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Class proposal for Mosse Teaching Fellowship

This proposal is for a lecture based class treating the subject of Medieval political thought from St. Augustine to fifteenth century Conciliarism. An understanding of medieval political thought is necessary to comprehend the period and to understand political developments of the Early Modern period. I would like to demonstrate the various changes in the role and function of both secular and religious government from the break with the Aristotelian idea of man as a political animal through the Council of Basel in the mid fifteenth century. With this in mind, I plan to alternate a course of lectures, reading of excerpts from relevant primary sources and readings from secondary sources. I plan to use several texts including Antony Black's *Political Thought in Europe: 1250-1450* and Brian Tierney's *The Crisis of Church and State: 1050-1300.* Tierney does not cover fifteenth century sources so I plan to prepare a course reader of later sources. I have not found a text to cover the earlier period, but am still looking. I have considered John B. Morrall's *Political Thought in Medieval Times*, but I think that it is somewhat dated and does not discuss Byzantine, Jewish or Arabic influences.

Throughout the semester I would like to follow several lines of thought including the development of the idea of kingship, the development of representative institutions and the development of ideas which contributed to Conciliar thinking. While I don't think they neatly tie

themselves in a bow in the mid fifteenth century, they do have some relationship to each other through out the period.

Over the course of the semester, I would like to cover the following topics:

Week one: I will present a brief background of political thought in the Classical world and then cover the political thought of St. Augustine. The lecture would discuss how Augustine's thought was different from earlier thinkers. The class will also read portions of *Civitas Dei*, especially Chapter xix and Aristotle's *Politics.*

Week two: Early conflicts between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* and the writings of Pope Gelasius I. We will consider the evolution of kingship and the idea of protection in return for service in the Western European successor states.

Week three: Political thought in the Byzantine Empire. The Eastern Empire developed in different directions, especially in the relationship of the emperor to the Church. We will also look at the relationship between the early Carolingian rulers and the papacy and the role of the popes in establishing the Carolingian dynasty. Readings will include "Pepin and the Papacy", "the Donation of Constantine," and "the Coronation of Charlemagne," all from Tierney.

Week four: The class will examine the role of the Western empire in the papal reforms of the eleventh century and the growing tension between the Western Emperors and the Popes. We will also cover the conflict over

lay investiture and the struggle between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII. Readings will include excerpts from the *Dictatus Papae,* Gregory's prohibition against lay investiture, and the correspondence between Gregory VII and Henry IV.

Week five: Week five will cover the developments of the twelfth century. Topics covered would include *Policraticus* and its author John of Salisbury and the development of a corporate view of society. The class will investigate the rediscovery of Roman law and the compilation of Gratian's *Decretum.* The growing interest in church councils by the decretalists will be discussed. Also covered at this time would be Brackton, the role of kingship and its change since the early medieval period and the development of corporate representation and the beginnings of representative bodies.

Week six: This week will cover the thirteenth century. The first lecture will cover the rise of universities, scholasticism and the rediscovery of Aristotle. I will also briefly discuss Arabic and Jewish influences on Western European thought. The political thought of St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastic writers will be considered in the second lecture. The third lecture will deal with the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* that intensifies at this time. The role of Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV and the conflict with Frederick II will be considered at this time.

Week seven: Our study of the thirteenth century continues. Lectures will include a continuation of the struggle between the *regnum* and

sacerdotium that reaches a climax in the conflict between Boniface VIII and Philip IV, which was a defeat for the papacy and the consequences of this event. I will also discuss the writings of Giles of Rome and James of Viterbo who both presented ideas in favor of papal supremacy.

Week eight: This week concludes the thirteenth century and begins the examination of the fourteenth. The works of John of Paris and Dante are discussed since they support the *regnum* and are both strongly influenced by Aristotle. John of Paris wrote in rebuttal to Giles of Rome and James of Viterbo suggested that the *regnum* was the highest form of natural society, can be worthwhile without the sanctification of the Church and had as its object the common good. Dante's *Monarchia* is a treatise in favor of a universal empire and is significant because he extends the principle of the autonomy of the state. We move into the fourteenth century with an examination of the writings of Marsiglio of Padua. The *Defensor Pacis* exerted a profound influence on a number of later political thinkers. Readings this week will include excerpts from John of Paris, Dante and Marsiglio of Padua.

Week nine: We continue with the fourteenth century and investigate the life and the works of William of Ockham. Although he was not a Conciliarist, he did exert a profound influence on a number of Conciliarist thinkers. We will also consider the writings of John Wycliffe and his influence on later thinkers. Students will read excerpts from both men.

Week ten: We will look at the Avignon papacy and the Great Schism of 1378-1417. We will look at the events that led to the Schism, then look at the response of territorial rulers, the Church and the universities. I will also talk about the rise of Conciliarism and its earlier antecedents.

Week eleven: We will discuss the Council of Pisa, the Council of Constance and the political activities that preceded them. The writings of Jean Gerson and other Conciliarists will be discussed. The condemnation of John Hus, the resolution of the Schism, election of a new pope and the important resolutions from Constance including *Frequens* and *Haec Sancta* will be considered.

Week twelve: Lectures this week will include Council of Basel and the events that preceded it. We will also consider the political situation in Europe, how it affected the proceedings at Basel and the goals of the Council of Basel. We will look at the fight between the council and pope and the reasons it happened. I will present the ideas of important Conciliarists such as Nicholas of Cusa and John of Segovia. Readings will include material from Nicholas of Cusa's *Concordontia Catholica.*

Week thirteen: Eugenius IV, his troubles with the council and in Italy. The class will examine the splitting of the council and the deposition of Eugenius. We will look at the writings of John of Torquemada and others who supported Eugenius and the papal position.

Week fourteen: I will discuss Concilarism in latter part of the fifteenth century. We will also look at the development of the state in the

fifteenth century and finally to attempt to draw some conclusions about the development of political thought in the Middle Ages.

I would like to see this course build upon the material presented in courses like History 115 and give students an idea of how political thought developed in the Middle Ages. This should give non-majors some idea of how political institutions developed in Europe and help provide majors with a more extensive background in important trends in Medieval thought. Thank you for your consideration.