

## HISTORY 733

### SELF AND SOCIETY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Fall Term 2014

**Dr. B. Kaczynski**

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Office Hours: Monday, 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

#### I. Course Description

The seminar will investigate a series of questions having to do with self and society in Late Antiquity and the early centuries of the Middle Ages – an era that saw the transformation of the Roman world and the emergence of a new Christian order. What did it mean to be pagan and/or Christian, male and/or female, spiritual and/or worldly in a society that was undergoing profound and irrevocable change? Many characteristics of this transitional period in history are open to debate – the complex interplay between power and religion, certainly, but also shifting perceptions of the human body, novel practices of asceticism, the hope of redemption and the fear of damnation, the social constructions of sanctity and sinfulness. Why were people in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries so concerned with these things?

The course is designed for students who wish to pursue these questions and who wish to develop their skills in intellectual history. Background preparation in ancient and/or medieval studies will be helpful to those who have it, but it is not essential. I hope to instill in my students an appreciation of what historian Peter Brown calls “the strategies involved in the recovery of a distant age.” This era is remote from our own, and therefore it presents challenges that are both difficult and compelling.

#### II. Outline

1. Sept 8 Introduction
2. Sept 15 Celibacy: Continuity or Change?
3. Sept 22 The Mental World of Pagans and Christians
4. Sept 29 Some Biographies
5. Oct 6 A Father of the Church: Augustine in His Own Words
6. Oct 13 <Thanksgiving Holiday>
7. Oct 20 <No Class -- Individual Meetings this Week>
8. Oct 27 Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars

9.	Nov 3	Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars
10.	Nov 10	Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars
11.	Nov 17	The Sanctions of Christian Morality
12.	Nov 24	Historians and the Premodern Text
13.	Dec 1	Historiographical Essay Due
14.	Dec 8	In-Class Final Examination

### III. Texts and Sources

#### Required Readings:

- Abbott, Elizabeth. *A History of Celibacy*. Toronto, 1999.\*
- Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Chadwick. Oxford, 1998.\*
- Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Revised Edition with a New Epilogue. Berkeley, 2000.\*
- Clark, Elizabeth A. *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. Cambridge, MA, 2004.\*
- Clark, Gillian. *Christianity and Roman Society*. Cambridge, Eng., 2004. E-Book.\*
- Early Christian Lives*. Translated by Carolinne White. Harmondsworth, 1998.\*
- Harper, Kyle. *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA, 2013. E-Book.
- O'Donnell, James J. *Augustine: A New Biography*. New York, 2005.\*
- Wills, Garry. *Augustine's Confessions: A Biography*. Princeton, 2011.\*

#### Recommended Readings:

- Augustine. *Confessions: Introduction, Text, and Commentary*. 3 vols. Edited by James J. O'Donnell. Oxford, 1992. Electronic edition available on <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/>
- Burrus, Virginia. *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography*. Philadelphia, 2004.\*
- Clark, Gillian. *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Life-Styles*. Oxford, 1993. E-Book.
- Elm, Susanna. *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford and New York, 1994. E-Book.
- de Nie, Giselle. *Poetics of Wonder: Testimonies of the New Christian Miracles in the Late Antique Latin World*. Turnhout, 2011.\*
- Pollmann, Karla and Willemien Otten, eds. *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, 3 vols. Oxford, 2013.

\*On reserve in Mills Library

#### Recommended On-Line Sites:

These are scholarly websites. They are useful starting-points for locating up-to-date English translations of Greek and Latin sources.

*Augustine of Hippo*, at <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/>

*Dumbarton Oaks Online Resources in Byzantine Studies*, at

<http://www.doaks.org/research/byzantine/> An especially good source for saints' lives.

*Early Church Fathers*, in *The Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, at

<http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>. English translations of Greek and Latin patristic texts.

*The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.asp>. Access to many primary sources in English translation. Click on the link to *The Ancient History*

*Sourcebook* for late Roman and early Christian documents.

#### IV. Course Requirements

Participation	15%
Facilitation	15%
Two Position Papers (500-750 words)	20% in total
Historiographical Essay (3,000 words)	30%
Final Exam (Dec 8)	20%

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class. The Department of History expects that History PhD students taking 700-level seminars to complete their minor field requirements will do 50% more work than MA students enrolled in the course. History PhD students should meet with the instructor soon after the first class meeting to arrange for the additional assignments.

Facilitation. Depending on the number of students in the class, each student will be responsible for leading one or more class discussions along with me. The student should introduce the class to the major issues raised by the week's readings. The presentation should be five to ten minutes long, and should serve to kick off the discussion. The student should identify the major problems raised by the readings and then help guide the class in the discussion of these issues. Students will be assessed on the quality of the questions they raise and on their ability to facilitate discussion.

Two Position Papers. One of the two brief papers (500-750 words each) is to outline a critical position on an issue or argument raised by the course texts and/or by the class discussion. The other paper is to be an annotated bibliography describing six items with relevance to a particular theme or line of inquiry. The first paper may be submitted any time up to and including Oct 6; the second paper, any time up to and including Nov 10.

Historiographical Essay. The paper (about 3,000 words) should raise an issue debated by modern historians that is related in some way to the themes of the course. The topic is to be

determined in consultation with the instructor. It is due in the History Department by 4:30 pm on Dec 1.

Final Examination. There will be a two-hour exam given in class on Dec 8, 2014.

## V. **Guidelines for Written Work**

All written work will be judged for grammar, clarity, and organization in addition to content and analysis. A useful general reference is William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (Boston, 2000). Papers should be prepared according to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed. (Chicago, 2010). For an abbreviated online version, see *The Chicago Manual of Style Online*, at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>. For guidance on how to cite the sometimes tricky classical and medieval sources, go to the website of the Medieval Academy of America, at <http://www.medievalacademy.org/>, click on “*Speculum*” (a journal of Medieval Studies), then on “*Speculum* Style Sheet.”

There will be a penalty of 3% per day (including Saturdays and Sundays) for late work. The departmental deadline for submission of all Term 1 written work is Dec 31, 2014. Extensions or other accommodations will only be considered if appropriate documentation is submitted to the instructor. The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) constitutes appropriate documentation. Students who are unable to use the MSAF should document the absence with the faculty office. In all cases, it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the instructor immediately to see if an extension or other accommodation will be granted, and what form it will take.

## **VI. McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy and Other Policies**

**McMaster's Academic Integrity Policy:** "You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is knowingly to act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: 'Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty'), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university."

It is your responsibility to understand what is meant by academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf> "The following illustrate only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1. Plagiarism, i.e. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2. Improper collaboration in group work. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in texts and examinations."

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster e-mail and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete e-mails that do not originate from a McMaster e-mail account. Audio, visual, or cellphone recordings or transmissions of the course are forbidden without the explicit permission of the instructor.

**HISTORY 733: SELF AND SOCIETY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES**  
**Fall Term 2014: Dr. B. Kaczynski**  
**SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS**

1. **Sept 8**    **Introduction**
2. **Sept 15**    **Celibacy: Continuity or Change?**  
Abbott, *History of Celibacy*, pp. 1-179.
3. **Sept 22**    **The Mental World of Pagans and Christians**  
G. Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*.
4. **Sept 29**    **Some Biographies**  
White, *Early Christian Lives*.  
(Also recommended: Burrus, *Sex Lives of Saints*, and de Nie, *Poetics of Wonder*)
5. **Oct 6**      **A Father of the Church: Augustine in His Own Words**  
Augustine, *Confessions*, Bks 1-10.
6. **Oct 13**    <Thanksgiving Holiday>
7. **Oct 20**    <No Class – Individual Meetings this Week>
8. **Oct 27**    **Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars**  
Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 1-278.
9. **Nov 3**      **Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars**  
Option #1: Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 279-520.  
Option #2: O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography*.
10. **Nov 10**    **Augustine as Seen by Modern Scholars**  
Wills, *Augustine's Confessions*.
11. **Nov 17**    **The Sanctions of Christian Morality**  
Harper, *From Shame to Sin*.
12. **Nov 24**    **Historians and the Premodern Text**  
E. A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text*.
13. **Dec 1**      **Historiographical Essay Due**
14. **Dec 8**      **In-Class Final Examination**