

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is that graduates be prepared to **utilize the Church's historical and theological heritage as an important resource** in their personal spiritual development and ministry. This course focuses on the heritage and resources that Augustine has given the Christian Church for the development of theology and spiritual life.

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will:

1. **Understand** the thought world in which Augustine lived and the major theological battles that dominated his life.
2. **Appreciate** and **critique** the spirituality that lies behind Augustine's writings.
3. **Reflect upon** and **evaluate** Augustine's influence on the Western Church generally and on their own traditions specifically.
4. Begin to **formulate** appropriate theological and spiritual expressions for their own ministries, utilizing the resources Augustine offers.

COURSE METHOD:

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's own mastery of information related to Augustine's thought world, his life, and the theological battles he fought. This component addresses objective 1 above, and it will be accomplished through class lectures and reading of Augustine's own writings.

The second component is **Classroom Participation**. Through discussion of Augustine's writings, the students will have opportunities to reflect upon, evaluate, and critique his spirituality, theology, and influence. This component addresses objectives 2 and 3 above.

The third component is the **Research Component**. Each student will explore one aspect of Augustine's thought in detail through a significant research project. This component will pull together all four of the objectives above.

The fourth component is the **Reflective Component**. Each student will keep a reading journal reflecting on how we can utilize the Augustinian heritage in our own expressions of Christian faith today. This component addresses objectives 2, 3, and 4 above.

TEXTBOOKS:

Students may use any translation of Augustine's writings, but older translations will be harder to read. Students may wish to borrow some of the books from libraries, rather than purchasing them. When making decisions about purchasing, students should consult the reading guide on pp. 5-6 to see how much of each book we will be reading. The following are the recommended translations:

St. Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin, 1961.

St. Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. Translated by D. W. Robertson. Prentice Hall, 1958.

St. Augustine. *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*. Translated by J. B. Shaw. Chicago: Gateway, Reprint 1996.

Burns, J. Patout, ed. *Theological Anthropology*. Sources of Early Christian Thought. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.

St. Augustine. *The Trinity*. Translated by Edmund Hill. Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991.

St. Augustine. *The City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin, 1984.

[To purchase these books at very competitive prices from the Erskine Seminary Virtual Bookstore, please click here.](#)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One: Each student will complete approximately 800 pages of reading from Augustine's writings, according to the schedule on pp. 5-6 below. Please make every effort to complete each reading assignment prior to the class when it will be discussed.

Requirement Two (50 points): Each student will keep a reading journal in which he/she reflects on Augustine's thought and how that thought can be utilized in our own expressions of Christian faith. The student is not limited to any particular format in keeping the journal, but it is recommended that the student pay attention to things Augustine writes that are...

- 1) Useful as explanations of Biblical passages
- 2) Useful as explanations of Christian teaching
- 3) Especially brilliant insights into Christian theology
- 4) Problematic or (in your opinion) unbiblical
- 5) Useful as illustrations of Christian life
- 6) Especially brilliant insights into the nature of spirituality
- 7) Hard to understand or raise questions in your mind

The journal is due at class time on May 8.

Requirement Three (50 points): Each student will choose one aspect of Augustine's theology and/or spirituality, research that aspect, and write a paper of approximately 10-12 pages (double spaced, with type size and margins similar to those used in this syllabus) on that topic. The topic should integrate spiritual and theological material, and the research should involve use of other primary and secondary sources in addition to those assigned for class discussions. Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the document "Writing Theological Papers" in preparing the research paper. **This paper is due on May 1.**

Seminary Policies Pertaining to Research Papers

Inclusive Language: The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is a mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

Form of Written Work: For the research paper, students are required to follow the form and style guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These guidelines are

summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “Style and Form Standards for all Master’s-Level Programs,” available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus.

Plagiarism: Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. See the academic section of the Catalog for complete information.

Criteria for Grading the Research Paper:

Writing that is grammatically correct and stylistically clear
 A form that adheres to the guidelines in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition)
 Adherence to the parameters of the assignment (length, scope)
 Choice of a topic and a specific question that directly pertain to Augustine and are suitable for the length of the paper
 Clear organization of material
 In the introduction, a clear statement of the topic, the specific question to be addressed, and the way the paper will address it
 In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant primary sources in addition to those read for class discussions
 In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant secondary sources
 In the body, evidence that the student grasps historical and/or philosophical information related to Augustine and to the topic
 In the body, evidence that the student understands both theological and spiritual concepts
 In the body and the conclusion, attention to ways in which Augustine teaches or challenges the Church today
 Depth and creativity in handling the topic

OVERALL GRADING SCALE:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

COURSE EXPECTATIONS and SEMINARY POLICIES:

Registration: Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a “drop/add” form and secure the appropriate signatures. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student’s receiving a grade of “F” for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Attendance: If a student misses more than one class period (3 hours), or significant time from classes totaling more than 3 class hours during the semester, he/she may be required to do

make-up work. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the professor immediately (before the missed class time if possible, so that taping can be arranged) to have the extra work and "due date" assigned. All make-up work must be handed in by **May 16**. Except in extraordinary circumstances, a student cannot complete this course if he/she misses more than two class days (or 6 hours total). If this happens, the student must consult with the professor as soon as possible to see whether the reasons for the absence warrant special arrangements to complete the material for the course.

Late or Incomplete Work: Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. The final deadline for submitting all late work and make-up work is noon on Friday, May 16. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of "0," unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to take an incomplete for the course. Incomplete (I) marks will be handled in accordance with policy statements in the Catalog. In particular, one should note that the student does not automatically have the privilege of taking an incomplete. Rather, it is the professor's prerogative to give an incomplete, and only when the student has completed most of the coursework and has been providentially hindered from finishing the remainder.

Return of Written Work: Federal privacy guidelines do not allow the return of student documents to an unsecured mail box *unless* the student grants permission in writing. Students who wish to have their work returned as early as possible to their student mail boxes will place their student box number on the front page of their work. This will be viewed as written permission to return documents in this manner. Students who decline to give such permission (that is, students who do not write their box numbers on their work) will get their work back in person at a later time.

Chapel Attendance Policy: All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday courses) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the Catalog or registration booklet for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per-chapel fee if one attends fewer chapels than required.

COURSE OUTLINE: LECTURES and READING GUIDE:

Feb. 7 Introduction to Course, Augustine's World

Feb. 14 The Young Augustine

Confessions, Books 1-4 (pp. 21-90)

Feb. 21 Augustine and the Thought World of Late Antiquity

Confessions, Books 5-8 (pp. 91-179)

Feb. 28 Augustine the Young Christian

Confessions, Books 9-10 (pp. 181-252)

Mar. 6 Augustine and Biblical Interpretation

On Christian Doctrine, Books 1-3 (pp. 3-117)

Mar. 13 Augustine and Biblical Preaching; Augustine and the Donatists

On Christian Doctrine, Book 4 (pp. 117-69)

Mar. 20 No Class – Holy Week Break

Mar. 27 Augustine and the Arians

On the Trinity, Books 1, 4, 7, and 8 (pp. 65-90, 152-77, 217-32, 241-55)

Apr. 3 Augustine and the Pagans

City of God, Book 1, Chaps. 1-18, 28-36 (pp. 5-28, 39-47)

Book 10, Chaps. 1-9, 22-32 (pp. 371-85, 402-26)

Book 14, Chaps. 1-7, 10-14, 25-28 (pp. 547-58, 566-74, 589-94)

Apr. 10 Augustine and the Pagans (cont.)

City of God, Book 18, Chaps. 1, 37-54 (pp. 761-2, 811-42)

Book 19 (pp. 843-94)

Apr. 17 Augustine and the Pelagians

Pelagius, *Letter to Demetrias* (*Theological Anthropology*, pp. 39-55)

On the Grace of Christ (*Theological Anthropology*, pp. 61-96)

Apr. 24 Augustine and Christian Theology

Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love, entire (pp. 33-135)

May 1 Augustine and Christian Theology (cont.)

Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love

Research paper due

May 8 Augustine and the “Semi-Pelagians”

On Rebuke and Grace, Chaps. 26-38 (*Theological Anthropology*, pp. 96-108)

Reading journal due

May 16 All make-up and late work due

**Addendum to HT 720 Syllabus
Requirements for Th.M. Students
Spring 2008**

In place of Requirements One and Two (50 points)

Each student must complete all of the reading listed above for master's-level students. In addition, he/she must consult with the professor to choose an additional 400 pages of Augustine's writings to read, in order to pursue special interests in Augustine's thought that are not covered in class. The student is to incorporate this additional reading into his/her reading journal as well.

In place of Requirement Two (80 points)

The research paper is to be 12-15 pages (rather than 10-12 pages, as for master's-level students). In the Th.M. students' papers, the professor expects not just greater length and more sources, but also more in-depth research and sharper critical thinking. Furthermore, the professor expects these papers to be at least reasonably distinct from the additional reading for requirement one. In other words, Th.M. students will choose two areas for further study, one for reading only, and the other for the research paper.