

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
OUR PREMODERN HERITAGE – PART II  
GOD, THE BIBLE, AUGUSTINE, AND AQUINAS

**Terms and concepts to know:**

The Middle Ages

Feudalism

*The City of God*

The Modern Era

*The Prince*

Pantheism / Monotheism

Revealed theology

Creation science

Sin and Salvation

The “Dark” Ages

Augustine

Augustinian “historicism”

Machiavelli

Old / New Testament

Natural theology

Experiential theology

“Problem of evil”

**Study and discussion questions:**

1. Discuss the concept of feudalism and how it controlled the political, social, and economic relations among the various classes. What sort of system eventually surpassed it? What are some of the reasons you feel it did not survive as a system?
2. Discuss the historicist elements of Augustine’s philosophy. Do you agree with not only the concept of historicism, but of Augustinian historicism?
3. How is it that Aquinas was able to better integrate Aristotle’s work into his own? How did he differ from Augustine? How is Aquinas’ s “hierarchically arranged world” different from today?
4. Read and discuss passages from *The Prince*. How do you feel about Machiavelli in general? Do you agree that “a man who wishes to make a vocation of being good at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good”? Is it better to be cheap or generous? To be loved or feared? (As the Prince, of course).
5. Discuss the differences among natural, revealed, and experiential theologies. Which do you think would appeal most to a believer or be accepted by a nonbeliever?
6. Discuss Stevenson’s reference to the “problem of evil.” How would believers deal with this problem in a rhetorical sense?
7. Discuss the biblical theory of the universe, its theory of human nature, and its diagnosis and prescription for what ails us.
8. Discuss some of the contemporary *political* questions regarding religion in society such as prayer in schools, the Ten Commandments posted in the classroom, etc. What is your position on these issues?

**Readings:**

Heineman. *Political Science*, chapter 3.

Stevenson. *Twelve Theories of Human Nature*, chapter 6.

**Video:** *With God On Our Side: George W. Bush and the Rise of the Religious Right.*