

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
Fall 2023
STPH 4000
Tues./Fri. 9:40 am to 11:00 am

The Corpus Areopagiticum

Instructor: Fr. Ambrose Sigman, OP
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Course Description:

The body of literature which comes down to us under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite was one of the most theologically influential group of texts in the Late Antique and Medieval periods. Short, and yet theologically and philosophically rich, these texts continue to stir intense debate among philosophers and theologians. This course will carefully examine the texts of the Dionysian corpus in an effort to understand the historical context as well as the theological and philosophical content contained therein. The course will be seminar style in format.

Course Goals:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the close reading of texts for the purposes of ongoing research and the development of their ability to engage fruitfully with the ideas of an historical author so as to aid the ongoing development of their own ideas. The student will be asked not to read any secondary sources concerning the corpus, and to focus all of their attention on the Areopagite's work itself, carefully reading and reflecting upon it, seeking to understand its ideas and learning how to ask questions of the text.

Course Outcomes:

The class will be divided between one student's presentation on the assigned reading, a discussion of said reading and the proffered interpretation, and a short lecture by the professor. The rough division of the class will be 1/3 of the class time for each of these, presentation, discussion and lecture, although the professor reserves the right to modify this as he sees fit. Through this structure, the students will develop their ability to engage meaningfully with a theological work of great importance and influence. This will aid the student's ability to engage in their own

ongoing research and to participate in ongoing debates about the meaning and influence of important historical philosophers and theologians.

Bibliography:

As already stated, the student will be asked not to read any secondary sources on the Dionysian corpus and to instead focus their attention entirely on the text itself. Any translation of the text is acceptable, or if the student wishes to use only the original Greek, that is acceptable as well. A common translation is the following:

Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), ISBN 0809128381.

Course Expectations:

As this is a seminar style course, the student will be expected to present regularly on a section of the corpus assigned to him, and to participate regularly in the ongoing discussions. A grade will be assigned based upon these presentations and their engagement with these discussions. Grading will be done according to the standards established in the Student Handbook (p. 37-38).

Course Schedule:

At the beginning of the semester, a schedule will be established for who will present on what and on which date.