What is virtue? How does a soul acquire it? What happens when it succumbs to vice? As medieval monks, preachers, poets, and scholastics understood, training the soul in virtue is no easy task. The vices, like demons, are ever ready to attack, rendering the soul a battlefield—or a castle under siege. How ought the soul prepare? In this course, we read across the medieval tradition of thinking about the soul's struggle with virtue and vice from Prudentius’s *Psychomachia* to Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. We will consider sources commenting on scripture, particularly Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, as well as those drawing on Aristotle, including William of Auvergne's *Treatise on the Virtues*. We will pay special attention to the role of memory, allegory, and confession as practices for training the soul, along with more formal theories of virtue and vice.
BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM THE SEMINARY CO-OP BOOKSTORE


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading and discussion** (30%). This is mainly a reading course, intended to introduce you to the genre of the treatise on virtues and vices, as well as to the analytical problems associated with studying this tradition.

2. **Scavenger hunt** (30%): Each * week, bring examples from the news of the virtues and vices we are reading about in our primary sources (write up 2-3 pages each, 8 total). **Due in class.**

3. **Source analysis** (40%): Description and analysis of one major treatise on the virtues and vices, including list of manuscripts, contents, description of method and sources (10-12 pages). **Due December 13 on Canvas.**

READING AND DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS

**October 2 Whose virtues are these anyway?**


**October 9 The Battle of the Soul**

Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143, Hebrew numbering)


October 16 On the dungheap*

- The Epistle [vol. 1:5-15]
- First Part: Preface, I.xxxvi; II.i-ivi; IV.xxvii-xxx; V.xlv-xlvi [vol. 1:17-32, 58-63, 65-121, 199-210, 279-87]
- Second Part: VI.xxii-xxv, xxxvii; VIII.vi; IX.lvii; X.vi, xiv-xv [vol. 1:317-19, 328-35, 386-90, 515-17, 534-41, 551-56]
- Fourth Part: XVIII.vii-x; XVIII.liv; XX:xiv [vol. 2:310-14, 367-72, 439-47]
- Fifth Part: XXIII.i; XXIV.viii-xi, xxiii; XXV.i, xi; XXVI.xii-xiii, xvii; [vol. 3:5-12, 58-74, 85-86, 90, 113, 135-39, 142-46]

October 23 Ordering the virtues*

October 30 Training the soul

November 6 Philosophical virtue*

November 13 Theological virtue*

November 20 The way of the pilgrim*

November 27 The way of the bride*

December 4 Summa virtutum*

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Guilelmus Peraldus, *Summa de vitius* [Special Collections, MS 174]