



Weekend Courses 2024-25

Great medieval Christian and Islamic philosophers

Start date: 7 March 2025 **End date:** 9 March 2025

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Dr Karim Esmail **Course Code:** 245NRX030

Tutor biography

Dr Esmail was educated at London, Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard. He was awarded a British Academy Studentship and the Gregg Bury Prize (Philosophy) at Cambridge. He was a Research Fellow at Oxford, Burney Student at Cambridge and a Visiting Fellow at Harvard.

Alongside international articles, he is the author of four volumes of a clear, concise and original philosophical work on the nature and existence of God. (The third and fourth volumes include an appendix on the nature of free action).

He lectures at both Cambridge and Oxford. Classes with him consist of clearly structured lectures and an encouragement to ask questions, and to make comments.

Summary of content:

Western philosophy begins with the ancient Greeks in the 6th century BCE. It includes three principal periods: ancient Greek; medieval; modern. This course considers some of the greatest medieval Christian and Islamic philosophers. It considers some of the key elements in their thought.

The philosophers are Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Ockham, al Kindi, al Farabi, ibn Sina, and al Ghazali. These philosophers are concerned with a wide range of philosophical issues. These issues include God, the physical universe, the physical universe and some of its fundamental features, the soul, evil, human society, and logic.

Aims:

This course aims to:

- provide an understanding of some of the key elements in the thought of some of the greatest medieval Christian and Islamic philosophers
- *begin* to provide an understanding of their thought in a wider philosophical context

Course sessions

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

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| 19:00 | Dinner |
| 20:30 – 22:00 | Introduction: Augustine |
| 22:00 | Terrace Bar open for informal discussion |

Saturday

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| 07:30 | Breakfast (for residents only) |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | Anselm |
| 10:30 | Coffee |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Aquinas |
| 13:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Free time |
| 16:00 | Tea |
| 16:30 – 18:00 | Ockham; al Kindi |
| 18:00 – 18:30 | Free time |
| 18:30 | Dinner |
| 20:00 – 21:30 | al Kindi cont. al Farabi |
| 21:30 | Terrace Bar open for informal discussion |

Sunday

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|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 07:30 | Breakfast (for residents only) |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | ibn Sina |
| 10:30 | Coffee |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | al Ghazali |
| 12:45 | Lunch |

The course will disperse after lunch

Presentation of the course:

Lecture (principally) and discussion.

Learning outcomes:

As a result of the course, you will gain a greater understanding of the subject and you should be able to:

- have a greater understanding of some of the key elements in the thought of some of the great medieval Christian and Islamic philosophers
- *begin* to have some understanding of their thought in a wider philosophical context

Reading and resources list

There are no compulsory readings for this course.

However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Kenny, A, *A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 2012)

Armstrong, A H, (editor) *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge 1967)

Copleston, F C, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London 1972)

Gracia, J and Noone, T, *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press 2003)

Kretzmann, N, Kenny, A, Pinborg, J, *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 1982)

McCrade, A S, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 2003)

Nasr, S H, and Leaman, O, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London 1996)

Online resource: Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

<https://plato.stanford.edu>

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of April 2024)