

## HT 6306      Augustine and the City of God

Fall 2023

Michael Allen

### Course Description

In this reading course we explore the life and theology of Augustine of Hippo, reflecting particularly on his *City of God* and the long, varied reception history of this work. Students grow in their confidence and competence to engage his works on their own.

2 Credit Hours.

### Learning Objectives

In this reading course students will grow in the following ways:

- Ability to read Augustine's texts, mindful of their context, genres, sources, structure, and literary character.
- Awareness of the broad lineaments of Augustine's life and theology.
- Appreciation of Augustine's approach to theological wisdom: exegetically, apologetically, historically, and pastorally.
- Attentiveness to the varied reception history of Augustine's theology in its breadth, from the medieval through the modern periods in the Roman Catholic and Protestant worlds.

### Textbooks

Augustine, *The City of God*. This classic text will be read in its entirety, and it will be the focus of both our discussion and student's final research papers.

For a combination of price and quality, I recommend Augustine, *The City of God* (trans. Marcus Dods; New York: Modern Library Edition; 1994). Available in both HB and PB versions [here](#). I will be using this edition myself in class and in my lecture notes.

Several translations and editions exist. There are a few that are acceptable, while one is especially recommended. First, the best available version would be the two-volume edition translated by William Babcock and published in the Works of St. Augustine for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by New City Press. Unfortunately, it is very expensive. Second, the Modern Library edition translated by Marcus Dods is also an excellent option and includes a strong preface by Thomas Merton; it is very affordable in both hardback and paperback. Third, the Penguin Classics version includes a decent translation from Henry Bettenson. The key is to use one of these three editions in unabridged form. Do not use any other translation beyond these three.

## Requirements

### 1. Read

Students will read all assigned texts prior to our class. Reading involves active and engaged analysis. We will read the entirety of *The City of God* over the course of the term.

### 2. Reading Briefs

Students are expected to prepare a brief on their reading. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of the relevant chapters, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the chapter (so long as page numbers are referenced).

Briefs should be no more than 350 words. Submit them for grading online.

### 3. Participate in Discussions

Much of the course will function as a reading seminar where the professor guides discussion of the text we have all read. Students are expected to bring questions and thoughts (in their reading briefs) and to interact appropriately throughout our classes.

### 4. Final Research Paper

Students will write a final paper on some theme that appears within Augustine's *City of God*. Depending on the topic, they may also involve significant interaction with other works by Augustine or by earlier and later theologians. Papers should be 4000-5000 words. They ought to engage in careful exposition of his text in its own terms, to be sure, but they also need to draw on appropriate research regarding his theology. In so doing, they will engage both primary and secondary sources.

Final papers by December 6 at 11:59 p.m. More information given in class.

## Schedule

Class meets over the course of two weekends:

Sep. 29-30      Read and brief *City of God*, books 1-10

Nov. 3-4        Read and brief *City of God*, books 11-22

Dec. 6          Final Papers Due by 11:59 p.m.

## Further Bibliography

For the works of Augustine in Latin, see the relevant volumes in the Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. For English translation, see the Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century series published by New City Press.

For biography, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, new edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); and Miles Hollingworth, *Saint Augustine of Hippo: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

For reference, see David Vincent Meconi and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (2nd edition; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); David Vincent Meconi (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's City of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Allan D. Fitzgerald (gen. ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); and C. C. Pecknold and Tarmo Toom (eds.), *The T & T Clark Companion to Augustine and Modern Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2016).

For significant monographs or books on aspects of his thought, see:

- a. Rowan Williams, *On Augustine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- b. John Cavadini, *Visioning Augustine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2019).
- c. Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Christian Theology in Context; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- d. John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study in the Religion of St. Augustine* (repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007).
- e. Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).
- f. Han-Luen Kantzer Komline, *Augustine on the Will: A Theological Account* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
- g. Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- h. Jason Byassee, *Praise Seeking Understanding: Reading the Psalms with Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
- i. Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity, and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- j. Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- k. Gerald Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- l. Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- m. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (eds.), *Augustine and His Critics* (London: Routledge, 2000).
- n. Arnoud Visser, *Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe, 1500-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- o. Michael Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).
- p. Gregory W. Lee, "Republics and Their Loves: Rereading *City of God* 19," *Modern Theology* 27, no. 4 (2011): 553-581.

- q. Martin Westerholm, "The Nature and Destiny of Niebuhr's Augustine," *Modern Theology* 39, no. 1 (2023): 89-113.
- r. Michael Lamb, *A Commonwealth of Hope: Augustine's Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022).



### Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: HT 6306: Augustine and the City of God  
 Professor: Allen  
 Campus: DC  
 Date: Fall 2023

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Research paper as finale.
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	Reading of City of God focuses in large part on biblical exegesis.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Study of Augustine as received in Reformed tradition.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Some focus on ordering of loves in Augustinian theology.
<b>Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Focus on various Augustinianisms in medieval and modern theology.
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	Engagement of patristic source to much Reformed theology, and one also

			claimed by Roman Catholics.
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	None	N/A