

## **SGBH 336: Deals With the Devil**

Spring 2024  
MWF 12:00-1:05pm  
Goldspohn 22

Professor: Adam Kotsko, akotsko@noctrl.edu  
Office: 5 S. Loomis St., Office 17 (in attic)  
Office Hours: MWF, 1:15-3:00pm, or by appointment

### **Course Description**

What does it mean to sell your soul to the devil? Our investigation of this question will focus on the legend of Faust, a very learned man who makes a pact with Satan—a religiously-inspired story that has played a decisive role in modern secular culture. After spending the first several weeks of the course tracing the roots of the figure of the devil to its biblical and early Christian roots, we will explore the story of Faust (which is based on a real historical individual) and its legacy in drama, literature, music, and film. Over the course of this investigation, we will discover that what is at stake in this odd story is nothing less than the meaning of human freedom.

### **Required Course Texts**

Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. Robert C. Clegg (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980). [ISBN: 978-0809122950]  
Gaiman, Neil, *The Sandman*, vol 4: *Season of Mists* (New York: DC Comics, 2011). [ISBN: 978-1401230425]  
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Faust: Part One*, trans. David Luke (New York: Oxford World Classics, 2008). [ISBN: 978-0199536214]  
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Faust: Part Two*, trans. David Luke (New York: Oxford World Classics, 2008). [ISBN: 978-0199536207]  
Marlowe, Christopher, *Doctor Faustus: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: Norton, 2005). [ISBN: 978-0393977547]

It is especially important that you use the editions of Goethe and Marlowe listed here, as they include scholarly articles and other background materials that we will use in class. Students will also need to obtain a Bible, which is widely available in a variety of translations. The version provided on the bookstore website is a standard scholarly edition that will serve you well for future study and reference, but students may use a Bible of their choice (though I strongly recommend finding a translation other than the King James Version). Other readings will be provided via Canvas and marked on the syllabus as follows: (\*\*).

### **Assignments and Grading**

Courses in the Shimer Great Books Program are heavily discussion-based and student-driven. Accordingly, class participation counts for a much higher proportion of student grades than in most courses: 50%. Students will write two short essays and a final research paper, which altogether will account for 50% of their grade.

**Class participation** presupposes careful and thorough preparation and serious intellectual involvement in class discussion. Students should come to class not only having read the text through, but having underlined, taken notes, and scanned over the marked text at least one additional time after the initial reading. On the basis of such preparation, students should be prepared for an intensive discussion focused on the texts or artworks assigned for that day.

You must also come prepared to class, and that means having the course text in front of you, along with annotations or notes. Hard copies are strongly preferred, especially for assigned books available from the college bookstore, but if electronic copies are used, you should bring a laptop or tablet. No student will be permitted to use a smartphone at any point during class without explicit permission (e.g., because they do not have access to a laptop or their battery has unexpectedly run out); not only are phones distracting, but it is very difficult to engage actively with the text in such a small format.

My expectation for class participation is that every member of class will be able to contribute with remarks and citations that are on-topic and reflect solid preparation for class. A student who meets that baseline will receive a grade in the **B range** for their participation portion. Students whose contribution is notably lacking—for instance, those who speak very little, who give no evidence of having done the reading carefully, who consistently change the topic in a disruptive way, or whose primary contributions are jokes or personal anecdotes—will receive a participation grade in the **C or D range**. Students who distinguish themselves through some particular service—such as consistently contributing new topics that shape the discussion, serving as a resource for navigating the text, or making a special effort to draw in quieter classmates—will qualify themselves for a participation grade in the **A range**.

The baseline condition for class participation is of course physical presence in class. Absences not only affect the individual student, but the entire group, and the same is true of habitual lateness. Punctual attendance should be regarded as mandatory, and no absence will be considered “excused.” Lateness will count against a student’s participation for that session, and in extreme cases will be treated as the equivalent of an absence. An increasing number of absences carries with it increasing consequences, which are as follows:

1-2 absences No grade penalty, in recognition of our shared human frailties. (If students miss fewer than two classes, however, then in cases where a student is at the threshold between two grades, the professor will go with the higher one.)

3-5 absences A half letter grade is deducted from the student’s final grade for each absence; this penalty may be lifted by doing an absence make-up for each missed class.

6-8 absences For each absence, the student *must* complete an absence make-up (described below) to avoid failing the course, and a half letter grade penalty is imposed on the student’s final grade which *cannot* be made up.

9 absences Failure of the course, barring emergency circumstances.

In order to make up for an absence, students must write a paper summarizing and reflecting on the day’s reading (at least one *full* page, double spaced) or schedule a meeting of at least 10 minutes to discuss the reading with the professor. Absence make-ups must be completed **within two weeks** of the absence being made up, though I strongly urge you to do so earlier.

Students requiring **additional accommodations** are urged to discuss this matter with the professor as early as possible in the semester and to devise a formal written plan in consultation with the relevant institutional offices. In line with the Shimer School's policies on attendance, accommodations will be made with the aim of allowing a student to attend at least 80% of class sessions synchronously and without placing undue burdens on either the accommodated student or the faculty member.

**Written work** will take the form of two short essays, which will each count for 10% of your grade, and a final research paper, which will count for 30% (inclusive of iterative steps). More detailed descriptions of each assignment and potential topics will be provided closer to their respective due dates.

The first short paper will reflect on the biblical materials in light of the problem of evil. The first paper may be rewritten for a higher grade in light of the professor's comments; rewrites are due within *two weeks* of the time the professor posts grades and comments on Blackboard (which will be established via the Announcements feature). The second paper will describe the student's proposed adaptation of the Faust legend for a contemporary audience. Students will have the opportunity to do peer review over a draft of the second paper prior to submission, but may not rewrite the final version. Both short papers must be 2-4 *full* pages in length, double-spaced with standard margins.

The final research paper will focus on the analysis and comparison of course texts, at least one of which must be a version of the Faust legend. The topic is up to the individual student, but the paper must use at least three scholarly articles or book chapters. A topic proposal, annotated bibliography of potential sources, and first draft will count, collectively, as 10% of the final grade, while the final paper will count as 20%.

***All written assignments must be turned in on Canvas*** by the due date listed on the course schedule below; in case of technical difficulties with Canvas, you may submit the paper via email or, in a true emergency, in print form for the sake of meeting the deadline, but the paper must be posted on Canvas as soon as possible in order to receive comments and a grade. Outside of cases involving computer problems, students should only bring a printed copy for peer review sessions (if they prefer).

Students submit ***all written work*** in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format; in case of technical difficulties submitting in the required format, you may use another format for the sake of meeting the deadline, but must resubmit in the required in order to receive comments and a grade. **Unless otherwise stated, the deadline is always *the beginning of class time on the date in question*.** Papers turned in within 24 hours of the deadline will receive a 5% grade penalty on the assignment; papers turned in within a week of the deadline will receive a 10% grade penalty, with an additional 10% penalty for each additional week (or portion of a week) the paper is late. Late papers do not qualify for the rewrite option.

### *Grading Criteria for Essays*

A: The paper demonstrates excellent competence in all areas: imaginative choice of material; excellent thesis clearly stated and supported with persuasive evidence and reasoning; well-organized ideas that unify the paper; good transitions between ideas and between paragraphs; clear and logical development of discussion; the paper is virtually free of errors in usage, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

B: The paper demonstrates above-average competence in all areas: appropriate choice of material; good thesis clearly stated and supported with good evidence and reasons; overall unity but some disjointed paragraphs and vague transitions; ideas sometimes out of sequence, and discussion occasionally hard to follow; clear and readable language that may at times be too general, vague, or inappropriate. It is comparatively free of errors in the use of English.

C: The paper demonstrates average competence in all areas: predictable, overly general, trite or obvious thesis supported with some irrelevant material; basic organization showing that the paper follows a logical plan; some paragraphs may be disunified or misplaced, containing abrupt shifts in ideas; wander off topic at times, becoming difficult to follow; sentences sometimes awkwardly constructed with wordy, imprecise, or trite language; mechanical errors that are distracting.

D: The paper demonstrates below-average competence in all areas: vague or carelessly thought-out thesis supported with inappropriate material; lack of overall unity, poor organization and development of ideas with some illogical transitions and weak conclusions; confusing sentences or passages whose meaning is unclear; poorly chosen language with numerous mechanical errors.

F: The F paper usually indicates failure to state and develop a main idea. It may also contain serious errors in logic, grammar, spelling, punctuation, documentation, and sentence structure.

### **Note on Institutional Policies**

Please note that the college-wide policy on plagiarism holds for this class. Plagiarism is a very serious academic and ethical offence that can lead to failure of the assignment or course—or, after multiple instances, expulsion from college. Please consult the Student Handbook for more details of the plagiarism policy. Note that the professor considers the use of AI text-generation software as a form of plagiarism. All other institutional policies apply equally, including those related to accommodations for students with learning disabilities or differences and Title IX protections. More details on those policies are available in the Student Handbook, and students are encouraged to approach the professor with any questions or concerns they may have.

### **Class Schedule and Readings**

*This calendar provides the schedule for assignments and readings for our time together this semester. Students should be aware that the schedule is approximate and may change. All students will be alerted as soon as possible via email and Canvas announcement. **Failure to check email regularly is no excuse for missing these updates.** Readings from the course pack are labelled as follows: (\*\*).*

Monday	January 8	Selections from Genesis and Qur'an (handout)
Wednesday	January 10	Bible: Job 1-14
Friday	January 12	Bible: Job 15-26
Monday	January 15	<b>MLK Day—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	January 17	Bible: Job 27-31, 38-42
Friday	January 19	Bible: Exodus 1-16, 32-34

Monday	January 22	Bible: Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 8; Jeremiah 25; Daniel 1-6; 2 Maccabees 6-7 and 9 (does not appear in all Bibles; see Blackboard)
Wednesday	January 24	Bible: Mark (whole book); Matthew 4; Luke 4
Friday	January 26	Bible: Gospel of John 1-13, 18-20
Monday	January 29	Borges, "Three Versions of Judas" (**); Hallaj, "Iblis as Tragic Lover" (**)
Wednesday	January 31	Athanasius, <i>The Life of Antony</i> , Introduction, §§1-43 (pp. 29-64); artwork on Temptation of St. Antony (**)
Friday	February 2	Athanasius, <i>The Life of Antony</i> , §§44-94 (pp. 64-99)
Monday	February 5	<b>NO CLASS—Short paper #1 due by noon</b>
Wednesday	February 7	Thomas Aquinas on the Fall of the Devil (**)
Friday	February 9	Selections from <i>Malleus Maleficarum</i> (**)
Monday	February 12	Federici, <i>Caliban and the Witch</i> , selection 1 (**)
Wednesday	February 14	Federici, <i>Caliban and the Witch</i> , selection 2 (**)
Friday	February 16	"The Faust Legend" in Marlowe, <i>Doctor Faustus</i> , pp. 182-209
Monday	February 19	<b>Bring draft of short paper #2 for peer review</b>
Wednesday	February 21	Marlowe, <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i> (B-text), Prologue, Acts 1-2 (pp. 54-81)
Friday	February 23	Marlowe, <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i> (B-text), Acts 3-4 (pp. 81-111)
Monday	February 26	<b>Final draft of short paper #2 due Sunday, October 4 at noon</b>
Wednesday	February 28	Marlowe, <i>The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus</i> (B-text), Act 5 (pp. 112-122); Aristotle, selections from <i>Poetics</i> (**) <i>Review act from Marlowe and section of Faust legend as assigned in class; come prepared with thorough list of comparisons and contrasts</i>
Friday	March 1	Marlowe volume: essays by Cole (pp. 304- ), Snyder (pp. 312- ), and Findlay (pp. 378-390)
Monday	March 4	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: "Prologue in Heaven" through "Outside the Town Wall" (pp. 9-37)
Wednesday	March 6	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: "Faust's Study" (I&II, pp. 37-62)
Friday	March 8	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: "Auerbach's Tavern in Leipzig" through "Evening" (pp. 62-88)
Monday	March 11	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	March 13	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>

Friday	March 15	<b>Spring Break—NO CLASS</b>
Monday	March 18	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: “A Promenade” through “By a Shrine Inside the Town Hall” (pp. 88-115); music by Schubert and Schumann (**)
Wednesday	March 20	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: “Night. The Street Outside Gretchen’s Door” through “Walpurgis Night” (pp. 115-133), “A Gloomy Day. Open Country” through “A Prison” (pp. 140-148)
Friday	March 22	Artwork inspired by Goethe’s <i>Faust</i> (**) <b>Discussion of possible paper topics</b>
Monday	March 25	<b>In-class research day—meet in basement of Osterle Library</b>
Wednesday	March 27	<b>One-on-one conferences on research paper</b>
Friday	March 29	<b>Good Friday—NO CLASS</b> <b>Topic Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due by noon</b>
Monday	April 1	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 1: Summary of Part 2 from Intro (pp. xli-xliv); Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 2, Act 1: “Prologue; A Beautiful Landscape” through “An Imperial Palace: The Throne Room (pp. 3-16) and “A Pleasure-Garden” through “An Imperial Palace: The Great Hall” (pp. 43-63); skim skipped pages
Wednesday	April 3	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 2, Act 4 (pp. 175-206)
Friday	April 5	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , Part 2, Act 5 (pp. 207-239)
Monday	April 8	Berman, selection from <i>All That is Solid...</i> (**)
Wednesday	April 10	Film: <i>Faust</i> (dir. Murnau) (**)
Friday	April 12	Gaiman, <i>Sandman</i> #4: “A Hope in Hell” (**) Gaiman, <i>Season of Mists</i> , episodes 0-1
Monday	April 15	<b>Draft of final paper due by class time—NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday	April 17	Gaiman, <i>Season of Mists</i> , episodes 2-4
Friday	April 19	Gaiman, <i>Season of Mists</i> , episodes 5-∞ (i.e., to the end)
Monday	April 22	<b>One-on-on conferences to plan for final draft</b>
Wednesday	April 24	Robert Johnson music and background (**)
Friday	April 26	Baldwin, selection from <i>The Fire Next Time</i> (**)
Wednesday	May 1	<b>FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE BY 12:30pm (i.e., the end of the posted final exam session)</b>