Great Works (GWK) 300: Great Works of Philosophy and Literature (Tuesdays 2:30-5:15)

The theme of this new course will vary from semester to semester. This fall it will be the following: When conflict arises between an individual’s beliefs and the practices of society, when should the former prevail, and when should the latter prevail? Can individuals find a natural fulfillment outside society, or does our freedom depend on our being members of a society? This course will examine those questions among others. The purposes of the course are (1) to develop the skill of close reading, (2) to understand the social and political tensions involved in the works we read, (3) to judge the extent to which those tensions can be resolved, and (4) to gauge the relevance of those tensions for social and political life today.

This course is potentially open to any sophomore, junior, or senior. It fulfills 3 of the 6 credits of the Distribution requirement in the Humanities. The prerequisites are English 231 (World Literature I) and Professor Fott’s consent. For students pursuing the Great Works Academic Certificate, this course is to be used as 3 of the 12 credits under the new requirements.

Required books ordered for purchase (be sure to obtain these editions, either in print or as e-book):

Political Science 409L: Medieval Political Theory (Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-12:45)

In this course we will explore leading medieval thinkers from the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions. Their thoughts and disagreements may help us with our thoughts and disagreements concerning the following questions: What is the proper relation between religion and politics? What is the proper relation between religious and political institutions? We will give particular attention to Thomas Aquinas, one of the most important proponents of the doctrine of natural law as the proper basis of human law.

Required books ordered for purchase (be sure to obtain these editions, either in print or as e-book):
Additional readings will come from the Koran and the Bible.
This class counts toward the Great Works Academic Certificate. See Professor Fott for more information.