Augustine’s *Confessions* are a spiritual exercise, a literary landmark, an entertaining autobiography, and a philosophical theory about life, the universe, and everything.

Augustine leads us on an expedition through the wild religious world of the late Roman empire: Christians who argue fiercely (or brawl in the streets); the ‘Pagan Resistance’; Manichaeanism, a forgotten world religion; encounters with mighty bishops like Ambrose and Faustus, with the emperor and, most terrifying of all, with Augustine’s mother. But he builds all this into a rigorous argument, that “my heart is restless until it rests in” God.

We will read all of the *Confessions*, very slowly, in English translation, paying close attention to the artistry of Augustine’s text and to its philosophical achievements. We will also read modern scholarly articles interpreting the *Confessions*, and supplementary readings illustrating the world in which Augustine lived. There will be a voluntary screening of the Terrence Malick’s film *The Tree of Life*.

The *Confessions* will also be the text for Latin 3610/4610 this Fall. Students can register for both classes.

**Catalog description for CL CV 4550:** Study of classical myth and/or religion (topics vary) in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds with an emphasis on mystery religions, later Judaism, early Christianity, later literary use of ancient myth, and modern anthropological/psychological interpretation of myth.

**Required books,** available at the campus bookstore, will be:


* There are very many English translations of the *Confessions*. I would be happy for you to use some of these instead of Chadwick. For example, some good versions are: