

Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
ST-1091 Theology: Nature and Method

Fall 2023
Thursdays, 12:40-3:30 p.m.
Classroom 2

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Office Hours: TBD

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the nature, method, sources, and structure of theology, focusing on (but not limited to) the Roman Catholic tradition and the work of St. Thomas Aquinas in particular. Issues to be considered include: the nature of theology, its method, the relationship between philosophy and theology, the theology of revelation, and the respective roles of scripture, tradition, magisterium, faith, and reason in theology. The course also introduces students to writing research papers in theology.

Methodology

The course will consist of lectures, class discussions, and student presentations.

Student Learning Goals

In this course, students will:

- come to an introductory grasp of key issues in fundamental theology;
- be introduced to the thought and work of Thomas Aquinas;
- become familiar with the roles played by faith, reason, Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium in theology;
- learn to discuss theological issues in oral and written form, to engage in dialogue about them, and to engage in independent academic research on them.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe and apply the principles of theological method;
- describe the place of Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium, faith, and philosophy in theology, demonstrating the appropriate use of each in their own theological work;
- present theological subjects to peers and instructors and lead discussions about it;
- use Church documents and the work of St. Thomas Aquinas for theological research.

**See the document in Moodle for an overview of how the goals, outcomes, and assignments in this course contribute to the broader program and institutional goals/outcomes.*

Required Texts

All required readings will be made available in Moodle.

Course Requirements

1. Participation

Students are required to attend each class session and be prepared to participate in class discussion. To this end, students must complete *all* required readings each week and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Students must also show familiarity with the supplemental readings. Finally, each student must be willing and able to present their research to the class at various stages, to engage in discussion about their research, and to and incorporate feedback from their classmates into their final Research Proposal (see below).

2. Research Proposal

Each student is required to complete a research proposal for a paper on a relevant topic of their choosing. The research proposal will be developed in two stages:

- a) *Research Exercise and Presentation.* Each student will complete the Research Exercise, which is intended to help students identify a topic and potential line of argumentation for their Research Proposal. To complete the assignment, students will follow the template handed out on the first day of class. Each student will present their results to the class for feedback on the fifth week of the semester. Students must circulate their Exercise to the class one week prior to their presentation (e.g., the fourth week of class).
- b) *Research Proposal and Presentation.* Each student will submit a Research Proposal for an 8–10-page research paper that builds on their Research Exercise and the feedback they have received from the presentation. Students will hand in their proposal and present it to the class on the eleventh week of the semester. The proposal will consist of three main elements:
 - i) *Main body of the proposal.* The main body of the proposal should contain 400–600 words and include the scope and nature, thesis statement, description, and significance of the proposed project. For this part of the proposal, students will follow closely the *MA Thesis Proposal Guidelines* (found on the DSPT website).
 - ii) *Outline of the project.* The outline of the project should trace the paper’s potential argument, including the main points that prove the thesis, the supporting sub-points, as well as potential counterarguments. Wherever possible, relevant sources should be referenced in support of the various points being advanced.
 - iii) *Annotated bibliography.* The annotated bibliography should contain a list of 15–25 academic sources with a brief paragraph summarizing each source and its value for the proposed project.

3. Final Exam

Students will complete a take-home exam at the end of the course. The exam will be in essay format and will be submitted electronically by the due date (see below).

Grading Summary

Participation	25%
Research Proposal	40%
Final Exam	35%

Grading Scale and Rubric

A	A	93 – 100	Excellent work: thorough understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a high level of engagement, original thinking, and critical analysis.
	A-	90 – 92	
B	B+	87 – 89	Good work: solid understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by the ability to discuss, synthesize, and organize the course material.
	B	83 – 86	
	B-	80 – 82	
	C+	77 – 79	

C	C	73 – 76	Satisfactory work: adequate understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a grasp of the key issues under discussion and the ability to communicate with reasonable clarity both orally and in writing
	C-	70 – 72	
D	D+	67 – 69	Passible work: reasonable familiarity with the subject matter, demonstrated by consistent effort and the ability to communicate the main themes of the course.
	D	63 – 66	
	D-	60 – 62	
F		0 – 59	Inadequate work: insufficient understanding of the subject matter, demonstrated by a lack of effort, inability to engage critically with the course material, or failure to satisfy the course requirements.

*For a detailed description of DSPT grading policies, please consult the Student Handbook.

Course Schedule

Sep 7 Introduction: Theological Method

Required: *Unity of the Faith and Theological Pluralism* (1972) (provided in class)

Supplemental: *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2011)

Sep 14 Theology and Thomism

Required: *Summa Contra Gentiles*: bk. 1, chs. 1-9; bk. IV, ch. 1

Summa Theologia: Prologue; and bk. I, q. 1, arts. 1-8

Sep 21 Theology and the 21st Century

Required: Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, ch. 2 (pp. 43-89)

R.R. Reno, “Theology after the Revolution”

Sep 28 Revelation and Faith **Research Exercise Due**

Required: Neuner & Dupuis, *The Christian Faith* (2001): Ch. 1, “Revelation and Faith”

Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 3-18

Oct 5 Research Discussion **Research Exercise Presentation/Discussion**

Oct 12 Tradition and Scripture

Required: Neuner & Dupuis, *The Christian Faith* (2001): Ch. 2, “Tradition and Scripture”

Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition*, 83-128

Supplemental: *Summa Theologia*, bk. I, q. 1, arts. 9-10

Oct 19 The Bible and Inspiration

Required: O’Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, 216-264

Supplemental: *Dei Filius* (1870), Ch. 2

The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church (1993): Pref., Intro., Part II & III

Oct 26 Reading Week

Nov 2 No Class (professor is away at a conference)

Nov 9 Faith and Reason ****Final Research Proposal Due****

Required: Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University"
Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology*, 13-30.
Supplemental: *Fides et Ratio* (1998)
Dei Filius (1897), Ch. 6
Humani Generis (1950)

Nov 16 ****Proposal Presentation/Discussion****

Nov 23 Thanksgiving

Nov 30 Theology and the Faithful

Required: *Summa Theologia*, 2-2, qq. 1-7
Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church (2014)
Supplementary: *Dei Filius* (1870), Ch. 3
Dei Verbum (1965), no. 5
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC; 1992), 153-184
Lumen Fidei: On Faith (2013), 23-37

Dec 7 Theology and the Magisterium

Required: *Theses on the Relationship between ... Magisterium and Theology* (1975)
Ratzinger, *Nature and Mission of Theolog*, 101-120
Supplemental: *Pastor Aeternus* (1870)
Lumen Gentium (1964), 22-29

Dec 14 ****Final Exam due****

Bibliography of Principal Church Documents

First Vatican Council.

- *Dei Filius: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*. (1870).
- *Pastor Aeternus: First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*. (1870).

Second Vatican Council.

- *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (1964).
- *Dei Verbum: The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (1965).

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

- *Mysterium Ecclesiae* (1973).
- *Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity* (1989).
- *Donum Veritatis* (1990).
- *Doctrinal Commentary ... Professio Fidei* (1998).

Codex Iuris Canonici: Code of Canon Law (1983).

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992).

Pope Pius XII. *Humani Generis* (1950).

Pope John Paul II. *Ex corde Ecclesiae: Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities* (1990).

Pope John Paul II. *Ad tuendam fidem* (1998).

Pope John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio* (1998).

Pope Benedict XVI. *Verbum Domini* (2010).

Pope Francis. *Lumen Fidei* (2013).

Bibliography of Secondary Church Documents

International Theological Commission.

- *Theses on the Relationship between Ecclesiastical Magisterium and Theology* (1975).
- *On the Interpretation of Dogmas* (1989).
- *Unity of the Faith and Theological Pluralism* (1972)
- *Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria* (2011)
- *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church* (2014).

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993).

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Application of "Ex corde Ecclesiae"* (2000).

Pope Benedict XVI. "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections." (2006)

General Bibliography of Secondary Sources

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Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol. I, *Seeing the Form*.

Translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982.

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Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Translated by G.W. Bromiley, T.H.L. Parker, et al. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975.

Barton, John. "Biblical Studies." In *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, edited by Gareth Jones, 18-33. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

Bauckham, Richard. "For Whom Were the Gospels Written?" In *The Gospels for All Christians:*

Rethinking the Gospel Audiences, edited by Richard Bauckham, 9-48. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998.

Bauerschmidt, Frederick C. *Holy Teaching: Introducing the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*.

Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005.

Baum, Gregory. "Vatican II's Constitution on Revelation: History and Interpretation." *Theological Studies* 28 (1967): 51-75.

Benoît, Pierre. *Aspects of Biblical Inspiration*. Translated by J. Murphy-O'Connor, and S.K. Ashe. Chicago: Priority Press, 1965.

Brogie, Guy de. *Revelation and Reason*. Translated by Mark Pontifex. New York: Hawthorn, 1965.

Brown, Raymond. *The Critical Meaning of the Bible*. New York: Paulist Press, 1981.

Congar, Yves. *The Meaning of Tradition*. Translated by A.N. Woodrow. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964.

---. *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical Essay and a Theological Essay*. Translated by Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough. New York: Macmillan, 1966.

De Lubac, Henri. *The Sources of Revelation*. Translated by Luke O'Neill. New York: Crossroad, 1968.

Reprinted as *Scripture in the Tradition*, New York: Crossroad, 2000.

---. "The 'Sacrament of the world'?" In de Lubac, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, translated by Richard Arandez, 191-234. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984.

---. *The Splendor of the Church*. Translated by Michael Mason. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986.

---. *Medieval Exegesis*. 3 vols. Translated by Marc Sebanc and E.M. Macierowski. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998-2000.

---. *History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen*. Translated by Anne Englund Nash. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007.

DiNoia, J. A., OP. "Communion and Magisterium: Teaching Authority and the Culture of Grace." *Modern Theology* 9 (1993): 403-418.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983.

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- . *Magisterium: Teacher and Guardian of the Faith*. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007.
- Farkasfalvy, Denis. *Inspiration and Interpretation: A Theological Introduction to Sacred Scripture*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010.
- Fastiggi, Robert. "Communal or Social Inspiration: A Catholic Critique." *Letter and Spirit* 6 (2010): 247-263.
- Ferguson, Everett. "Paradosis and Traditio: A Word Study." In *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph T. Lienhard, SJ*. Edited by Ronni J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang, 3-30. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010.
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