

Self and Text in Roman North Africa: Augustine's *Confessions*

The native North African Augustine of Hippo wrote the most influential autobiographical text in (so-called) Western Literature. It remains the most brilliant text I have ever read: a mind-bendingly complex and yet fully coherent literary self. Let's read it together.



Set between Carthage and Rome in 400, Augustine wrote just ten years before the Eternal City would be sacked by the disaffected former legions of the empire (the /Goths/). Split between conqueror and conquered, civilization and apocalypse, Augustine wove humanity's existential and epistemological questions into a literary tapestry for the ages: Who am I? How do you speak? Who are you? How do I listen? Who are we? How do we know?

At once memoir, critique of empire, philosophy, psychology, theology, personal history, criticism, and a letter, these CONFESSIONS require close, careful, focused, attentive readings from a diverse group of interpreters. Join our learning community and spend three snowbound weeks at Wesleyan with a book you will never forget.

Required Text (this translation only): Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by H. Chadwick (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1991) ISBN: 9780199537822

Course Plan

Please complete readings before the designated class meeting & come to the first meeting prepared to discuss

Tu 1/9	Books 1-4	<i>Student & Teacher</i>
We 1/10	Books 5-8	<i>Friend & Lover</i>
Th 1/11	Books 9-11	<i>But What Am I?</i>
Fr 1/12	Books 12-13	<i>Being and the Text: Divinity & Community</i>
Sunday 1/14, 6pm	<u>Paper Draft</u> : What Self is Confessed? (3-4 pp)	
Mo 1/15	Re-read: Books 1-3	<i>Childhood & Sorrow</i>
Tu 1/16	Re-read: Books 4-6	<i>Youth & Passion</i>
We 1/17	Re-read: Books 7-9	<i>Death & Eternity</i>
Th 1/18	Re-read: Books 10-11	<i>Self & Mind</i>
Fr 1/19	Re-read: Books 12-13	<i>Who I Am in You, & You All</i>
Sunday 1/21, 6pm	<u>Reflection Paper</u> : What Does It Mean to Remember? (3-4 pp)	
Mo 1/22	What do we think?	
Weds 1/24, 6pm	<u>Final Paper</u> : What is the Self Confessed? (12 pp)	