

**POL 484 H 1 S/ POL 2026 H 1 S (L0201): Topics in Political Thought I: St.
Augustine's City of God
Spring Semester 2019**

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Office Hours (Spring Semester 2019): Wednesdays 12:00-2:00 pm

Description

We focus this semester on the political thought of Aurelius Augustinus, widely known as Augustine or St. Augustine (354-430 AD). Having come of age as a leading student of classical rhetoric, Augustine later became bishop of Hippo and one of the principal architects of early Christian political thought. His most important political reflections can be found in *The City of God against the Pagans*, which was written over the period 413-426. This *magnum opus* represents Augustine's attempt to subvert and to supersede the thought of pagan antiquity by offering a philosophical explanation and defense of Christianity at a time of cataclysmic historical change.

Required Texts

Augustine. *The City of God against the Pagans*. Edited and translated by R.W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

This text is available at the Bob Miller Book Room, 180 Bloor St. West.

Other relevant books will be placed on reserve in Robarts library, while articles will generally be available online through the University of Toronto library system.

Marking Scheme

The marking scheme for the undergraduate course will be as follows: one essay of 1500 words will be due on **February 27th by 5:00pm** (35% of the final mark), and a second essay of 3000 words will be due on **April 3rd by 5:00pm** (50% of the final mark). These marks are in addition to the class participation mark (15%). In addition to making an original and well-structured argument, each paper must also engage substantively with the secondary literature – in the first paper, you will be required to cite and engage with at least two secondary sources, at least one of which must be a book; in the second paper, you will be required to cite at least four secondary sources, at least two of which must be books.

The marking scheme for the graduate course will be different. Graduate students may choose one of the following options:

(1) one essay of 2500 words will be due on **February 27th by 5:00pm** (35% of the final mark), and a second essay of 4000 words will be due on **April 3rd by 5:00pm** (50% of the final mark). These marks are in addition to the class participation mark (15%). In addition to making an original and well-structured argument, each paper must also engage substantively with the secondary literature – in the first paper, you will be required to cite and engage with at least two secondary sources, at least one of which must be a book; in the second paper, you will be required to cite at least five secondary sources, at least two of which must be books.

(2) One essay of 7000 words, due on **April 3rd by 5:00pm** (85% of the final mark). This mark will be in addition to the class participation mark (15%). In addition to making an original and well-structured argument, your paper must also engage substantively with the secondary literature; hence, you will be required to cite at least eight secondary sources, at least two of which must be books.

The papers should be sent to me at Ryan.Balot@utoronto.ca. I will suggest paper topics well in advance of the deadlines. Graduate students should feel free to construct your own topics provided that you discuss the topics with me.

I will penalize tardiness by subtracting 1% per day of lateness. Students are advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before turning them in to me. These should be kept at least until the marked assignments have been returned. You are of course responsible for familiarizing yourself with the university's policy on plagiarism.

Schedule of Meetings and Readings

After an introductory lecture, we will devote ourselves to the first 10 books of *The City of God*. We will then be discussing selected sections of Books 11-13, to be followed by Books 14-15 in their entirety. We will then focus on selected sections of Books 16-18, and we will conclude by reading Book 19 in its entirety. Graduate students should aim to read the entire work.

Select Bibliography

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- Deane, H.A. 1963. *The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine*. New York and London: Columbia University Press.
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