

**Self-Knowledge and Discernment:  
The Experience of Pilgrimage**  
PHIL/THEO 4495



Facade of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela  
By Antoine Cadotte - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7163888>

**Meetings:**

Thursday 10-12, every other week: Fulton Hall  
Additional 2-night weekend retreat: March xx-xx  
17-Day Pilgrimage: June 1-17, 2021

Professor: Michael C. Magree, S.J.  
Office: Stokes Hall North 345  
Office Hours: TBD  
Contact: [frmagree@bc.edu](mailto:frmagree@bc.edu) (preferred); 617-552-3817 (Office)

**Course Description:**

This course surveys Christian theology of pilgrimage, in order to help students to grow in reflection, self-knowledge, and discernment. The course culminates in a group experience of seventeen days of walking pilgrimage on the famous *Camino* to the shrine of St. James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Only ten students will be selected for the course after an application and interview process. The course is taught from a Christian perspective, though students of any religious belief or none are welcome to apply.

**Required Texts:**

- Augustine of Hippo. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- The Bible. NRSV translation. Recommended edition: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and Henry David Thoreau. *Nature, Walking*. Edited by John Elder. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1991.
- Ignatius of Loyola. *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola - New Edition*. Edited by Barton Geger. Translated by Parmananda Divarkar. Boston: Jesuit Sources, 2020.
- Pieper, Josef. *On Hope*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986.
- Sumption, Jonathan. *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God*. Mahwah, N.J.: HiddenSpring, 2003.

*All other course readings will be posted on Canvas.*

**Course Policies:**

*Academic Honesty:* Any plagiarism or cheating on any assignments or exams will result in an F for the assignment and, at the professor's discretion, may result also in an F for the course. Read and understand the Boston College policies on academic integrity.

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html>

*Gender Inclusive Language:* Standard practice in the course will be use inclusive language concerning human beings, and concerning God to use the metaphors and analogies of the texts we are studying.

*Students with Disabilities:* Please see the Disability Services Office website:

[https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary\\_offices/disabilityservices.html](https://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/subsidiary_offices/disabilityservices.html)

The instructor will make all reasonable accommodations when documented properly through this office.

*Electronic Devices:* Use of electronic devices when not specifically authorized by the

professor will result in a deduction from the participation grade for that session.

*Food:* Food is not permitted in the classroom without explicit permission from the professor.

**Grading:**

**1. 20%. Active participation.**

There are three expectations: a) the student must do the readings assigned and come to class prepared with questions and comments; b) the student must actively participate, by being attentive to others' comments and by sharing her own reactions to and considerations of the readings; c) the student must do the assigned walks and the related journal entries for each class session. Journal entries are graded on timely and full completion and not on content. Students must begin walking significant distances early in the semester in order to be ready for the Camino.

**2. 30% Papers.**

Each student must complete two papers of 1000-1500 words. The paper topics will be assigned by the professor. The first paper is due March xx, 2021, and the second is due on the date and time of the assigned oral exam.

**3. 20% Oral Exam.**

There will be 20 minute oral exam on the readings during final exam days. Students will individually schedule this exam with the professor.

**4. 30%. Final Paper.**

There will be a final paper of 3000-4000 words on the experience and theology of pilgrimage. It must involve both personal narrative and some of the readings. It is due **Monday, July 19, 2021**, via email or Canvas upload.

**Meeting One: January 21, 2021**

**What is Theology? What is Pilgrimage? Who is God?**

Cavadini, John C. "Why Study God?" *Commonweal* 140, no. 16 (2013): 12–18.

Smith, Christian, and Melinda Lundquist Denton. "God, Religion, Whatever: A Summary Interpretation: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism." In *Soul Searching: the Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*: 162-171. Oxford: University Press, 2005.

Cavanaugh, William T. "Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age." *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 340-356.

Turner, Victor Witter, and Edith L. B. Turner. "Chapter One: Introduction: Pilgrimage as a Liminoid Phenomenon." In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*: 1-39. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Exercise 1: What is God? Who is God for me?

Exercise 2: What is pilgrimage? Who am I as a pilgrim?

## **Meeting Two: February 4**

### **Pilgrimage and Creation: God in Action**

Bible: Genesis 1; Psalms 104, 139; John 1:1-18

Hopkins, Gerard Manley. "God's Grandeur," "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," "Spring and Fall," "Pied Beauty."

Thoreau, Henry David. "Walking." In Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and Henry David Thoreau, *Nature, Walking*, edited by John Elder, 69-144. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1991.

Solnit, Rebecca. "Tracing a Headland," and "The Mind at Three Miles an Hour." In *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*: 3-29. New York: Viking Penguin, 2000.

Exercise 1: Bodily Awareness

Exercise 2: Creation Awareness

## **Meeting Three: February 18**

### **Pilgrimage as Election: God Chooses (a) People for a Journey**

Bible: Genesis 12-22; Exodus 1-24; First Letter of John

Jenson, Robert. "Israel," in *A Theology in Outline: Can These Bones Live?:* 13-25. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Webb, Diana. "Motives for Pilgrimage," and "Varieties of Pilgrim." In *Medieval European Pilgrimage, 700-1500*: 44-113. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Baden, Joel S. "Exodus and Civil Rights." In *The Book of Exodus: A Biography*, 157-85. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Exercise: Why did I choose to be in this course and to go on pilgrimage? What could it mean to think that God chose me to go on pilgrimage?

## **Meeting Four: March 11**

### **Pilgrimage as Exile, Redemption, Return: God Saves**

Bible: Isaiah chapters 1-12, 40-66; Luke chapters 7-9, 15, 22-24

Sumption, Jonathan. "The Penitential Pilgrimage." In *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God*: 136-159. Mahwah, NJ: Hiddenspring, 2003.

Arnade, Chris. "Introduction," and "God Filled My Emptiness." In *Dignity: Seeking Respect in Back Row America*: 1-18, 99-124. New York: Sentinel, 2019.

Schumacher, Lydia. "A Problem with Method in Theological Anthropology: Towards an All-Inclusive Theology." *The Expository Times* 127, no. 8 (2016): 375-389.

Exercise 1: What is exile? How does it connect to the concept of sin? Where do I notice exile and sin in the world most clearly?

Exercise 2: What is it to be redeemed? Why does redemption take time? Why would a

pilgrimage help a believer encounter Christ's redemption?

**Interlude:**

**Retreat**

**March xx-xx, 2021**

**First Paper Due: March xx, 2021**

**Meeting Five: March 25**

**Pilgrimage and Memory: God in My Life**

Augustine, *Confessions*, books 1-2 and 8-9

Stewart-Kroeker, Sarah. "Christ-Centered *Peregrinatio*: The Mediated Journey." In *Pilgrimage as Moral and Aesthetic Formation in Augustine's Thought*: 60-82. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Hamm, Dennis, S.J. "Rummaging for God: Praying Backwards through Your Day," in G. Traub, SJ, *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), pp. 104-113.

Sumption, Jonathan. "The Pursuit of the Miraculous," and "The Medicine of the Sick." In *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God*: 69-121. Mahwah, NJ: Hiddenspring, 2003.

Exercise 1: Labyrinth.

Exercise 2: Practice of the examen.

**Meeting Six: April 8**

**Pilgrimage, Providence, and Hope: Depending on God's Help**

Pieper, Josef. *On Hope*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986.

Ignatius of Loyola. *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola - New Edition*. Edited by Barton Geger. Translated by Parmananda Divarkar. Boston: Jesuit Sources, 2020.

Sumption, Jonathan. "The Journey." In *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God*: 239-298. Mahwah, NJ: Hiddenspring, 2003.

Exercise: On whom do I depend? What control do I cling to? What is different about depending on God compared with depending on human beings?

**Meeting Seven: April 22**

**The Goal of Pilgrimage: Journey to God**

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae* I-II.4.7-8

Martin, Regis. "Heaven." In *The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven*, 137-167. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998.

Frey, Nancy Louise. "Introduction: Arriving at the End," and "Arrivals and Endings." *Pilgrim Stories On and Off the Road to Santiago, Journeys Along an Ancient Way in Modern Spain*, 1-16, 137-152. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Exercise 1: Is God a destination? What does place have to do with God?

Exercise 2: What is happiness? What brings happiness?

**Walking, May xx, 2021:** We will take a long walk together as a class starting at St. Ignatius Church on May xx and going into the city of Boston and then returning by MBTA. Please bring a backpack, a full water bottle, and wear a good pair of shoes. If you have a Charlie Card, please bring it, or bring enough funds to purchase a train ride back from Boston.

**Exam week:** individual oral exams, as scheduled in advance with Fr. Magree. **Your second five-page paper must be submitted electronically before you arrive!**

## **Part II:**

### **Pilgrimage to Santiago**

June 1-17, 2021

*In Spain:* We will begin in Leon, but with an option to meet in Madrid first and travel together to Leon as a group if you wish. Our first day in Leon will include a classroom preparation piece in the evening, and our walking will begin the following day.

## **Part III:**

**Final paper is due Monday, July 19, 2021**, via email or Canvas upload, 3500-4500 words (approx. 10-12 pages).

We will also have a **reunion meal** in the fall after we have all returned to campus.