UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2016
Instructor: Dr. Michel Barnes
Course #: THEO 4220/5220
Section: 101
Course Title: St. Augustine: The Man and the Theologian

Description:

Few figures are as important for the history of Christianity as St. Augustine of Hippo. In the West, Augustine stands at the pivot point from the Greco-Roman world to the Medieval world; and he marks the dividing line between the eastern church of Byzantium and the western church in Europe. Augustine develops key terms, such as "original sin," "grace" and "predestination," which will shape western Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, for nearly 1600 years.

The course will follow two particular themes in Augustine's life and thought: (1) his experience of and reflection upon the fact of evil in humanity, and how only grace can overcome this evil; and (2) his exploration of the mystery of the Trinity. The "backbone" of the course will be Augustine's Confessions, an autobiography expressed precisely in terms of Augustine's encounter with human evil and divine grace.

In order to better understand Augustine's thought and experience we will, at times, read from those who would have influenced Augustine and set the terms of his own reflections. For example, key ideas in Augustine's own thoughts are shaped by his responding to, or developing, something he had read from an earlier theologian or philosopher. Selections from such authors will be read along with several works by Augustine.