

Higher Institute of Philosophy


FILO1281 History of philosophy 2: History of medieval Philosophy

[30h] 3 credits

This two-yearly course is taught in 2007-2008, 2009-2010,...

Teacher(s): Jean-Michel Counet
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

By the end of the course, the student should be able to give an account of the main problems Medieval philosophers confronted (the problem of universals, reason and faith, logic and the knowledge of God, Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism, transitions-from antiquity and into the Renaissance, etc.). The student should also be able to grasp the originality of method displayed in these texts, the institutional framework within which it took place, and its posterity in Modern thought. The student should likewise be able to use the working tools learnt in the course to undertake an assignment about a topic discussed in the lectures and thus deepen his/her knowledge of it.

Main themes

The course will carefully examine the genesis of philosophy in the Middle Ages. The links to doctrines from Antiquity are very strong. However, we notice also that an interiority characteristic of Augustinian Christianity begins to gain ground, as does a type of rational questioning based on faith. Authors such as Augustine, Boethius, and Pseudo-Dionysius are revealing in this respect.

Having examined the links to Antiquity, we shall move on to an examination of the impact that Arab thought had on Medieval thinking: the rediscovery of Aristotle through Arabic and Greek translations; the emergence of the University as an institution devoted to philosophical reflection.

Finally, we shall examine the impact of the condemnations of 1277: these dealt a fatal blow to radical Averroism and, in the end, gave birth to a class of intellectuals who thought outside of a direct reference to the Church.

Content and teaching methods

The course proposes a careful examination of Medieval noetics through some of its upholders: what is thinking? or conscience of the self? What is the status of concepts and their relation to empirical reality (problem of universals)?

This approach will lead us to study several authors that are linked historically and doctrinally: Augustine, Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, Abelard, Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Master Eckhart, Dante, Ockham, and Nicolas of Cusa will be the figures requiring our attention for bringing to light the historical and thematic issues mentioned above.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Assessment: An oral exam with written preparation on one question.

Supporting Material: Class notes, book, and a bibliography.

Other credits in programs

CLAS21	Première licence en langues et littératures classiques	(3 credits)
CLAS22	Deuxième licence en langues et littératures classiques	(3 credits)
HIST13BA	Troisième année de bachelier en histoire	(3 credits)
ISP20	Licence à durée réduite en philosophie	(3 credits)
ISP21	Première licence en philosophie	(3 credits)
ISP22	Deuxième licence en philosophie	(3 credits)
ISPA9CE	Certificat universitaire en philosophie (fondements)	(3 credits)
ISPB9CE	Certificat universitaire en philosophie (approfondissement)	(3 credits)
ROM21	Première licence en langues et littératures romanes	(3 credits)