

Academic Year 2022/23

Instructor: Martin Pjecha (pjecha_martin@phd.ceu.edu)

HIST 5050

Theo-Political visions and experiments:
Europe from early Christianity to the Age of Revolution

Aims and scope

The main aim of the course will be to explore a historical panorama of some of the most important challenges to contemporary order in pre-modern Europe, both lasting and transitory, as unique theo-political visions and experiments in themselves. The approach of the course therefore consciously distinguishes itself from anachronistic interpretations often found in textbooks, which interpret such leaders and movements teleologically as precursors to modernity, or reduce their ideas to the religious or political “spheres”. Instead, this course aims to portray these innovative figures and groups as holistic thinkers and agents responding to existential problems or concerns of their time. A main advantage of this approach is that it does not privilege orthodox over heterodox, or “success” over “failure”; course participants are instead regularly presented with competing or parallel visions in conversation with particular conditions and traditions, and invited to set aside normative assumptions to approach each from the emic context of their actors.

The first quarter of the course (sessions 1-3) is dedicated to the historical and conceptual background for the coming weeks. Attention here is given to particular problems of historiography and terminology, and to outlining the early theo-political visions available in the ancient Latin world, and their persistent legacies. Weeks 4 and 5 move into the innovative period of the High middle ages, where ancient configurations of order are challenged by new visions of authenticity and engagement from across society. The next quarter of the course (sessions 6-8) continues into the tumultuous later medieval period, where the fragmentation of Christendom and competing claims to theo-political authority interact with particular local conditions and attitudes to create unique experiments of re-unification, from the conciliatory to the revolutionary. Finally, the last third of the course (sessions 9-12) traces certain continuities while shifting the examination into the context of Reformation. Here, a new visionary enthusiasm of theo-political order meets with established traditions and also hostile or more modest views of innovation to overthrow certain basic norms and foundations, and inaugurate a revolutionary new age of early-modernity.

Evaluation and format

The format of the course will include lectures, student presentations, and seminar-style discussions. On most weeks, the session will begin with a short student presentation of certain readings. Following this is a lecture-style introduction to the more general historical background and basic concepts of the session. Parts of this will be interactive, and students are encouraged to take note of comments or questions to raise to the group and the instructor. Following this, the remainder of the session will be dedicated to a closer reading of the primary sources assigned, directed by the instructor but assuming collective participation by the students.

Evaluation will be based on **two take-home exams** (40 %), one at midterm and one final exam, as well as four short **response papers** (30 %), and in-class **participation** (30%). The exams will be take-home essays (cca. 1500 words) based on a question posed by the instructor which will relate to the course content. They are meant to be opinion essays drawing on the course readings and discussions, but not research essays. The response papers (300-500 words) should critically summarize and engage with a reading from the week, and also pose at least one question which the student found relevant or problematic from the text. It is up to the student to decide which readings to choose, though the paper should be submitted on the week of the selected reading. In-class participation will be assessed via one in-class presentation (10-15 min.) of a reading or collection of readings (as agreed upon with the instructor), as well as course attendance and active participation in class discussions.

1. Introduction: problems of historiography, terminology, and method

Readings:

- Howard Kaminsky, “The Problematics of ‘Heresy’ and ‘The Reformation’”, in *Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation in Spätmittelalter*, ed. František Šmahel, Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (Munich, 1998), 1-22.
- Eric Voegelin, “Introduction to the History of Political Ideas”, in *History of Political Ideas 1* (Columbia, 1997), 225-237.
- Idem, “Representation and existence” in *The Collected works of Eric Voegelin 5: Modernity without Restraint* (Columbia, 2000), 109-117.
- Matthias Riedl, “The secular sphere in Western Theology: A Historical Reconsideration” in *The Future of Political Theology*, ed. Péter Losonczy, Mika Luoma-Aho, Aakash Singh (Aldershot, 2011), 11-22.

Optional readings:

- Karl Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation* (London, 1897), 2-28.

2. Establishing traditions and alternatives I: early dissenters

Readings:

- Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches I*, trans. Olive Wyon (Louisville, 1992), 328-49.
- Matthias Riedl, “Living in the future—Proleptic existence in Religion, Politics and Art”, *International Political Anthropology* 3.2 (2010), 117-23.
- Frances Young, “Christianity”, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge, 2005), 635-660.

Source readings:

- 1 Corinthians 12; Acts 2
- Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.33-35
- Revelation of John 17-21

Optional readings:

- W. H. C. Frend, “Donatism/ Donatus the Great”, in *Encyclopedia Of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York, 1999), 343-7.
- Brian E. Daley, “Chiliasm”, in *Encyclopedia Of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York, 1999), 238-41.

- Yves Congar, “Ecclesiology”, in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York, 1986), 480-86.
- Eusebius, selections on Montanism

3. Establishing traditions and alternatives II: Church fathers and empire

Readings:

- R. A. Markus, “The Latin Fathers” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350-1450* (Cambridge, 1988), 92-122.

Source readings:

- Eusebius, “Oration in Praise of Emperor Constantine”, ch. I-V
- Augustine, selections

Optional readings:

- Herbert A. Deane, *Political and Social ideas of St. Augustine* (New York, 1963), 78-115.
- Eusebius, “Oration in Praise of Emperor Constantine”, (rest of text)

4. Visions of spiritualization: Gregorian Reform and Joachim of Fiore

Readings:

- Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought* (London, 1996), 84-96.
- Matthias Riedl, “Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker”, in *Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration*, ed. Julia Eva Wannemacher (Farnham, 2013), 53-73

Source readings:

- Select texts on the Investiture crisis
- Select readings from Joachim of Fiore

Optional readings:

- Bernard McGinn, “Introduction: Joachim of Fiore in the History of Western Culture” in Matthias Riedl (ed.), *A Companion to Joachim of Fiore* (Leiden, 2017), 1-19.
- Bernard McGinn (ed.), *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New Jersey, 1979), 120-31, 142-48.

5. Popular experiments of improvement and engagement: Mendicants, Waldensians, & Spirituals

Readings:

- Eric Voegelin, *History of Political Ideas* 4 (Columbia, 1998), 131-145
- Gordon Leff, *Heresy in Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1967), 13-22
- Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford, 2002), 70-85 **OR** David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (University Park, 2001), 1-10.

Source readings:

- Selection of Waldensian sources
- The Rule of St. Francis
- Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End* (New York, 1979), 164 f., 203-15, 226-9

6. Visions of Christian re-unification I: New Jerusalem experiments

Readings:

- “The Coronation of Cola di Rienzo”, in *Parallel Source Problems in Medieval History*, Frederic Duncalf and August C. Krey (New York, 1912), 177-83.
- Donald Weinstein, “Savonarola, Florence, and the Millenarian Tradition,” *Church History* 27.4 (1958), 291-305.

Source readings:

- Select sources of Cola di Rienzo, in *Parallel Source Problems*, 196-206.
- Anne Borelli and Maria Pastore Passaro (trans.), *Selected Writings of Girolamo Savonarola* (New Haven, 2006), 151-62.

7. Visions of Christian re-unification II: Papacy, Empire, and Councils

Readings:

- Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought* (London, 1996), 135-148
- Anthony Black, “The Conciliar movement” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350- c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge, 1988), 573-587.
- Matthias Riedl, “Dante and the Politics of Universal Mankind”, in *Abenteuer des Geistes-Dimensionen des Politischen*, ed. Petra Huse, Ingmar Dette (Baden-Baden, 2008), 75-84.

Source readings:

- Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctam*
- Nicholas of Cusa, *De Pace Fidei*, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis, 1994), 633-37.
- Marsilius of Padua, Selections from *Defensor pacis*, trans. Annabel Brett (Cambridge, 2005)

8. Visions of Christian re-unification III: John Wyclif, the Hussites, and the Taborites

Readings:

- Howard Kaminsky, “Wycliffism as an ideology of revolution”, *Church History* 32.1 (1963), 57-74.
- Gordon Leff, *Heresy in Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1967), 644-55, 685-707.

Source readings:

- Jakoubek of Mies, “Counsel on pacifying the kingdom”
- Selections from the Hussite Chronicle, in Laurence of Březová, *Origins of the Hussite Uprising*, trans. Thomas A. Fudge (New York, 2020), 124-6, 118 f.,
- Selections of Hussite war propaganda, in Thomas A. Fudge, *The Crusade against Heretics in Bohemia* (Aldershot, 2002), 281 f., 285-94, 320 f.

9. Contesting visions of Reform: Andreas Karlstadt & Thomas Müntzer

Readings:

- R. Emmet McLaughlin, “The Radical Reformation,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* 6 (Cambridge, 2007), 37-46
- Eric Voegelin, “The People of God,” in *History of Political Ideas* 4 (Columbia, 1998), 173-7.
- Bernard McGinn, *Mysticism in the Reformation (1500-1650)* (New York, 2016), 74-94.

Source readings:

- Thomas Müntzer, “Sermon to the Princes”, in idem, *Revelation and Revolution: Basic Writings of Thomas Müntzer*, trans. Michael Baylor (Bethlehem, 1993), 98-114.

10. Visions of violent renewal: the Anabaptists and Münster

Readings:

- R. Emmet McLaughlin, “The Radical Reformation,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* 6 (Cambridge, 2007), 46-55
- Claus Bernet, “The Concept of the New Jerusalem among Early Anabaptists in Münster 1534/35. An Interpretation of Political, Social and Religious Rule,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 102 (1), 175-194.

Source readings:

- Hans Hergot, “On the new Transformation of the Christian life” in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. Michael G. Baylor (Cambridge, 1991), 210-25.
- The rise and order of Jan van Leiden, in Hermann von Kerssenbrock, *Narrative of the Anabaptist Madness*, trans. Christopher S. Mackay (Leiden, 2007), 70 f., 541-555.

11. Calvinist internationalism: visions of fundamental mankind

Readings:

- Robert M. Kingdon, “Calvinism and resistance theory, 1550-1580”, in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge, 1996), 193-200, 206-218.

Source readings:

- Theodore Beza, *De jure magistratum*, 1-44 (you may skip the proofs and examples)
- John Knox, *On Rebellion*, ed. Roger A. Mason (Cambridge, 1994), 94-114.

Optional readings:

- Barbara B. Diefendorf, “The Religious Wars in France”, in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia (Malden, 2004), 150-168.

12. Insular visions of the secular millennium: The English Civil Wars

Readings:

- Jan H. Ohlmeyer, “The English Civil wars” here: <https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars/The-first-English-Civil-War-1642-46>

- Andrew Sharp, “Introduction: the English Levellers, 1645-1649” in *The English Levellers*, ed. idem (Cambridge, 1998), vii-xiii.
- Ian Birch, “Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, and the reign of King Jesus”, *Perichoresis* 16.4 (2018), 19-34.

Source readings:

- “An Agreement of the People”, in *The English Levellers*, ed. Andrew Sharp (Cambridge, 1998), 92-101 **OR** Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers, “The True Levellers Standard Advanced”, 1-12.
- William Aspinwall, “A Brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdome, That shortly is to come into the World”, here: <https://ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12024/A75729/A75729.html?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>