HT 6305 Syllabus

Fall 2021

Reformed Theological Seminary

**The Life and Theology of Augustine of Hippo**

**Meeting Information**

Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 1:00 PM–3:00 PM (August 31 – December 7)

Meeting Place:

**Contact Information**

Prof.: D. Blair Smith (office: lower level in E building)

Office Phone: 704-366-5066 (x4223)

Email: [bsmith@rts.edu](mailto:bsmith@rts.edu)

Office Hours: Thurdsays 2:00 PM–4:00 PM and by appointment

Teacher Assistant: Matthew Kirk ([matt4kirk@gmail.com](mailto:matt4kirk@gmail.com))

**Course Description**

This course examines the life and theology of Augustine of Hippo, and considers his thought in context through a chronological/biographical framework. Key teachings will include: grace and the Christian life; the interpretation of Scripture; the nature of the Church; the Trinity and Christ; and the relationship between the Church/Christian and the world.

**Course Objectives**

1. Know the major events and key personalities of Augustine’s life.

1. Understand the theological significance of his work for the church throughout the ages.
2. Understand the contextual factors which shaped his life and theological emphases.

1. For students to be able to make connections between Augustine’s theological contribution in his time and the shape and state of the church today.

**Texts and Abbreviations** (*Required*)

*CTFH*: Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Christian Theology in Context; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 222pgs.

\*Amazon has plenty of affordable used copies of this book.

*CL:* Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life: Transformed by the Power of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 232pgs.

*CPA:* *Class Packet: Augustine’s Writings (Available on Canvas*)

*CPS: Class Packet: Key Dictionary Chapters plus Recommended Chapters and Articles on Augustine (Available on Canvas*)

**Recommended Texts** (*Recommended*)

Many biographical details of Augustine’s life will be gained from reading Harrison and Bray. If you’d like to go deeper, I highly recommend Peter Brown’s *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). It is deservedly one of the classic works of modern Augustinian studies—historically rich and elegantly written. That said, it is important to note that Brown spends little time with Augustine’s theology.

It is also recommended that you become familiar with Allan Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). This is a comprehensive resource. There will be a copy for reference in the library, but if you think Augustine might be a lifelong “friend” then I recommend buying a copy. Note: Some entries in this encyclopedia will be in your Class Packet (*CPS*).

I’ve attached some recommended additional reading to several of the weeks below. This is not required, but, if you have the time and interest, this will fill out your understanding. There is also a more thorough bibliography of recommended texts available in Canvas.

**Requirements**

1. Attendance and Participation (20%)

Students are expected to attend each class and be ready to participate in class discussion. This includes being ready to engage in class the required reading for each week. Please let me know if you have an unavoidable conflict that will require you to miss class.

1. Reading Briefs (30%)

Students are required to complete the reading for each week and upload to Canvas a reading brief for one of the readings. The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that text, 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 text (so long as page numbers are referenced). Briefs should be no less than 200 words and no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and edited carefully.

1. Theological Paper (50%)

Students will write a 12-to-17 page double-spaced essay exploring an aspect of Augustine’s thought with appropriate footnoting and bibliography. Make sure you (1) present a clear thesis; (2) have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay; (3) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides; (4) where necessary, engage primary-sources; (5) offer critical analysis (and not merely summary) of the positions and views you engage; (6) where relevant, consider the implications and significance of your investigation for the life of the church; (7) use Turabian formatting; and (8) use at least 12 sources. Potential topics for papers will be released later in the Summer. **Students can pick one of the provided topics *or* write on a topic of their choosing as long as it is agreed upon beforehand with the professor. I will hand out suggested topics the first couple weeks of class.**

**\*Due: December 9th**

**Schedule, Reading Schedule, and Assignments**

**Class 1 – Tuesday, Aug 31**

**Topic: *Introduction: Augustine as a Church Father in the Christian Tradition***

*CL:* pp. 19-46 (chapter 1); 191-213 (chapter 5)

*CPS*: Michael AG Haykin, “Rediscovering the Church Fathers: A Vital Need for Evangelicals,” in *Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church,* pp. 13-30 (chapter 1)

BB Warfield, “Augustine,” in *Calvin and Augustine,* pp. 305-324 (part 2, chapter 1)

**Class 2 – Tuesday, Sept 7**

**Topic: *Greek Philosophy and Augustine’s Early Theology***

*CTFH:* pp. 1-36

*CPA: The Teacher* (A Dialogue between Augustine and his Son Adeodatus), pp. 64-101.

*CPS:*  “God” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 384-390.

“Plato, Platonism” and “Plotinus” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity,* pp. 923-929.

Plotinus, *Ennead* VI.9 (on the One), pp. 300-345 (Half of these pages are Greek, which you don’t have to read).

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 1

**Class 3 – Tuesday, September 14**

**Topic: *Augustine’s Theology of Conversion and Construction of Christian Identity***

*CL:* pp. 47-88 (chapter 2)

*CPA: Confessions* 8 & 9, 13.xxx1.46-xxxiv.49, pp. 141-185 and pp. 317-321.

*CPS:* “*Confessiones*” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 227-232.

(*Recommended* additional reading: Lewis Ayres,“Into the Poem of the Universe: Conversion, Church and Grace in Augustine’s *Confessions,*” pp. 263-281; Rowan Williams, “’A Question to Myself’: Time and Self-Awareness in the *Confessions,*” in *On Augustine,* pp. 1-24).

*\****Assignment:** Reading Brief 2

**Class 4 – Tuesday, September 21**

**Topic: *Augustine and Reading Scripture***

*CTFH:* pp. 46-78 (chapter 2)

*CL:* pp. 89-123

*CPA: On Christian Teaching,* Books 1-2, pp. 1-37, 63-67

*CPS:* (*Recommended* additional reading: Joseph T. Lienhard, “Reading the Bible and Learning to Read: The Influence of Education on St. Augustine’s Exegesis,” *Augustinian Studies* 27 (1996): 7-25; Rowan Williams, “Language, Reality and Desire: The Nature of Christian Formation,” in *On Augustine,* pp. 41-58.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 3

**Class 5 – Tuesday, September 28**

**Topic: *Augustine and Preaching and Teaching Scripture***

*CL:* pp. 170-182

*CPA: The First Catechetical Instruction,* pp. 13-87.

*Homilies on the Psalms* (Psalms 120-121)*,* pp. 197-229.

*CPS:* (*Recommended* additional reading: Rowan Williams, “The Soul in Paraphrase: Augustine as Interpreter of the Psalms,” in *On Augustine,* pp. 25-40.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 4

**Class 6 – Tuesday, October 5**

**Topic: *Augustine and the Church***

*CTFH:* pp. 117-157 (chapter 4)

*CL:* pp. 141-170

*CPA: Homilies on 1 John,* pp. 270-294 (Homilies 2-4).

*CPS:* “Church” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 169-175.

“Donatus” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 284-287.

(*Recommended* additional reading: J. Patout Burns, “The Eucharist as the Foundation of Christian Unity in North African Theology,” pp. 1-23; Serge Lancel, *St. Augustine*, pp. 162-173 (chapter 17) & pp. 287-305 (chapter 26)).

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 5

**October 12 – FALL BREAK – No Class**

**Class 7 – Tuesday, October 19**

**Topic: *Augustine on Sin and Grace***

*CTFH:* pp. 79-100

*CPA: To Simplicianus,* 1.1-2, pp. 370-406.

*CPS:* “Grace” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 391-398.

(*Recommended* additional reading: William Babcock, “Augustine’s Interpretation of Romans (AD 394-396), pp. 55-74; Jesse Couenhoven, “St. Augustine’s Doctrine of Original Sin,” pp. 359-396.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 6

**Class 8 – Tuesday, October 26**

**Topic: *Augustine and Pelagianism***

*CTFH:* pp. 101-114

*CPA: On the Spirit and the Letter,* pp. 193-250.

*CPS:* “Pelagius, Pelagianism” in *Augustine through the Ages,* pp. 633-640.

(*Recommended* additional reading: Gerald Bonner, “Pelagianism and Augustine,” *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992): 33-51; “Augustine and Pelagianism,” *Augustinian Studies* 24 (1993): 27-44.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 7

**Class 9 – Tuesday, November 2**

**Topic: *The Saving Triune God: The Love of God***

*CL:* pp. 123-140

*CPA: Homilies on 1 John,* pp. 259-269 (Homily 1) and pp. 312-338 (Homilies 7-9).

*CPS:* (*Recommended additional reading:* Lewis Ayres, “Augustine, Christology, and God as Love: An Introduction to the Homilies on 1 John,” in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God,* pp. 67-93; Gerald Bonner*,* “St. Augustine’s Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” *Sorbonist* 4 (1960):51-66; Robert Wilken, *“Spiritus sanctus secundum scripturas sanctas:* Exegetical Considerations of Augustine on the Holy Spirit,” pp. 1-18.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 8

**Class 10 – Tuesday, November 9**

**Topic: *The Saving Triune God: Christology and* Totus Christus**

*CTFH:* pp. 36-45

*CPA: Letter 137,* pp. 212-224.

*Sermon 341,* pp. 19-29.

*Homily 1 on Psalm 30,* pp. 316-320.

*Homilies on 1 John,* pp. 339-348 (Homily 10).

*On the Trinity* Book 13, pp. 454-468.

*CPS:* (*Recommended additional reading:* Brian Daley, "A Humble Mediator: the Distinctive Elements in St. Augustine’s Christology," *Word and Spirit* 9 (1987) 100-117; J. David Moser, “*Totus Christus:* A Proposal for Protestant Christology and Ecclesiology,” *Pro Ecclesia* 29 (2020): 3-30; Basil Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 39-65.)

**Nov 16 – ETS Week – No Class**

**Class 11 – Tuesday, November 23**

**Topic: *The Saving Triune God: Augustine and the Nicene Tradition***

*CPA: Sermon* 52, pp. 50-62.

*On the Trinity* Book 15, pp. 395-437.

*CPS:* (*Recommended* additional reading:Lewis Ayres, “Augustine on the Triune Life of God,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine,* 2nd Edition, pp. 60-77; Michel Barnes*,* “Rereading Augustine’s Theology of the Trinity,” in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium,* pp. 145-176; Rowan Williams, “*Sapientia:* Wisdom and the Trinitarian Relations,” in *On Augustine,* pp. 171-190.)

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 9

**Class 12 – Tuesday, November 30**

**Topic: *Marriage, Sex, and Asceticism***

*CTFH:* pp. 158-193 (chapter 5)

*CPA: On the Excellence of Marriage*, pp. 29-64.

*CPS:* “*Virginitate, De sancta*,” in *Augustine through the Ages,* p. 870-871.

(*Recommended* additional reading: Peter Brown, “Sexuality and Society: Augustine,” in *The Body and Society,* pp. 387-427; John Cavadini*,* “Feeling Right: Augustine on the Passions and Sexual Desire,”pp. 195-217; Elizabeth Clark, “’Adam’s Only Companion’: Augustine and the Early Christian Debate on Marriage,” *Recherches Augustiniennes* 21 (1986): 139-162

**\*Assignment:** Reading Brief 10

**Class 13 – Tuesday, December 7**

**Topic: *The Two Cities***

*CTFH:* pp. 194-222 (chapter 6)

*CL:* pp. 182-190

*CPA:* Selections from *City of God* books 1, 4, and 19, pp. 3-18, 35-39, 109-113, 669-709.

*Letters* 189 & 220 to Count Boniface, pp. 323-333 and pp. 414-437 (half of these pages are in Latin, which you don’t have to read).

*CPS:* (*Recommended* additional reading: Gilbert Meilaender, “Politics,” in *The Way that Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life*, pp. 77-116; Rowan Williams*,* “Politics and the Soul: Reading the *City of God*,”in *On Augustine,* pp. 108-129.)

**\*Term Paper: Due December 9th**

**On Laptops and Smartphones in Class**

It is my strong recommendation that you take notes by hand using the hardcopy outlines I will provide before class. If you have an equally strong inclination to use your laptop, I require you to put your word processing program in “full screen” mode or use the “do not disturb” function so that other applications on your computer do not grab your attention (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Please keep your smartphone in your pocket on vibrate. If you do not have a pocket, put it facedown on your desk. Only check them on breaks or if you are receiving repeated notifications indicating an emergency.

**RTS Charlotte’s Classroom Technology Usage Policy**

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student’s own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.



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

**With Mini-Justification**

Course: HT6305

Professor: D. Blair Smith

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Fall 2021

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| **MDiv Student Learning Outcomes** | | **Rubric**   * Strong * Moderate * Minimal * None | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. | Strong | Emphasis on understanding Augustine’s theology through oral engagement, weekly reading brief, and a research paper. |
| **Scripture** | 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 | Students will learn how Augustine read and interpreted Scripture, and the role it played in his theology. |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Strong | Augustine is a fountain head for Reformed Theology, so students will gain a deeper appreciation for how he shaped our theological tradition. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | Students will learn to appreciate how God shaped Augustine from being a pagan to a mature Christian, and how he can be a model for our Christian lives. |
| **Worldview** | 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. | Moderate | Through Augustine’s robust engagement with the world of his day, students will gain paradigms through which to analyze and appreciate issues in our world. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | 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.) | Strong | Not only will students gain an appreciation for Augustine’s winsome rhetoric, they will learn how his thought has influenced the worldwide church. |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Moderate | Students will learn how Augustine pastored and exposited the Scriptures, thus gaining examples of effective ministry. |