

James Madison Program
in American Ideals and Institutions

**AUGUSTINE AND POLITICAL THEORY:
DIALOGUE OR DIALECTIC?**

Monday, April 16, 2018
Prospect House, Princeton University

A public workshop presented by
The James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University
Cosponsored by
The University Center for Human Values, Princeton University

Recent scholarship in political theory displays a considerable interest in Augustine's thought. This conference workshop aims to deepen this scholarship, by probing how political theorists develop accounts of modernity and republicanism, political theology, and contemporary theory through positive or negative readings of Augustine's thought. Undoubtedly, much recent scholarship is post-Rawlsian. Either it seeks to apply insights Augustine has on concepts Rawlsian liberalism deems integral to sustaining pluralistic societies, such as fairness. Or, it argues that to sustain pluralistic societies, Rawlsian liberalism must include concepts of civic virtue, care, and love found in Augustine. While these lines of enquiry are fruitful, they take the framework of Rawlsian liberalism as a given without probing its foundations. Addressing these foundations, this workshop explores themes in republicanism, political theology, and modern political theory, with Augustine as its guide.

For Rawlsian political theory, the concern with the civil and religious unrest of the 17th century demands that common political life be sustained by the idea of an overlapping consensus, which does not make reference to comprehensive doctrines. Hence the modern problem of religious violence impels a defense of a modern ideal of public reason. But critics of political liberalism ask whether this account of modernity is adequate. What claims does modernity make about human beings, politics, and God? What understanding of modernity should inform future political theory?

It is here where political theorists reveal how they stand toward Augustine's deepest themes. Either Augustine is a hero, who offers resources to push back against the problematic features of modernity. One can therefore engage in a dialogue with him, responding positively to his insights, in order to develop a better understanding of the tasks of political theory in modernity. Or Augustine is the villain, who contributes to the problematic features of modernity especially with respect to intolerance. One can therefore engage in a dialectic with him, criticizing his understanding, in order to develop a better understanding of the tasks of political theory. To that end, participants will examine some of the following:

- What does Augustine's theological anthropology offer to political theory?
- Is modernity characterised by a loss of authentic politics, as Hannah Arendt argued? Do Augustinian themes exacerbate it?
- What accounts of the origins of religious violence should political theorists consider? How do earlier understandings of religion and politics bear on contemporary understandings of liberalism and republicanism?
- Can Augustinian themes help proponents of Rawls's political liberalism find an overlapping consensus with critics of liberalism?

With the so-called "return of the theologico-political problem," this workshop provides a forum for participants to discuss these issues. It is our hope that Augustine sharpens our understanding of future directions for political theory.

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2018

All conference sessions held in Presidential Dining Room, Prospect House.

9:00 to 10:15 a.m. Keynote: Pride, Politics, and Philosophy: The City of God and Augustine's Apologia for Humility

Mary M. Keys, *Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame*

Response by: **Paul Weithman**, *Glynn Family Honors Collegiate Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame*

10:15 to 10:30 a.m. Refreshments Available in Drawing Room

10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Augustine and Political Theology

Papers: *Cultus Hominum: Political Reflections on Augustine's Theological Anthropology*

Veronica Roberts, *Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Assumption College*

Augustinian and American Political Theology: Providence, Divine Patronage, and Existential Humility

Kody Cooper, *Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Service, University of Tennessee*

Chair: **Peter Busch**, *Lawrence C. Gallen Fellow in the Humanities, Villanova University*

11:30 to 11:45 a.m. Refreshments Available in Drawing Room

11:45 to 12:45 p.m. Arendt and Augustine

Papers: *Banality, Privation, and Political Evil*

Daniel Strand, *Postdoctoral Associate, Center for Political Thought and Leadership, Arizona State University*

"Love, but be careful what you love": Arendt's Augustinian Fragments on Thinking

Nathan Pinkoski, *2017-18 Thomas W. Smith Postdoctoral Associate, James Madison Program, Princeton University*

Chair: **Eric Gregory**, *Professor of Religion, Princeton University*

1:45 to 2:45 p.m. Augustine and Republicanism

Papers: Politics, Religion, and Republicanism: A New Direction for Political Augustinianism

Michael Lamb, *University Scholar in Residence, Wake Forest University*

Augustine and Contemporary Republicanism: On Speech as Domination

Boleslaw Z. Kabala, *2017-18 Thomas W. Smith Postdoctoral Associate, James Madison Program, Princeton University*

Chair: **Mary M. Keys**, *Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame*

2:45 to 3:00 p.m. Refreshments Available in Drawing Room

3:00 to 5:30 p.m. **Augustine and Contemporary Political Theory**

Papers: The Rape of Lucretia and the Testimony of Conscience: Consent, Conscience, and the Lust for Domination in Augustine's City of God
Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo, *Assistant Professor of Political Science, Texas State University*

Augustine's Call to Citizenship

Peter Busch, *Lawrence C. Gallen Fellow in the Humanities, Villanova University*

The In-Gathering of Strangers: Global Justice, Nations, and Augustinian Politics

Eric Gregory, *Professor of Religion, Princeton University*

Augustine on Slavery, Literal and Political

Toni Alimi, *Graduate Student, Department of Religion, Princeton University*

Chair: **Paul Weithman**, *Glynn Family Honors Collegiate Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame*

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES AND PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Mary M. Keys' research and teaching interests span a broad spectrum of political theory, with a special focus in Christianity, ethics, and political thought. She is the author of *Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge University Press, 2006; paperback 2008) and of articles appearing in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *History of Political Thought*, and *Perspectives on Political Science*. She has held various fellowships, including a NEH Fellowship supporting her ongoing research project on Humility, Modernity, and the Science of Politics, and she has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University and the University of Chicago. She is currently completing a book manuscript on Pride, Politics, and Philosophy: *The City of God* and Augustine's *Apologia* for Humility. Her recent work on Augustine's political thought also includes "Augustinian Humility as Natural Right" in *Natural Right and Political Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Catherine Zuckert and Michael Zuckert* (Notre Dame, 2013); "Religion, Empire, and Law amongst Nations in *The City of God*: from the Salamanca School to Augustine, and Back Again," in *International Law and Religion: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford, 2017); "The Power and Peril of Names: Rhetoric and Political Thought in Augustine's *City of God*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Rhetoric and Political Theory* (Oxford, forthcoming); and "Books 6 & 7: Nature, Convention, Civil Religion and Politics" in *The Cambridge Companion to The City of God* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

Pride, Politics, and Philosophy: The City of God and Augustine's Apologia for Humility

This manuscript offers an interpretation of *The City of God* through the lens of a central aim identified by Augustine in the work's preface: to persuade the proud of the excellence of humility. At the workshop *Augustine and Political Theory: Dialogue or Dialectic*, I will offer an overview of the book project in terms of its timeliness and content, with reference to recent commentary on *The City of God* in political theory. I will then present in greater detail the manuscript's fourth chapter, "Love of Wisdom and the Pride of Philosophy (II): *City of God* VIII-X." In this segment of *The City of God* we find Augustine in dialogue especially with five great philosophers of antiquity: Socrates, Plato, Apuleius, Plotinus, and Porphyry. I argue that Augustine is not as antagonistic as some commentators have thought towards these Socratic-Platonic philosophic luminaries, and further, that he finds praiseworthy forms or analogues of humility in their lives and writings. Augustine's recurring critique in these books of problematic philosophic attitudes, especially pride and vanity, is intended to be intelligible within the perspective of philosophy itself, while it takes on greater poignancy in view of these attitudes' political and religious repercussions.

Paul Weithman is the Glynn Family Honors Collegiate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, where he has taught since 1991. His *Why Political Liberalism?* won the Spitz Prize for the best book in liberal democratic theory published in 2010. His most recent book is *Rawls, Political Liberalism and Reasonable Faith* (Cambridge, 2016), which features some of his previously published essays on Rawls.

Veronica Roberts is an assistant professor of philosophy at Assumption College who teaches courses on the history of philosophy. Her research focuses on the intersection between theology and political philosophy in classical and patristic thought, and she is currently working on a book manuscript entitled *A World Besieged: Politics and the Earthly City in Augustine's City of God*.

Cultus Hominum: Political Reflections on Augustine's Theological Anthropology

In it, I will ask, 'what are the political implications of Augustine's theological anthropology?' In particular, what follows from his claim that human beings are, at bottom, beings who worship, and, importantly, desire to worship communally?

Kody Cooper received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Government from the University of Texas – Austin in 2014. He joined the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga as an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Service in 2016. Prior to coming to UTC, Professor Cooper was a postdoctoral research fellow at Princeton University and the University of Missouri. He has also spent one year as a Visiting Scholar at Wolfson College, Cambridge University. His research interests lie in the areas of constitutional law/theory, jurisprudence, political philosophy, and the history of political thought.

Augustinian and American Political Theology: Providence, Divine Patronage, and Existential Humility

In this paper I explore Augustinian political theology, and bring it into dialogue with American civil religion. On my interpretation, Augustinian political theology entails a doctrine of existential humility. Existential humility is posited by Augustine in critique of Roman and Christian civil religion and, more broadly, the divine patronage view of the city. The paper then brings the Augustinian outlook into conversation with American revolutionary providentialism as manifested in an unduly neglected work of John Jay's.

Daniel Strand is a postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Political Thought and Leadership at the Arizona State University. His scholarly interests are in history of political thought, religion and politics, and the thought of St. Augustine of Hippo.

Banality, Privation, and Political Evil

Hannah Arendt's famous account of the Eichmann trial drew intense criticism from many corners but especially for her description of evil as banality. Some scholars, including Jean Elshtain and Charles Mathewes, have argued that Arendt is aligning herself with the Augustinian tradition on this account, as she does at other moments in her political thought. But does Arendt's allusion to the Augustinian notion of evil as privation actually line up with Augustine's own account of evil? This paper will examine the case that has been made for Arendt as a "faithful daughter of Augustine" and argue that contrary to the current trend, Arendt is in fact far outside the Augustinian conception of evil as privation.

Nathan Pinkoski is 2017-18 James Madison Program Thomas W. Smith Postdoctoral Research Associate. His research interests focus on the interpretation of classical political thought in 20th century political thought. His D.Phil. dissertation was on the interpretation of Aristotle in the thought of Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, and Alasdair MacIntyre. He also works on early modern Latin and is preparing translations of some Latin texts of Francis Bacon and John Locke. Presently, he serves as the assistant director for the Centre for Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP), and an editor for *Politics and Poetics* academic journal. He holds a B.A. (Honours) in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of Alberta, Canada, and an M.Phil. and a D.Phil. in Political Theory from the University of Oxford.

"Love, but be careful what you love": Arendt's Augustinian Fragments on Thinking

Arendt's critique of love as an anti-political virtue is well known, and forms the basis of a scholarly judgement that Arendt's work are a head-on confrontation with Augustine and Christianity. In this paper, I aim to temper that scholarly judgement. If one thinks Arendt's work is exclusively concerned with politics and the recovery of a right understanding of the action, this claim makes sense. But Arendt's work is also concerned with philosophy and the recovery of a right understanding of thinking. From this perspective, Arendt uses Augustine to develop an understanding of thinking that is rooted in neighbourly love. This overcomes the solitude and isolation rooted in the tradition's understanding of philosophy.

Michael Lamb is University Scholar in Residence at Wake Forest University and a Research Fellow at the Oxford Character Project. He holds a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University, a B.A. in Political Science from Rhodes College, and a second B.A. in Philosophy and Theology from the University of Oxford, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar. Michael's research focuses on the ethics of citizenship, the relationship between religion and politics, and the role of virtues in public life. He is currently finishing *A Commonwealth of Hope: Reimagining Augustine's Political Thought*, which recovers Augustine's virtue of hope to offer a novel interpretation of Augustine's political thought and inform contemporary accounts of democratic hope. He is also working on a second book project tentatively entitled *Augustine and Republican Liberty*, which explores Augustine's engagement with the Roman republican tradition and considers its implications for contemporary political theory and practice. Along with his research and teaching, Michael is also developing a new program in leadership and character at Wake Forest.

Politics, Religion, and Republicanism: A New Direction for Political Augustinianism

Contemporary political Augustinianism remains at an impasse between liberalism and traditionalism. This paper seeks to identify a new direction for political Augustinianism by recovering Augustine's Roman republican commitments and exploring how they influence his vision of religion and politics. By highlighting the influence of Roman republicanism, I seek to advance a republican form of political Augustinianism that is both more faithful to Augustine's political context and more constructive in our own.

Boleslaw Z. Kabala, 2017-18 James Madison Program Thomas W. Smith Postdoctoral Research Associate, is working on judicial politics during his Fellowship year at the James Madison Program. Are there competing interpretations of Marbury vs. Madison, the landmark Supreme Court case that formally established judicial review? If so, do any of them stand in need of revision today? Dr. Kabala's dissertation at Yale suggested a new path in the comparison of two important thinkers, Hobbes and Spinoza, through a focus on theological politics. It significantly broadened his early interests in Hobbes and Spinoza, which culminated in a senior thesis at Harvard. Dr. Kabala also has experience in government, having served as a Deputy Press Secretary in Governor Haley Barbour's administration in Mississippi from 2004-2005. He hopes to utilize his academic and political experience in the research on judicial politics. Originally from Poland and a naturalized US citizen, he is a United States Presidential Scholar. He graduated from Groton, received his A.B. from Harvard University, and received his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Yale University.

Augustine and Contemporary Republicanism: On Speech as Domination

I argue that Augustine can inform contemporary republicanism in a way that has not yet been considered. To do so, I first unpack Philip Pettit's theory of republicanism, which changed the debate in political theory. I demonstrate that it contains a significant "blind-spot," namely, more deliberation will be required than Pettit allows to establish what counts as "arbitrary" interference in the lives of citizens for the sake of maximizing non-domination. But the deliberative settings leave an opening for a specific kind of domination: namely, domination through rhetoric. It is here that Augustine enters: I outline the shift in his position on rhetoric from the *Confessions* and the *City of God* to Book IV of *De Doctrina Christiana*, where he allows that rhetoric properly understood has positive uses.

Ashleen Menchaca-Bagnulo received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame in the summer of 2013, with a primary specialization in Political Theory and a secondary specialization in American Politics. Dr. Menchaca-Bagnulo has served appointments as a James Madison Program William E. Simon Postdoctoral Fellow in Religion and Public Life at Princeton University, as a Resident Fellow in the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership at the US Naval Academy, and most recently, as the Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Western and American Political Thought in the Tocqueville Program at Furman University. Her research interests lie in the Western Civic Republic tradition, particularly as represented in the thought of St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and James Madison. She is also interested in Constitutional theory and the American presidency.

The Rape of Lucretia and the Testimony of Conscience: Consent, Conscience, and the Lust for Domination in Augustine's City of God

Augustine's treatment of Lucretia is quite remarkable, as he is one of the first church fathers to discuss her plight in a unique and revolutionary way because his intertwined accounts of Lucretia and his advice to rape victims are rooted in his ideas about conscience. His ideas about conscience enable him to talk about sexual assault in terms of consent, rather than in the terms of "pollution" the Romans used. Yet given the pervasiveness of the *libido dominandi* in political life, we are left with questions about conscience's strength in the face of a vicious culture.

Peter Busch received his doctorate in political science from the University of Toronto, where he wrote his dissertation on Nietzsche's critique of democracy. Since 2001 he has taught at Villanova University, where he has become acquainted with Saint Augustine and sought to understand his mutually challenging dialogue with political philosophers, ancient and modern.

Augustine's Call to Citizenship

Should political theorists draw upon Augustine as an important resource for their theories of justice? Or should they engage him dialectically, in order to expose and correct his influential errors in modern times? I propose that Augustine is actually the one engaging his readers, be they Rawlsian liberals, communitarian critics, moderns or ancients. For even as he underscores the need to provide for the most basic forms of the secular peace, he also invokes standards of community that lie far beyond the reach of any earthly polity. City of God XIX is well crafted for the purpose of helping readers discover this ambivalence not only in Augustine, but in themselves. In my view, it is by encouraging such awareness -- what one might call "reflective agitation" or "overlapping dissensus" -- that Augustine calls heavenly citizens out of their bondage in the earthly city.

Eric Gregory's research interests include religious and philosophical ethics, theology, political theory, law and religion, and the role of religion in public life. He has received fellowships from the Erasmus Institute, University of Notre Dame, the Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and in 2007 was awarded Princeton's President's Award for Distinguished Teaching. He is the author of *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (2008), and various articles, including "Before The Original Position: The Neo-Orthodox Theology of the Young John Rawls" (*Journal of Religious Ethics*), "Augustinians and the New Liberalism" (*Augustinian Studies*), and "Religion and Bioethics" (*A Companion to Bioethics, 2nd edition*). He is currently working on a book tentatively titled, *What Do We Owe Strangers? Globalization and the Good Samaritan*, which examines secular and religious perspectives on global justice. A graduate of Harvard College, he earned an M.Phil. and Diploma in Theology from the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and his doctorate in Religious Studies from Yale University.

The In-Gathering of Strangers: Global Justice, Nations, and Augustinian Politics

Global justice is among the most pressing concerns of our time. Yet political theologians have surprisingly little about it, even as the burgeoning political theory literature on this topic has largely overlooked religion. This paper hopes to remedy this neglect by thinking with Augustine about the tensions between moral obligations that are universal in scope and those more particular roles and offices that constitute our temporal identity, including national loyalties.

Toni Alimi entered the Religion department at Princeton in 2015. He is interested in value and normativity in ethics, law, aesthetics, religion, and politics. Recent research topics include: 1) the relationship between freedom and reason in conceptions of sovereignty, divine and human; 2) the prospects for realism about aesthetic judgments; 3) the compossibility of divine commands and covenants within the space of moral reasons; 4) conceptions of slavery and religion in Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius. He is also interested in the thought of Augustine and Aquinas. Before starting in the graduate program, Toni received an M.A.R. in Ethics from Yale Divinity School and an A.B. in Religion from Princeton.

Augustine on Slavery, Literal and Political

Augustine and Cicero agree that to be a slave is to be under the rule, or jurisdiction, or another. But where Cicero defined slavery and liberty as opposites, Augustine's account is complicated by his theological commitments. Augustine relativizes the badness of slavery by indexing it to the master. Slavery to God is perfectly good; slavery to sin is maximally bad. True freedom is submission to the law of God; slavery to sin leads to all other kinds of slavery, including literal slavery and political domination. God sometimes gives people up into literal slavery to help them turn away from sin, as a parent might punish a child to help the child become a better person. Political domination occurs when one party, ruled by sin, seeks to rule another party unjustly, usurping the role that belongs to God alone.

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