

Rachel Fulton Brown
Department of History
The University of Chicago

COLLOQUIUM: ANGELS AND DEMONS

Autumn 2022



From Enoch to Milton, angels and demons were central to the Christian understanding of creation, whether as the invisible intelligences of the celestial hierarchy or as the powers through which astrologers and magicians worked. This course will focus on reading primary sources from late antiquity through the seventeenth century for the study and importance of angels and demons, the roles which they played in Christian theology and devotion, the development of ideas of virtue and goodness, evil and sin, and the interactions they were believed to have had with human beings. Special attention will be given to both contemplation and magic, as well as to the significance of angels for thinking about God.

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE SEMINARY CO-OP BOOKSTORE

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Prima Pars*, 50-119 (Lander: The Aquinas Institute, 2012)
[ISBN 9781623400071]

- Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992) [ISBN 9780664253950]
- Steven Chase, *Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002) [ISBN 9780809139484]
- Claire Fanger, *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015) [ISBN 9780271051437]
- Deborah Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) [ISBN 9780521027489]
- Tobias Hoffman, *Free Will and the Rebel Angels in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) [ISBN 9781316608838]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading and participation in class discussion.** This course is designed as a research colloquium, meaning, a seminar intended to help you develop questions for research. Think of it as a practicum working on several different levels at once: an introduction to a particular topic, a survey of the questions other scholars have brought to this topic, a series of exercises intended to help you think about the topic, and an opportunity to learn more about the primary sources you might use to inquire further into the topic. To prepare for class, you will need to attend to the assigned readings on each of these levels, while at the same time being attentive to the metaquestion of how to do historical research.
2. **Exercises:** The purpose of these weekly exercises is to help you develop your research question by breaking the process down into parts. Think of them as steps along a path rather than discrete problems. They should build on each other over the course of the quarter. I will give feedback to help you develop your questions, but the final grade for the course will depend cumulatively on your class participation, written exercises, and final paper, not on a simple average of marks.
3. **Final paper:** Your final paper (10-12 pages, double-spaced) should focus on a single primary source that you have discovered in your reading for class. Bluntly: check the bibliographies in the books I have assigned! (Yes, you may choose Thomas Aquinas, but focus on what he says about angels.) Your paper should introduce the source, discuss the main scholarship on the source (3-5 items), and suggest questions for future research (with provisional answers, based on what you have learned thus far). Your suggested questions may build on themes we have discussed in class, while also pointing to things we may not have covered. Think of the paper as a proto-proposal for a research project (dissertation or thesis).

Grading (roughly): Class participation (10%), Exercises (40%), Final Paper (50%).

READING AND DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS

September 28 Thinking with Angels

Lorraine Daston, "Intelligences: Angelic, Animal, Human," in *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. Lorriane Daston and Gregg Mitman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 37-58 [on e-reserve]

Exercise: What kinds of questions do angels help us to ask? Bring an example from contemporary media (e.g. news, literature, television, movies, music) to present in class. Send images by Tuesday, September 27, at 8pm to Professor Fulton Brown (so I can put them in the slides).

October 5 Thinking God with Angels

Barker, *The Great Angel*

Exercise: How does our understanding of God change if the Son of God is an angel? Which of Barker's sources of evidence do you find most persuasive (pick one!)? (2-3 pages)

October 12 Thinking Hierarchy with Angels

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, trans. John Parker (London: Skeffington & Son, 1894), pp. 15-49 [Hathi Trust <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044048193577>]

Chase, *Angelic Spirituality*, especially part two

Exercise: Using the primary sources in Chase's selection as a model, write a short commentary (3-4 pages) on one chapter in Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy*.

October 19 Thinking Knowledge with Angels

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Pars Prima*, Q. 50-61, pp. 1-95

Exercise: Each student will choose ONE question on which to present in class (30 minutes each). Your presentation should be a *quaestio* on the *quaestio*: question why Aquinas poses the question he does, how he divides it, whether he raises proper objections, and whether he answers them. The other students will be expected to challenge you on your presentation.

October 26 Thinking Action with Angels

Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae Pars Prima*, Q. 62-64, 106-114, pp. 97-135, 523-603

Exercise: Continuation of same exercise.

November 2 Thinking Free Will with Angels

Hoffman, *Free Will and the Rebel Angels*

Exercise: Choose one of the authors whom Hoffman uses and summarize his place in the tradition (3-4 pages). You should consult the edition Hoffman cites and consider what

Hoffman focuses on in his account of the author's thinking. If you do not know Latin, you should still consult the edition and learn what you can from the introduction and table of contents (it will be more than you think!).

November 9 Thinking Power with Angels

Fanger, *Invoking Angels*

Exercise: Write a review of one article in Fanger's collection (3-4 pages). Consider the context in which the author places the source(s) consulted and whether you are convinced of its significance. Consider further questions you would ask about the source(s) and their significance.

November TBA Thinking Nature with Angels

Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*

Exercise: John Dee comes to you with a proposal: help him contact an angel. He has questions he wants the angel to answer! Record your conversation with Dee and the angel (3-4 pages).

November 30 Thinking with Angels 2.0

Presentations on your primary sources for your final papers (15 minutes each)

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FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 9, 11:59pmCST, in Canvas: Assignments (file format: YourLastName Angels.pdf)