

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology  
**STPH-4042 Augustine Through His Sermons**

Fall 2023  
Fridays, 8:10-11:00 a.m.  
Classroom 3

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Course Description

This course will explore some of the major themes of Augustine's thought as they are reflected in his extensive body of sermons: his account of Christ, the Trinity, the Church, grace, sin, and Scripture. While highlighting the interrelationship between the various aspects of Augustine's theology, this course will pay particular attention to the question of what it means to teach and preach Christian belief.

Methodology

This course will be conducted in a seminar-style, which means that reading and discussing the primary texts for each week will be our main focus. At times, there will also be formal and informal lectures. Given that the emphasis will be placed on understanding and discussing the readings, it is essential that students attend class on a weekly basis, do all the required reading prior to each class session, and come to class prepared to actively participate in discussion.

Student Learning Goals

In this course, students will:

- come to grasp the fundamental contours of Augustine's theology;
- gain a clear understanding of Augustinian preaching;
- become familiar with issues around what it means to teach and preach Christian belief.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- articulate a coherent summary of the main points of Augustine's theology;
- describe Augustine's theology of preaching in light of its late antique context;
- discuss intelligently how the way Augustine teaches and preaches Christian belief might be relevant in our contemporary context.

*\*See the document in Moodle for an overview of how the goals, outcomes, and assignments in this course contribute to the broader program and institutional goals/outcomes.*

Required Texts

Augustine of Hippo, *Instructing Beginners in Faith*. Translated by Raymond Canning. The Augustine Series, Volume 5 (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 2006).

Augustine of Hippo, *Teaching Christianity* Translated by Edmund Hill. WSA 1/11 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996).

\*All other required readings, including the texts of Augustine's sermons, will be made available in electronic format and uploaded to Moodle.

## Course Requirements

### *1. Participation*

Students are required to attend each class session and be prepared to participate in class discussion. This includes completing all the required readings each week and preparing in advance to discuss them in class. Students will take turns leading our discussion.

### *2. Research Paper*

Students are required to complete a research paper (25–20 pgs.) on a topic of their choosing (although it must be decided in consultation with the professor by the third week of class). Each paper will be circulated for everyone in the class to read. The due date for the paper will be one week prior to the presentation/discussion date (see below).

### *3. Research Presentation/Discussion*

Each student will give a 20-minute presentation on his or her paper to the class. The presentation can include the main findings and lines of argument for the paper, but it should be viewed as complimentary to the paper. It can address specific objections, implications, or alternative lines of argument that augment or clarify the research paper. Students should come prepared to answer questions related to their paper/presentation. The schedule for presentations will be determined on the first day of class.

### *4. Response*

Each student will prepare a formal 10-minute response to one of their classmates' papers (due dates for this assignment will be given during the first week of class). Students will present their response immediately following their assigned classmate's presentation (see above). A good response will note the strengths and weaknesses of the paper and will clearly explain why these strengths/weaknesses are important. It will also present some constructive suggestions for how to develop alternative lines of thought and/or how to build further on the paper's argument. It will conclude with three questions for further class discussion.

## Grading Summary

Participation	20%
Research Paper	40%
Research Presentation/Discussion	30%
Respondent Presentation	10%

## Grading Scale and Rubric

<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	93 – 100	<b>Excellent work:</b> thorough understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a high level of engagement, original thinking, and critical analysis.
	<b>A-</b>	90 – 92	
<b>B</b>	<b>B+</b>	87 – 89	<b>Good work:</b> solid understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by the ability to discuss, synthesize, and organize the course material.
	<b>B</b>	83 – 86	
	<b>B-</b>	80 – 82	
<b>C</b>	<b>C+</b>	77 – 79	<b>Satisfactory work:</b> adequate understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a grasp of the key issues under discussion and the ability to communicate with reasonable clarity, both orally and in writing.
	<b>C</b>	73 – 76	
	<b>C-</b>	70 – 72	

<b>D</b>	<b>D+</b>	67 – 69	<b>Passible work:</b> reasonable familiarity with the subject matter, demonstrated by consistent effort and the ability to communicate the main themes of the course.
	<b>D</b>	63 – 66	
	<b>D-</b>	60 – 62	
<b>F</b>		0 – 59	<b>Inadequate work:</b> insufficient understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a lack of effort, inability to engage critically with the course material, or failure to satisfy the course requirements.

\*For a detailed description of DSPT grading policies, please consult the Student Handbook.

### Course Schedule

Sep 8 Introduction: Augustine the Preacher

#### Part I: Augustine's Homiletic Strategy

Sep 15 The Story of Scripture  
*Teaching Christianity*, book 4

Sep 22 Arguing for the Church  
*Instructing Beginners in Faith*  
*Sermons* 214; 57

Sep 29 Forming Christian Identity  
*Sermons* 223A; 228B; 223; 226; 260C; 260B; 353

Oct 6 Looking Through Scripture  
*Sermons* 1; 4; 270; 114B; 8; 363.

#### Part II: Preaching Christian Doctrine

Oct 13 Sin and Forgiveness  
*Sermons* 159B; 351; 352; 98; 99; 82  
*Expositions of the Psalms* 50; 57

Oct 20 Grace and Faith  
*Sermons* 23A; 26; 143; 144; 168; 365  
*Expositions of the Psalms* 104

Oct 27 No Class (Reading Week)

Nov 3 No Class (professor is away at a conference)

Nov 10 The Trinity and the Life of God  
*Sermons* 2; 52; 264  
*Tractates on John* 20, 21, 99

Nov 17 Christ and the Church

*Sermons* 341; 271  
*Expositions of the Psalms* 21.2, 33, 44, 56, 138

Nov 24 No Class (Thanksgiving)

Dec 1 Baptism and Eucharist  
*Sermons* 260A; 227; 272  
*Tractates on John* 4; 5; 6; 26

Dec 8 Marriage, Money, and Ministry  
*Sermons* 51; 354A; 39; 295; 340A  
*Expositions of the Psalms* 127

Dec 15 Exam Week

*\*See Moodle for a full bibliography*