

Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology
MA4901, Academic Forum III
FALL 2023

Instructor:

Michael Glowasky

Philosophy Department Representative: TBD

Description: The Academic Forum is a four-semester course required of all DSPT MA students. It is designed to develop skills for master's level theological and philosophical research, writing, and professional dissemination.

MA 4901, Academic Forum III, normally taken in the third semester, students continue to practice research skills by presenting published journal articles and leading the class (or a subgroup) in a discussion. MA 4901 allows students to work on their own projects and apply the knowledge of professional presentation and writing gained during the Academic Forum I and II. Students are encouraged to explore areas of theology and philosophy where they can make a contribution. Students are expected to offer a preliminary presentation on the topic they selected for their capstone research/thesis.

Course Objectives (SEE DSPT Institutional Goals at the end of this syllabus):

By the end of the MA 4901 (Fall and Spring sessions), students will:

1. Implement a project that contributes to scholarly research and the development of thought and action in the academy, Church, and society. [Institutional goals A1, A3]
2. Show competency in communicating their research findings in academic forums both in written and verbal modalities and with appropriateness to the type of audience. [Institutional goals A1, A3, B2]
3. Demonstrate active learning and listening skills, during the preparation of their project and after discussions with peers and advisors, by incorporating in their scholarly work feedback, differing views, and objections. [Institutional goals A2, A3, B1]
4. Develop planning skills for either their paper/thesis/project implementing the guidelines learned in the Academic Forum I and II. [Institutional goals A2, A3, B2]

Course Outcomes: By the end of MA 4901, students will:

1. Produce a focused and manageable research project with a clear and concise goal that effectively directs the presentation and discussion and engages the audience.
2. Guide and participate in the discussion, demonstrating active listening skills, familiarity with the relevant professional literature, and the capacity to consider alternative perspectives in a thoughtful and professional manner.
3. Follow guidelines for academic writing and include the appropriate primary and secondary sources, showing the ability to curate the appropriate sources for scholarly research

and writing, besides other skills learned during the two previous semesters. [Institutional goals A1, A2]

4. Demonstrate the ability to impart the information in a focused and digestible format that is appropriate to a particular scenario, e.g., paper, thesis, book proposal, evening lecture, workshop, course series, academic conference, an RCIA class, an adult education session, etc

Meeting Days: We will meet four to six times during the semester, depending on the number of presentations (to be arranged). Meetings are scheduled to take place via Zoom from 9:40 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the following dates: September 20; October 18; November 15; and December 6.

Professor Contact. Students may contact the professor via email (mglowasky@dspt.edu). In-person appointments can also be arranged.

Course Requirements. Students will prepare and present a 15-20-minute PowerPoint presentation of their research topic and lead a 15-minute discussion on the presentation.

Working with their academic advisor on the modality of their capstone (exam or thesis option), students will share their ideas with participants in the forum as follows:

1. Students in the thesis option present their proposals. Students create a thesis/paper outline that indicates a cogent argument and good use of methodologies and resources that are identified in the research rubric (classical and contemporary; texts and journals).
2. Students in the exam option develop a lesson plan that demonstrates effective pedagogy and the use of resources identified in the research rubric (classical and contemporary; texts and journals). This may include:
 - a. design a review paper, encyclopedia, or Wikipedia entry on a topic of their interest; or,
 - b. design a research topic for a specific public context, e.g., a parish adult education lecture, a high school religious education series, etc.

Whatever the option for the capstone, all students will demonstrate the same set of performance skills, which will be measured according to a common (though not necessarily identical) set of research criteria.

Active participation in discussions is expected and students will be graded on a Pass/No Pass basis, according to the DSPT common rubrics for institutional core abilities (see "[Rubrics for assessing student skills](#)").

Given the small number of meeting sessions, students are not normally permitted to miss a session and must contact the professor beforehand for permission.

Required Course Materials. The students are required to follow the guidelines provided by the reference manual they used in previous semesters (Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Ninth Edition (April 16, 2018). ISBN-13: 978-0226430577. \$18.00 at Amazon).

The readings for the course will depend on the student's topic. Any other reference reading that the instructor may consider helpful will be posted on Moodle.

DSPT Institutional Goals and Course Goals

Institutional Goals:

A1 Integrative Thinking: the ability to recognize, understand, retain, integrate, and apply the fundamental principles operative in a field of inquiry, and use them to make synthetic judgments.

A2 Intellectual Humility: an orientation of mind and heart that fosters intellectual collaboration, precludes both rigidity and passivity of mind, and recognizes that contrary opinions are not a threat, but provide the opportunity to test and deepen one's own grasp of the truth.

A3 Self-Direction: the disposition to take primary responsibility for one's own education, manifested in a keen intellectual interest in the topic of studies, and the ability to teach oneself through a habit of skilled and responsible research and resilient exploration.

B1 Ability to Collaborate: expressed in good listening and communication skills which foster decisions stemming from and leading to an open, transparent, and mutually enriching dialog with others in order that the gifts of all can be appropriately acknowledged and utilized.