



*Tolle Lege*—Pick up and read.  
— St. Augustine, *Confessions* VIII



**Augustine and Culture Seminar**  
1000 (Ancients) and 1001 (Moderns)  
**Foundation Question**  
Who am I?

**Augustine and Culture Seminar** is one of a group of five courses that we call the foundation courses. The courses make a Villanova education distinctive and work together to answer a series of related questions:

**WHO AM I?**

Augustine and Culture Seminar 1000 (Ancients) and 1001 (Moderns)

**WHAT CAN I KNOW?**

Philosophy 1000:  
Knowledge, Reality, Self

**WHAT DO I BELIEVE?**

Theology and Religious Studies 1000:  
Faith, Reason, and Culture

**HOW SHOULD I LIVE?**

Ethics 2050:  
The Good Life—  
Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems

By seeking answers to these questions, you will conduct an interdisciplinary inquiry that is informed by Augustinian and Catholic intellectual traditions, develop your skills in critical thinking and communication, deepen your understanding of yourself and the world, and engage with issues of personal responsibility and social justice.

**ACS 1000-DE3: ANCIENTS**  
MW 3:25-4:40pm, Chemical Engineering 204  
Fall 2020

Instructor: Emma V. Slonina, Ph.D.

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Office: <https://villanova.zoom.us/j/6397327350>

Office Hours: T 1:00-3:00pm, W 10:00am-12:00pm, by appointment

Phone: 610-519-3851

### Course Description

This seminar is the first of five courses that comprise the foundation for your education here at Villanova, “Ancients” being focused on the earliest developments in Western thought. Here we are also particularly concerned with the life and work of St. Augustine of Hippo, whose relentless pursuit of the truth will be a model for us in this class.

The foundational question for us in the first two Augustine and Culture Seminars is “Who am I?” This involves asking both who we are as individuals and as human beings. To answer this question, we are going to examine the various ways humans have answered it over the course of history in the West. This way we will discover where our ideas come from, but also confront serious alternatives to the ways we think about ourselves and our lives. We will be challenged by these thinkers, and we will learn how to challenge them in turn.

While we will not definitively answer any of our questions over the course of this semester, this year, or perhaps in our lifetimes, we will develop the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills for pursuing answers long after you have graduated.

### Learning Goals

- To read philosophical, religious, and literary texts closely and critically
- To clearly articulate arguments through writing and speaking
- To understand the development of Western thought over time
- To uncover the assumptions about human life that obscure our philosophical ignorance
- To identify and ask the fundamental questions about human life

## Responsibilities

As students in this class, you will be expected to complete all reading and writing assignments thoroughly and on time, bring your books and note taking supplies to every class, and discuss course material respectfully with me and your peers. You get two “freebie” absences in this class, no questions asked. After that, you will lose participation points for classes that you miss, for whatever reason. If you are absent for an extended period because of serious illness or an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

As your instructor, I will come prepared every day to teach and discuss course material respectfully with you, respond to all emails within 24 hours (M-F) or 48 hours (Sat & Sun), and grade all assignments within one week of submission. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus and schedule as needed, but I will inform you both via email and in person of any changes in a timely manner.

We all also have additional responsibilities to each other during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to keep ourselves and others healthy. If you develop symptoms of an illness, especially Covid-19, **please stay home** and, if necessary, take additional precautions to avoid infecting others. If you are exposed to someone with Covid-19, you also need to self-quarantine for 14 days. To accommodate students who need to miss class for health reasons, I will also be streaming class live during our scheduled meeting time via Zoom.

## Zoom Room

I will be using Zoom both for my office hours and to stream our live class for those who are unable to come to class in person because of illness or virus exposure. While I promise to be available during my listed office hours, you must email me to set up a meeting even if you want to meet during those scheduled times. If you can't make it to any of my office hours, I'm happy to arrange something else with you. Please email me with your availability so we can set something up.

To join the room, go to <https://villanova.zoom.us/j/6397327350> during your scheduled office hours visit or during our regularly scheduled class time. I will have a waiting room set up and will “let you in” at the appropriate time.

## Course Materials

You will need the exact editions of the following texts:

- *Four Texts on Socrates*, Plato and Aristophanes (trans. West), ISBN: **978-0801485749**
- The Holy Bible (NRSV translation) – any edition, but must be NRSV
- *Confessions*, St. Augustine (trans. Boulding), ISBN: **978-1565481541**
- *The Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri (trans. Mandelbaum), ISBN: **978-0679433132**

You can easily access the Bible in the NRSV translation online – I highly recommend [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com). All additional readings will be posted on our course website and will be noted in the class schedule (below).

### Class Schedule

Week	Assignment	Due date
Week 1 M 8/17 W 8/19	[no reading] Aristophanes <i>Clouds</i> lines 1-509, 876-1113, 1303-end <b>Set up portfolio and submit “Life Well Lived” essay</b>	<b>F 8/21</b>
Week 2 M 8/24 W 8/26	Plato, <i>Apology of Socrates</i> 17a-22e Plato, <i>Apology</i> 23a-28b <b>Plagiarism quiz</b>	<b>F 8/28</b>
Week 3 M 8/31 W 9/2	Plato, <i>Apology</i> 28b-35e Plato, <i>Apology</i> 35e-42a	
Week 4 M 9/7 W 9/9	<b>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY</b> Bible, Genesis 1-11 <b>Short paper #1</b>	<b>F 9/11</b>
Week 5 M 9/14 W 9/16	Bible, Genesis 12-21 Bible, Genesis 22-35	
Week 6 M 9/21 W 9/23	Bible, Genesis 35-50 Bible, Mark 1-4	
Week 7 M 9/28 W 9/30	Bible, Mark 4-8 Bible, Mark 9-12	
Week 8 M 10/5 W 10/7	Bible, Mark 13-14 Bible, Mark 15-16	
Week 9 M 10/12 W 10/14	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book I Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book II <b>Short paper #2</b>	<b>F 10/16</b>
Week 10 M 10/19 W 10/21	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Books III-IV Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book V	
Week 11 M 10/26 W 10/28	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Book VI Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> Books VII-VIII	
Week 12 M 11/2 W 11/4	Dante, <i>Inferno</i> Cantos I-III Dante, <i>Inferno</i> Canto XXXIV, <i>Purgatorio</i> Cantos I-III	

	<b>Short paper #3</b>	<b>F 11/6</b>
Week 13 M 11/9 W 11/11	Dante [TBA] Dante [TBA]	
Week 14 M 11/16 W 11/18	Dante [TBA] Boccaccio, <i>Decameron</i> [TBA] [on Blackboard]	
Week 15 M 11/23	Boccaccio, <i>Decameron</i> [TBA] [on Blackboard]	
11/30 — 12/5 <b>FINAL WEEK</b> <b>Final paper due Friday 12/4 by noon</b>		

## Assignments

All assignments have corresponding detailed guidelines that will be on Blackboard – please read these before beginning your work.

### *Plagiarism Quiz*

Plagiarism in this class will result in a 0 on the assignment, a report filed about the incident, and a 0 in the course if you plagiarize again. Many students do not fully realize what constitutes plagiarism, however. To remedy this, you will take a quiz to ensure you know what is and is not plagiarism. You can find the quiz online at <https://plagiarism.iu.edu/certificationTests/index.html>. Scroll down and choose the “undergraduate” test. When you pass, email your certificate to me. I recommend looking through the tutorials first and not waiting until Friday night to try it for the first time; some students are surprised at how long it takes to pass the test.

### *“Life Well Lived” Essay*

In this short essay (250-500 words) you will answer the question “What is a life well lived?” on the basis of your education thus far. You do not need a bibliography or quotes, but you should clearly note which thinkers and other influences have helped you come up with your answer. This provides a baseline for your thinking and writing, which will allow you and your professors to gauge your progress over your time in ACS.

### *Short Papers*

You will write three short papers (4 pages each) that correspond to three of our four units (Classical Greece, Bible, and St. Augustine). They will each respond to a question/set of questions I post on Blackboard.

### *Final Paper*

You will write one longer paper (6-7 pages) for the final in this class. It will primarily correspond to our final unit (Medieval) but will also involve the other three units and the themes we have explored throughout the semester. You will have a few questions to choose from for this paper.

### *Participation*

There are two portions to daily participation: class discussion and written reflections. We will work through the texts together in class and discuss various questions as they arise. You can earn up to 3 points for in-class participation: 1 for being there and paying attention, 1 for contributing during discussions, 1 for exceptional contributions to discussion. Contributing can involve both answering and asking questions. I will also ask a reflection question during class each day, and will give you time to type up and submit your answers to the reflections folder on Blackboard. We will then reconvene as a class to talk about our responses. These reflections are worth 5 points each: 3 points for completing it, additional 2 points available for higher quality responses.

### *Cultural Events*

You are expected to attend 3 cultural events throughout the semester and submit a one page written reflection on your experience for each of them. This year is obviously very different, with few to no gatherings on campus outside of classes. This requires a little creativity; there will be virtual events you can attend, virtual tours and scavenger hunts you can complete on your own, and hopefully the opportunity for very small gatherings later in the semester. You can always count an event (virtual or otherwise) that has the “ACS Approved” distinction (this will be clearly advertised) but you can propose other activities and events to me – if it is worthwhile and will help expand your learning experiences from class, I will approve it. You must get approval ahead of time, or risk not getting credit for an event that doesn’t count. Each of your one-page response papers will be worth 20 points, and will count towards your general participation grade.

### *Portfolio*

All students generate a portfolio of work during their time in ACS. You are responsible for setting up your portfolio correctly on Blackboard (instructions are on the website) and you will submit two assignments to it by the end of this semester: 1. “Life Well Lived” essay and 2. One analytic essay (short paper or final paper) of your choice, one that reflects your best work.

### *Meetings*

You need to make two appointments over the course of the semester: 1. A meeting with me to discuss your writing, and 2. A meeting with the Writing Center on campus. You can have these meetings at any point in the semester, but I recommend at least one of these meetings near the beginning of the semester and one near the middle or the end. The earlier meeting can help you establish good parameters for your writing, while the later meeting can help you evaluate and improve your work.

### **Final Grade Breakdown**

Assignment	Points	Weight
Plagiarism quiz	10	5%
Short papers x3	50 each	45% (10%-15%-20%)
Final paper	100	25%
Participation	8 daily (5 points for reflection, 3 points for class participation)	20%
Cultural events x3	20 each	
Portfolio	20	5%

## Grading Scale

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and under

## The Fine Print

### *Office of Disabilities (ODS) and Learning Support Services (LSS):*

It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Go to the Learning Support Services website (<http://learningsupportservices.villanova.edu>) for registration guidelines and instructions. For physical access or temporarily disabling conditions, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or [Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu](mailto:Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu). Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

### *Academic Integrity*

All students are expected to uphold Villanova's Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for disciplinary action. For the College's statement on Academic Integrity, you should consult the Student Guide to Policies and Procedures. You may view the University's Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway web site:

<https://library.villanova.edu/research/subject-guides/academicintegrity>

### *Absences for Religious Holidays*

Villanova University makes every reasonable effort to allow members of the community to observe their religious holidays, consistent with the University's obligations, responsibilities, and policies. Students who expect to miss a class or assignment due to the observance of a religious holiday should discuss the matter with their professors as soon as possible, normally at least two weeks in advance. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the absence. See also: [L https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/religious\\_holidays.html](https://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/resources/student/policies/religious_holidays.html)