

Length: 1700 words (or set by your conference leader)

Due: Saturday, April 21st, 5 p.m.

in your conference leader's Eliot Hall mailbox.

Topic 1 Many texts from the beginning of the common era place considerable emphasis on the spiritual development of the individual, generally through some sort of withdrawal from society and/or a repudiation of physical pleasures (food, drink, sex, and the like). Compare the nature of the withdrawal or renunciation, and the rewards it brings, in two of the following texts: *The Golden Ass*, "The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas," *The Life of Anthony*.

Topic 2 *Isaiah*, *Amos*, *Matthew*, Paul's letter to the *Romans*, *John*, the *Tractate Avot* and Josephus' *The Jewish War* are all written with the presupposition that *Genesis* and *Exodus* provide a history and definition of the relationship between the human and the divine. Choose one of these texts and discuss how its conception of this relationship builds on, elaborates, redefines, or otherwise relates itself to *Genesis* and *Exodus*.

Topic 3 The tale of Cupid and Psyche is the longest of the many interpolated tales in *The Golden Ass* and unlike these other tales, which are often taken from earlier sources, is traditionally seen as a more original creation by Apuleius. What is the relation of the tale of Cupid and Psyche to *The Golden Ass* as a whole?

Your Topic In consultation with your conference leader, devise a topic of your own.