Course overview: In this course, students will carefully and closely read texts by Medieval authors (in Latin) concerning eschatological themes, with theological analysis and reflection. Authors to be studied include Peter Lombard and Joachim of Fiore, and, if possible, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas.

Course goals & outcomes: Through this course, students will develop a deeper theological understanding of medieval eschatology, and will develop the knowledge and skills to be able to carry out investigations in this area and in related ones on their own. By a probing and patient reading of texts, by research into their textual and historical contexts, and by investigation into questions that arise as a result of that reading, students will learn to gain insights from theological works written in the medieval period that can contribute to theological discourse today. By concentrating on eschatology, students will (1) deepen their knowledge of that subject, (2) learn to see how it relates to other areas of theology, and (3) develop skills that can be transferred to other areas of theology.

Format: Lecture and seminar, reading and interpreting of texts. Students will be evaluated on a research paper (of 4000 to 7000 words), on their in-class reading of the texts to be studied in class, and on their participation in discussions about those texts.

Intended Student Participants: This is an advanced-level Master’s course, for students who can read Latin competently (at least with a dictionary).

Requirements: Students will be required (a) to read texts before class, (b) to do any background reading needed to understand the context of the passage, (c) to read and translate texts in class (a student who cannot sight-read Latin will need to prepare a written translation before class), and (d) to write a research paper of 4000-7000 words, due Monday, May 23, at 2pm.\(^1\)

\(^1\) The Research Essay required for this course must demonstrate that a particular thesis statement is true. The essay must include (usually, in the conclusions) some account of the possible implications, application, or relevance of the subject of your paper, for today and the future. The bibliography for the Essay should be focused and relevant to the topic. Written work should be proofread before being submitted; for this, a student whose first language is not English normally will need a native speaker’s help. The essay must be subdivided into sections, each with its own descriptive heading. It must include the student’s name, date, course number and title, instructor’s name, and title of assignment; it must have page margins of 1 to 1.5 inches, with page numbers on each page; its text in the main body should be in 12-point type and double-spaced; it must conform to academic standards, particularly as found in the latest edition of “Turabian.” See Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). I strongly prefer footnotes over endnotes; I prefer the “Notes-Bibliography” citation style (as described in ibid., chaps. 16-17, pp. 141-215) to parenthetical reference style, although the latter is acceptable. If my instructions differ from those found in Turabian, mine are to be followed.
Plan for the Semester: While we will begin with texts from Peter Lombard, the texts to be read in every class for the entire semester will not be assigned at the beginning of the course. Rather, as the course progresses, we (professor and students) will consider what texts to study based on the questions and interests that emerge during the course of our reading. However, the list of primary sources below suggests some editions from which our texts may come.

Primary Sources


Note: In most cases, the published editions of source texts to be consulted are prohibitively expensive or unavailable for purchase. Furthermore, students will work only on brief passages from the published works. What is more, it is one of the chief goals of the course that students be exposed to a broad variety of medieval authors. Finally, it is not possible to anticipate which particular passages the class will choose. Therefore, it is anticipated that students will be permitted to photocopy the passages of the texts that the class decides to use for in-class reading.
Select Secondary Literature


