

**Topics in Ancient & Medieval History: *Time in Antiquity***  
**HIST 476 – AS01**  
**Winter 2017**

**Instructor:** Sean Hannan, PhD

**Office:** 7-352H

**Phone:** 780-633-3914

**E-mail:** [hannans@macewan.ca](mailto:hannans@macewan.ca)

**Office Hours:** R 11:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Lecture Time:** R 3:30 – 6:20 p.m.

**Lecture Room:** 7-355

**Course Credits:** 3

**Course Pre-requisite:** A minimum grade of C- in 6 credits of 200- or 300-level history courses, and a minimum grade of C- in ancient history courses (CLAS 210, CLAS 314, CLAS 315) or courses as determined by the department.

**Course Description:**

In this seminar, students discuss, critique, and analyse readings on a selected topic in ancient or medieval history. They also prepare a major research paper on an issue related to the seminar topic. The topic in any given year is selected by the instructor.

In this rendition of HIST 476, we will excavate the diversified field of ideas about time that once circulated throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Readings will center on the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Augustine of Hippo. Using methods drawn from both intellectual and cultural history, we will carve out a place for these texts within their respective religious, philosophical, and political contexts. Nevertheless, we should let these ancient sources break free of their contexts at times, so that they can challenge us to reflect on our own preconceptions about what time is. Along the way, we will pause to ask ourselves: What did the ancients mean when they talked about “time?” Were past, present, and future all held to be equally real in antiquity? And how do these debates about temporality relate to the historian’s goal of overcoming the vast distances of historical time in order to say something true about the past?

## **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Find, identify, and analyse documentary evidence related to conceptions of time in antiquity.
- Critique and analyse significant schools of interpretation in Social, Political, Economic, and Intellectual History.
- Discuss, critique, and analyse historical writing on a selected topic.
- Write an analytical essay of advanced depth and clarity.
- Display a firm familiarity with theories of time and history as they were formulated in the ancient and early medieval worlds.
- Converse intelligently about ideas of time that arose in Greek, Roman, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim thought.
- Appreciate the subtle relationship between religion and philosophy in the intellectual history of Europe, the Middle East, and the wider Mediterranean world.
- Articulate a sense of historiographical awareness about the definitions of time and philosophies of history assumed by the historian.
- Reflect on the role played by historical narrative in shaping the categories of temporal experience, both in antiquity and today.
- Explain challenging but methodologically crucial terms like “historiography,” “philosophy of history,” and “historical consciousness.”

## **Textbooks and Other Learning Resources:**

Augustine. *Confessions* (Loeb 26-27). 2 volumes. Trans. Carolyn J.B. Hammond. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 2016.

In addition, students will be invited to make use of digital learning tools when appropriate. Two such resources are especially recommended:

- The *Confessions* Mobile App
  - Developed by the fine folks at Villanova University (just outside Philadelphia), the *Confessions* app allows users to easily peruse Augustine’s *Confessions* on any of their mobile devices. The goal of the project is to provide each passage in the text with helpful, hyperlinked annotations, which are provided by scholars who specialize in Augustine’s works. I have contacted the makers of the app at Villanova, and they have a great interest in hearing about how we fare with their digital learning technology.
  - <http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/unit/MobileComputing/VillanovaMobileApps/augustine-s-confessions.html>

- The *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps* Podcast
  - For students who need a bit of a leg up with some of the more philosophical readings, I would recommend listening to Peter Adamson's podcast on the history of philosophy. Adamson is a reputable, distinguished scholar of both philosophy in general and medieval Islamic thought in particular. Students will be able to hit the ground running with many of our texts by listening to some of his episodes on their commute or on the treadmill.
  - <http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/>

Please also note that many of our texts are drawn from the Loeb Classical Library, which can be accessed easily online via the MacEwan Library website. Simply type “Loeb Classical Library” into the catalog search bar and you will be able to click through to these texts. Please also note, however, that it is best to purchase the Augustine text in hard copy.

Other, shorter readings will be made available via our Blackboard site for this course. They will be drawn from the following monographs, collections, and journals:

Aristotle. *Physics I-IV* (Loeb 228). Trans. P.H. Wicksteed & F.M. Cornford. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1929, 1957.

Augustine. *The City of God VIII-XI* (Loeb 413). Trans. David Wiesen. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1968.

———. *The City of God XII-XV* (Loeb 414). Trans. Philip Levine. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1966.

*Augustinian Studies* (journal).

Hadot, Pierre, with Arnold I. Davidson & Jeannie Carlier. *The Present Alone Is Our Happiness*. Trans. Marc Djaballah. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

*History and Theory* (journal).

Jaritz, Gerhard, & Gerson Moreno-Riaño. *Time and Eternity: the Medieval Discourse*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003.

Löwith, Karl. *Meaning in History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Lucretius. *On the Nature of Things* (Loeb 181). Trans. W.H.D. Rouse; Rev. Martin F. Smith. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1924 (1975).

*Maimonidean Studies* (journal).

Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations* (Loeb 58). Trans. C.H. Haines. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1916.

Plato. *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles* (Loeb 234). Trans. R.G. Bury. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1929.

Plotinus. *Enneads III* (Loeb 442). Trans. A.H. Armstrong. Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1967.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Volume I. Trans. David Pellauer & Kathleen McLaughlin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Simplicius. *Corollaries on Place and Time*. Trans. J.O. Urmson. Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1992.

Sorabji, Richard. *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 A.D.: A Sourcebook*. Volume 2: Physics. Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 2005.

———. *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse & Historical Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

## Grade Evaluation:

<b>Participation</b>	20%
<b>Blog Posts</b>	20%
<b>Seminar Presentation</b>	20%
<b>Research Paper</b>	40%
	<b>100%</b>

## Assignment Dates:

*Blog Posts*: Rolling deadlines distributed over the course of the semester.

*Seminar Presentations*: Rolling deadlines distributed over the course of the semester.

*Research Paper* (approx. 3500 words): Finals period (Thursday, April 13).

## Assignment Descriptions:

*Seminar Presentations*: By the end of the year, students will have been asked to present their critical reflections on our assigned readings to their peers. Presentations should aim to last for twenty minutes, although that time-frame may fluctuate based on class enrollment. They may take the form of a prepared set of remarks or a digital presentation (via PowerPoint, Prezi, or another appropriate medium). Their focus should be on a theme from our readings that is relevant to the research the student is pursuing for their research paper.

*Blog Posts*: As part of this course, we will be building up a class blog, which will most likely be hosted via the instructor's own research site. This should make things more exciting than if students were only uploading their thoughts onto Blackboard. Students will be asked to contribute (at least) two posts to our collective blog. At the end of the semester, the most helpful posts will be selected for presentation at MacEwan's common undergraduate research day. These posts will consist of about 300-500 words and take the following forms:

*Post 1 – Podcast Review*: Write a review of one of the episodes of Peter Adamson's *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps*. It is perhaps easiest, thought not mandatory, to choose an episode that dovetails with what we are reading in class.

*Post 2 – Confessions App Reflection*: Write a piece reflecting on Augustine's *Confessions* in light of the critical glosses included in Villanova's *Confessions* app. This can take the form of a research reappraisal or a critical counterargument, but it must also reflect on the pedagogical use of digital technology in the classroom.

*Research Paper*: At the end of the semester, students will submit a research paper (of about 3500 words) on a time-related topic of their choosing. While the choice of sub-topic is free, it must fall within the historical and thematic realm of our course. It must also be made known to the instructor well in advance of the paper's due date. Students should make their selection of a theme clear during meetings with the instructor during office hours.

## Final Grade:

The official grading system at MacEwan University is the 12-point letter grade system. While instructors may use percentages to aid in their grade development, percentages are not part of MacEwan University's official grading system. Policy [C2020: Grading](#).

Grade	Percentage	Grade Point	Descriptor
A+	96-100	4.0	Outstanding
A	88-95	4.0	Excellent
A-	82-87	3.7	
B+	78-81	3.3	Good
B	74-77	3.0	
B-	71-73	2.7	
C+	66-70	2.3	Satisfactory
C	63-65	2.0	
C-	58-62	1.7	
D+	53-57	1.3	Poor
D	48-52	1.0	
F	0-47	0.0	Fail

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to be aware of their academic responsibilities as outlined in Policy [E3101: Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Policies are available online at [MacEwan.ca/policymanual](#).

- 1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Policy [C1000: Academic Integrity](#). All incidents of academic dishonesty, as outlined in the policy, are reported and recorded by the [Academic Integrity Office](#).
- 2. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** Policy [E3400: Student with Disabilities](#). Students who require special accommodation in this course due to a disability are advised to discuss their needs with [Services to Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#).
- 3. PREREQUISITES:** Students who do not have the appropriate prerequisite may be removed from the course and may be responsible for any tuition costs up to the date of removal.
- 4. FINAL EXAMS:** Policy [C2005: Final Assessment](#) and Policy [C2020: Grading](#). Students are responsible for confirming the date, time, duration and location of the final exam. Students may apply for a deferred final exam to the [Faculty of Arts and Science Program Services Office](#). **Applications must be received within two business days of the final exam** (\$50 per exam to a maximum of \$100 per scheduled exam period).
- 5. APPEALS:** Policy [E3103: Student Appeals](#). Students may contact [Student Affairs](#) for assistance.

## INSTRUCTOR COURSE POLICIES:

**Students must communicate with their instructors using their myMacEwan email accounts.**

- 1. Late penalties/policy:** Students must submit all assignments by the stated deadlines in order to for their grade to receive full consideration. Late submissions will have their grades docked at a rate of 5% per day. No assignments will be accepted more than one week after their stated deadline. Exceptions may be made in the case of compelling medical circumstances. In that case, it will be necessary to provide documentation in the form of a doctor's note.
- 2. Attendance:** Attendance at and attention during class are expected of all students in this course. Failure to attend will put students at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding the material and succeeding with their assignments. This is especially true of in-class presentations!
- 3. Use of Digital Resources:** While it will be a goal of this course to encourage students to use digital tools and resources to further their study of the ancient and medieval worlds, we must be careful not to rush too quickly into our use of online sources. Before you rely on an online source for academic use, please ensure that that source is academically reliable. That means: it is not okay to cite Wikipedia in your research paper, but it may be useful to consult online maps and sources posted by other faculty or universities. (Hint: Look for websites ending in .edu!) There is a lot of nonsense written about history on the internet; our goal will be to dilute the intensity of that nonsense, rather than adding to it.

## DISCLAIMER:

The information in this course outline is subject to change and any changes will be announced in class or in writing.

## COURSE TOPICS AND SCHEDULE

[Note: (BB) means that the readings will be made available on our Blackboard course site.]

### Week 1: Introduction to Thinking About Time Historically

(Thursday, January 5)

*Readings:*

None, but we will discuss short Pre-Socratic fragments relating to time.

### Week 2: Approaching the History of Time

(Thursday, January 12)

*Readings:*

Momigliano, "Time in Ancient Historiography," *History & Theory* 6 (1966), 1-23. (BB)

Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 1-19 ("Introduction"). (BB)

Sorabji, *Time, Creation, & the Continuum [TCC]*, Intro & "Is Time Real?," 1-16. (BB)

White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *The Content of the Form*, 1-25. (BB)

### Week 3: The Cosmic Shape of Time in Plato

(Thursday, January 19)

*Readings:*

Plato, *Timaeus*. (Selections will be posted on BB, but students are encouraged to read the entire work in order to glean the full context.)

Osborne, “Space, Time, Shape, and Direction: Creative Discourse in the *Timaeus*,” in Gill & McCabe, eds., *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 179-212. (BB)

Sorabji, *TCC*, “Plato’s *Timaeus*,” 268-276. (BB)

### Week 4: The Physics of Time in Aristotle

(Thursday, January 26)

*Readings:*

Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV.x-xiii. (BB)

Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators*, “Change,” 61-69. (BB)

Sorabji, *TCC*, “Static & Flowing” & “Time-Atoms,” 46-51, 365-383. (BB)

### Week 5: The Presence of Time in Epicurean & Stoic Texts

(Thursday, February 2)

*Readings:*

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* (selections). (BB)

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Books I-IV. (BB)

Hadot, *The Present Alone Is Our Happiness*, 162-174. (BB)

### Week 6: Time Versus Eternity in Neo-Platonic Thought

(Thursday, February 9)

*Readings:*

Plotinus, *Enneads*, III.vii. (BB)

Sorabji, *TCC*, “Is Eternity Timeless?,” 98-130. (BB)

### Week 7: Augustine & ‘Christian Time’

(Thursday, February 16)

*Readings:*

Augustine, *Confessions*, Books I-IV.

Paul, Philippians & 1 Corinthians. (cf. Bible Gateway: <https://www.biblegateway.com/> )

### Week 8: NO CLASS!

(Thursday, February 23)

*Reading Break!*

### Week 9: Augustine in the Context of Intellectual History

(Thursday, March 2)

*Readings:*

Augustine, *Confessions*, Books V-IX.

Byers, “Augustine on the ‘Divided Self’: Platonist or Stoic?” *Augustinian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 105-118. (BB)

Week 10: Augustine on Time & Memory

(Thursday, March 9)

*Readings:*

Augustine, *Confessions*, Books X-XIII.

Ricoeur, P., *Time & Narrative* I, 5-30 (“Aporias of the Experience of Time”). (BB)

Week 11: Augustine and ‘Christian (Historical) Times’

(Thursday, March 16)

*Readings:*

Augustine, *City of God* XI & XIV. (BB)

Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 160-190 (“Augustine,” “Orosius,” & “Biblical View”). (BB)

Week 12: Time between Antiquity and the Middle Ages

(Thursday, March 23)

*Readings:*

Simplicius, *Corollary on Time*, 85-124. (BB)

Sorabji, *Commentators*, “Infinity,” “Time,” and “Eternity,” 189-225. (BB)

Week 13: Questions about Time in Jewish and Muslim Sources

(Thursday, March 30)

*Readings:*

Rudavsky, “The theory of time in Maimonides and Crescas,” *Maimonidean Studies* 1 (January 1990), 143-162. (BB)

Maccoby, “Crescas’s Concept of Time,” in Jarity & Moreno-Riano, eds., *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 163–170. (BB)

Sorabji, *Time, Creation & the Continuum*, “Islamic Occasionalism” & “Islamic Atomism,” 297-306, 384-402. (BB)

Week 14: Final Reflections & Presentations

(Thursday, April 6)

*Readings:*

None, but we will set aside time for seminar presentations and a roundtable discussion of the themes animating our entire course.