

**V55.0401 Conversations of the West
Antiquity and the Middle Ages
(Tentative) Schedule
Spring 2006**

Instructors:

Conor Creaney (section leader)
Michelle Goodin (section leader)
Paul Grimstad (section leader)
Hal Momma (lecturer)

Classes:

Section 1 (lecture): Momma; Mon & Wed 9:30 a.m.--10:45 a.m.; 19 University Place, Room 101
Section 2 (discussion): Goodin; Thu 8 a.m.—9:15 a.m.; 25 West 4, C-3
Section 3 (discussion): Goodin; Thu 9:30 a.m.—10:45 a.m.; 25 West 4, C-3
Section 4 (discussion): Grimstad; Thu 3:30 p.m.—4:45 p.m.; 25 West 4, C-11
Section 5 (discussion): Grimstad; Thu 4:55 p.m.—6:10 p.m.; 25 West 4, C-11
Section 6 (discussion): Creaney; Fri 9:30 a.m.—10:45 a.m.; 25 West 4, C-12
Section 7 (discussion): Creaney; Fri 11 a.m.—12:15 p.m.; 25 West 4, C-12

Office Hours and locations:

Creaney: t.b.a.

Goodin: t.b.a.

Grimstad: t.b.a.

Momma: Monday, 1:30 p.m.--3 p.m.

Wednesday, 12 noon.—1:30 p.m.

Or by appointment: (212) 998-8813; hal.momma@nyu.edu

19 University Place, Room 528

Required Texts:

Plato, Symposium, translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Hackett, 1989)

Sophocles, Sophocles I: Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus, and Antigone, translated by David Grene, 2nd edition (University of Chicago Press, 1991)

Virgil, The Aeneid, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (Vintage, 1990)

Homer, The Iliad (online): <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~joelja/iliad.html>

The New Oxford Annotated Bible With the Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version College Edition (Oxford University Press)

Saint Augustine, Confessions, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford World's Classics, 1992)

Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, translated by Victor Watts, revised edition (Penguin, 1999)

Beowulf: A new Verse Translation; A Bilingual Edition, translated by Seamus Heaney (Norton, 2000)

Chrétien de Troyes, Lancelot: the Knight of the Cart, translated by Burton Raffel (Yale University Press, 1997)

Arthurian Passages from Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain," available from the Camelot Project (online):
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/geofhkb.htm>

Proto-Arthurian passages from Gildas, Concerning the Ruin of Britain, available from Medieval Sourcebook (online):
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gildas.html>

Thomas Malory, Le Morte D'Arthur (online)
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Mal1Mor.html>

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (online)
<http://academic.booklyn.edu/webcore/murphy/canterbury/4miller.pdf>

Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, vol. 1 Inferno (translated by Allen Mandelbaum (Bantam, 1982)

Course Description:

This medieval section of the Conversation of the West will concern a wide range of literature composed before the modern period, in different languages, and by authors with different backgrounds. We will consider how medieval Europe resembles or differs from the ancient Mediterranean world, and how these varied cultures constitute the foundation of the West as we know it. The topics will include literature and performance, different genres of writing, transmission of knowledge, the idea of human, and ethics manifested in different belief systems.

In the first half of this course, we will read texts from Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern antiquity including a philosophical dialogue (Plato's Symposium), Greek tragedies (Sophocles's Oedipus the King and Antigone), epics (Virgil's The Aeneid and excerpts from Homer's The Iliad), the Bible (both the Old and the New Testament), and an autobiography of a church father (St. Augustine's Confessions).

In the second half, we will read medieval texts including a Latin philosophical dialogue (Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy), an Old English heroic poem (Beowulf), an Old French romance (Chrétien de Troyes's Lancelot), a Latin history (Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain), narratives from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and Dante's Divine Comedy.

Each week, you will read one or more assigned texts, attend two lectures on historical backgrounds and characteristics of the text(s), and discuss points of interest in a small group led by your section leader.

In order to maximize your progress, we will ask you to stick to two principles: to come to the class regularly, and to read the assigned text(s) before each class. You may miss up to three lectures and two discussion classes, but you will start losing marks after the fourth lecture or the third discussion class you have missed without a medical excuse (with a doctor's note) or a family/personal emergency. Chronic lateness may affect your grade.

The course evaluation will consist of attendance and class participation (10% and 5%, respectively), two essays (10% and 25%), a mid-term examination (15%) and a final examination (35%).

The **mid-term examination (March 6)** will consist of explanation of key terms (which will be given in each lecture class), identification of key passages from some of the classical texts, and brief comments on them. The **final examination (May 1)** will consist of explanation of key terms, identification and interpretation of key passages from some of the medieval texts, and an essay on Chaucer or Dante. Further information will be provided a week before each exam. All questions on the exams should be addressed to the lecturer (Momma).

The **first essay** will be a brief analysis (with ca. 750 words) of one of the texts read in the weeks of January 23 and 30 (Plato and Sophocles). Topics will be provided on February 2 or 3, at your discussion meeting. The essay is **due on February 16 or 17**, depending on your discussion section. Please submit your essay to your section leader. The **second essay** will be a more developed discussion (with ca. 1,750 words) of one or more texts read in the weeks of February 6 through April 10 (Virgil, Homer, the Bible, St. Augustine, Beowulf, Boethius, Chrétien de Troyes, and Geoffrey of Monmouth). Topics will be provided on March 30 or 31 at your discussion meeting. The essay is due on April 17. Please submit your essay, again, to your section leader. All questions on essays should be addressed to your section leader.

F.Y.I.: Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc>

Tentative Schedule:

- Jan. 18 Introductory lecture
19-20 Introductory meetings for discussion sections

Part 1: Antiquities

- 23 Lecture on Plato, The Symposium (1), pp. 1-39 (up to "The Speech of Agathon")
25 Lecture on Plato, The Symposium (2), pp. 40-77 (from "Socrates Questions Agathon")
26-7 Discussion sessions
- 30 Lecture on Sophocles, Oedipus the King
Feb. 1 Lecture on Sophocles, Antigone
2-3 Discussion sessions; **essay topics assigned**
- 6 Lecture on Virgil, The Aeneid (1), books I-VI **with emphasis on Books I, II, IV, and IV**; Homer, The Iliad, Book V
8 Lecture on Virgil, The Aeneid (2), books VII-XII **with emphasis on Books VII, IX, and XII**; Homer, The Iliad, Book XX
9-10 Discussion sessions
- 13 Lecture on Genesis and Exodus; emphasis on Genesis, Chapters 1-25, Exodus, Chapters 1-24
15 Lecture on the Gospel according to Luke
16-17 Discussion sessions; **first essay due**
- 20 **President's Day: no class**
22 Lecture on the Acts of the Apostles
23-4 Discussion sessions
- 27 Lecture on Augustine's Confessions (1), books I-VII
Mar. 1 Lecture on Augustine's Confessions (2), books VIII-XIII
2-3 Discussion sessions
- 6 **Midterm Exam**

Transition

- 8 **Topic t.b.a.**
9-10 Discussion sessions

Part 2: the Middle Ages

- 13-17 **Spring break**
- 20 Lecture on The Consolation of Philosophy (1), books I-III
- 22 Lecture on The Consolation of Philosophy (2), books IV-V
- 23-4 Discussion sessions;
- 27 Lecture on Beowulf (1), ll. 1-1676
- 29 Lecture on Beowulf (2), ll. 1677-3182
- 30-1 Discussion sessions; **essay topics assigned**
- Apr. 3 Lecture on Chrétien's Lancelot (1), ll. 1-3673;
- 5 Lecture on Chrétien's Lancelot (2), ll. 3674-7120
- 6-7 Discussion sessions
- 10 "Arthurian Passages from The History of the Kings of Britain" (1): from Book VI, Chapter I, to end of Book VIII; proto-Arthurian passages from Gildas, Concerning the Ruin of Britain; Malory, Le Morte D'Arthur, Book I, Chapters 5 and 6
- 12 "Arthurian Passages from The History of the Kings of Britain" (2): from Book IX, Chapter I, to end; Malory, Le Morte D'Arthur, Book III, Chapters 1 and 2
- 13-14 Discussion sessions
- 17 Lecture on Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (1): The Miller's Tale; **2nd essay due**
- 19 Lecture on Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (2): The Pardoner's Tale
- 20-1 Discussion sessions
- 24 Lecture on Dante's Inferno, cantos I-XVII, **emphasis cantos I-V, IX, XI, XV, XVII**
- 26 Lecture on Dante's Inferno, cantos XVIII-XXXIV, **emphasis on XIX, XXVI, XXVIII, XXX-XXXIV**
- 27-8 Discussion sessions
- May 1 **Final exam**