**DRAFT SYLLABUS**

RELI-E 1421

**Augustine’s *Confessions***

Spring 2016

Thursdays 5:30-7:30pm

Location TBD

Instructors

Charles Stang

CSWR 208 (42 Francis Ave)

[cstang@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:cstang@hds.harvard.edu)

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Description

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the Confessions of Augustine of Hippo, a Christian theologian of the 4th/5th c. This seminar will introduce students to the life of Augustine, but will focus on a close reading of the Confessions in English translation, attending to such questions as: what is a "confession" and how does it relate to autobiography?  Who is the "I" that speaks and the "you" to whom it speaks, and what is the condition of that speech? How are we best to understand this text, as a work of theology, philosophy, or literature (or is that division even helpful)?

Required texts

Augustine, *Confessions* (translation by F.J. Sheed), Hackett: 0872208168 (Paperback)

Kim Pappenroth and Robert Peter Kennedy (eds), *A Reader’s Companion to Augustine’s Confessions,* Westminster John Know Press: 0664226191 (Paperback)

Robert J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine’s Confessions: The Odyssey of the Soul*, Fordham University Press: 0823212653 (Paperback)

~~Garry Wills,~~ *~~Saint Augustine: A Life~~*~~, Penguin 0143035983 (Paperback)~~

Virginia Burrrus, Mark D. Jordan, and Karmen MacKendrick, *Seducing Augustine: Bodies, Desire, Confessions*, Fordham: 0823231941 (Paperback)

Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions*, Basic Books: 0465022278 (Hardcover)

Schedule of readings

Each week’s reading will consist of one or two books of Augustine’s *Confessions*, along with the corresponding commentary chapters in Pappenroth and Kennedy (eds) and O’Connell.

1/28 INTRODUCTION

*Confessions* Other readings Writing Assignments

2/4 Book 1-2 Pappenroth §§1-2

O’Connell, Introduction and §§1-4

2/11 Book 3-4 Pappenroth §§3-4

O’Connell §§5-6

2/18 Book 5-6 Pappenroth §§5-6

O’Connell §§7-8

2/25 Book 7 Pappenroth §7

O’Connell §§9-10

3/3 NO CLASS

3/10 Book 8 Pappenroth §8

O’Connell §§11-12

SPRING BREAK

3/24 Book 9 Pappenroth §9 **Assignment 1 due**

O’Connell §13

*Seducing Augustine*

3/31 Book 10 Pappenroth §10 **Assignment 2 due**

O’Connell §14

4/7 Book 11 Pappenroth §11 **Assignment 3 due**

O’Connell §15

4/14 Book 12 Pappenroth §12 **Assignment 4 due**

O’Connell §16

4/21 Book 13 Pappenroth §13 **Assignment 5 due**

O’Connell §17, Conclusion

(CS in Washington, DC)

4/28 Conclusion

5/5 NO CLASS **Assignment 6 due**

Requirements

It is vital that every student, regardless of grading status, read the assigned texts carefully and come prepared for each class, ready to ask and field questions.

Writing assignments:

Writing Assignment 1: A 4-5 pg. book review of *Seducing Augustine*

Writing Assignments 2-5: 2-3 pg. papers on Books 10-13

Writing Assignment 6: A 10 pg. paper on *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions*