. Understand Augustine's unique place in the history of the church.
3. Analyze the most important writings of Augustine.
4. Synthesize the major theological contributions of Augustine.
5. Explain the various theological battles Augustine faced in his work.
6. Describe Augustine's life as a pastor, teacher, and writer.
7. Apply lessons from Augustine to current ministry contexts.
8. Evaluate Augustine's contribution to the development of Medieval theology.

Course Texts

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*. New edition. California: University of California Press, 2000.

The Essential Augustine. Vols. 1-3. Edited by Scott Carroll. Grand Rapids: Institute of Theological Studies, 2000. **(only available through ITS)**

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10.3.3.3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. [ITS Online Interactivity Forum](#) (see course requirements) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. [Spiritual Formation Project](#) (see course requirements) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. [Learning Community Assignments](#) (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ for the most up-to-date ITS resources.



Syllabus

Course Requirements

1. **Lectures and Reading:** Each student will complete twenty-four (24) lessons that include listening to recorded lectures and completing the assignments that accompany them. These assignments include required readings and three essays for each lecture.
2. **Essays:** After completing each lesson (lecture and reading), the student will complete two reflective essays: one summarizing the lecture and the other summarizing a select issue raised in the reading. Each lecture is also accompanied by one applicational essay which will take the issues under consideration in the lecture and the readings and attempt to place them in a contemporary context.
3. **Final Exam:** Each student may take a final exam at the end of the course. It will be summative in nature and will cover the entire course. Students will not have access to their books or notes for the final.
4. **Student Project:** *In lieu of the Final Exam*, the student has the option to work on a semester-long project. In the back of volume 3 of the textbook, *The Essential Augustine*, there is a section entitled, *Florilegium*. This section contains a collection of citations from Augustine's works that deal with various theological issues. This project entails your continuation of this work. As the student reads Augustine's works, he or she will keep the list nearby and add to it when encountering his treatment of a theological issue. Citations should be typed, highlighting the key parts of the section cited. The goal of this project is not to simply record a large number of citations. The student should record citations based upon quality and theological significance. An "A" project will have many citations dealing with a variety of specific theological issues. Primary source reading beyond the course requirements may be necessary, and critical arrangement of citations according to theological categories is a must. A "B" project will have many citations of theological significance arranged critically but without the extra reading. A "C" project will simply have a long list of citations which deal with general theological issues. Ultimately, the student should spend an amount of time (not including time spent reading) comparable to the time it might take to prepare for and take the final exam.
5. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum:**

Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ to register for and enter the ITS Online Interactivity Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment *after* you have listened to *all* the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).



Syllabus

- ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
- ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

6. Spiritual Formation Project:

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

- 1. Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.
 - Follow these steps in your reflection:
 - Step 1:** What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?
 - Step 2:** What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?
 - Step 3:** Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?
 - Step 4:** How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?
 - Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
 - Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).



Syllabus

2. **Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor*** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

- a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

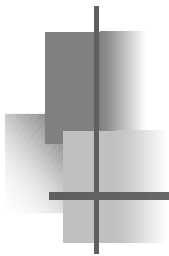
NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

- b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - ◆ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - ◆ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - ◆ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

3. **Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
- b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - ◆ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
 - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - ◆ Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.



Syllabus

- c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
- ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

Revised 10/05

Course Grading

The grade for the course shall be determined by the following:

Essays.....	50%
Required Reading	10%
Final Examination OR Student Project	25%
ITS Online Interactivity Forum	5%
Spiritual Formation Project	<u>10%</u>
	100%



Syllabus

List of Lectures

Section One: The Life of Augustine

1. Setting the Stage: The World of Late Antiquity
2. Sources for the Study of Augustine and His Age
3. Augustine: The Wayward Genius (AD 354-385)
4. Augustine: The Convert (AD 386-395)
5. Augustine: Son of the Church (AD 395-410)
6. Augustine: Bishop in Controversy (AD 391-430)
7. Augustine the Pastor: An Introduction
8. Augustine the Pastor: The Sacramental System
9. Augustine the Pastor: The Practical Ministry

Section Two: The Major Works of Augustine

10. Augustine and the Classical Tradition
11. Augustine's Earliest Writings
12. *Augustine On Christian Doctrine*
13. *Augustine On Christian Doctrine* (continued)
14. Augustine's Anti-Manichaean Works
15. Augustine's Anti-Donatist Works
16. Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Works
17. Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Works (continued)
18. *Augustine On the Trinity*
19. Augustine's *City of God*
20. Augustine's *City of God* (continued)

Section Three: The Theological Legacy of Augustine

21. The World after Augustine
22. An Augustinian Synthesis by the Early Medieval Church
23. Debate over the Augustinian Synthesis
24. Augustine Rediscovered by the Later Medieval Church

Course Bibliography

There is an extensive bibliography at the end of volume 3 of the textbook: *The Essential Augustine*. Therefore, one is not included in this Syllabus.



Syllabus

Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.