

# Self-Knowledge and Discernment: The Experience of Pilgrimage

PHIL/THEO 4495



Facade of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

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## Meetings:

7 meetings, select Thursdays, 1:00-3:00.

Additional 2-night weekend retreat: March 31 – April 2.

17-Day Pilgrimage: May 29 – June 14

Professor: Jeremy D. Wilkins

Office: Stokes Hall North 417

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-4pm

Contact: [wilkinje@bc.edu](mailto:wilkinje@bc.edu) (preferred)

Chaplain: Fr Robert van Alstyne, SJ

Graduate Assistant: Grace Agolia

### **Course Description:**

This course surveys Christian theology of pilgrimage, in order to help students to grow in reflection, self-knowledge, discernment, and awareness of transcendence. 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:**

Anonymous. *The Way of a Pilgrim, and the Pilgrim Continues His Way*. Trans. from the Russian by R.M. French. New York: HarperOne, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0060630171.

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 is strictly forbidden, even during breaks.

*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. 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.

### **3. 20% Final Exam.**

The exam will be oral or written at the discretion of the professor, and occur during the exam week.

### **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 10, 2021**, via email or Canvas upload.

## Schedule of Probabilities

[tentative]

### Part I

#### **Meeting One: January 19, 2023**

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

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 Liminal Phenomenon." In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*: 1-39. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

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.

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

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

#### **Meeting Two: February 2, 2023**

##### **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 16, 2023**

## **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 2, 2023**

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

Bible: Jeremiah, chapters 1-5, and 30-33; 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?

## **First Paper Due: March 16, 2023**

## **Meeting Five: March 16, 2023**

### **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 Walk

Exercise 2: Examen, according to St. Ignatius Loyola

### **Interlude:**

#### **Retreat**

**March 31 – April 2, 2023**

Toah Nipi Retreat Center, Rindge, NH. We will hike Mt Monadnock during this retreat. Plan accordingly.

Reading preparation: *The Way of a Pilgrim*.

**Meeting Six: April 13, 2023**

#### **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 27, 2023**

#### **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, April 29, 2023:** We will take a long walk together as a class starting at St. Ignatius Church 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:** exams as determined. **Your second five-page paper must be submitted electronically before you arrive in Spain!**

## **Part II**

### **Pilgrimage to Santiago**

May 29 – June 14

*In Spain:* We will begin in León. Our first day in Leon will include a classroom preparation piece in the evening, and our walking will begin the following day. Planned arrival in Santiago June 12. June 13 summary/concluding class session. June 14 departure from Santiago.

## **Part III**

**Final paper is due Monday, July 31, 2023, by noon,** Canvas. 3500-4500 words (approx. 10-12 pages). Class reunion in the Fall, tba.