

The One Creator God
STPH 3095
Fall, 2023
Thur 12:40PM-3:00PM, DSPT #1
Office hours: by appointment

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Course description: *Classical and contemporary questions regarding the nature of God and creation will be addressed through the retrieval of the tradition of Thomas Aquinas. Existence and attributes of God, divine compassion and human suffering, the possibility and nature of God-talk, divine action and contemporary science, cosmology and creation.*

Goals: *Students will acquire a fundamental understanding of what it means to speak of God, using Dionysius's three ways of causality, negation and eminence, and Aquinas's notion of analogy. They will discover the possibility and meaning of "proofs" for the existence of God and come to understand certain basic problematics regarding divine attributes, knowledge, will and action.*

Outcomes: *Students will be conversant with the notion of analogy in the thought of Thomas Aquinas and be able to apply it to contemporary issues in God-talk. They will be able to analyze and critique arguments for and against the existence of God. They will be able to discuss certain key issues regarding God's being and relation to the world including: (a) the meaning of divine attributes, (b) the understanding of divine knowledge and will in relation to creaturely contingency and freedom; and (c) the possibility of divine action in the world as the world is understood by empirical science. They will also be capable of serious academic research regarding the subject matter of this course.*

Course time composition: *The format for this class will be as follows: One sixty-minute asynchronous session per week, comprising reading of assigned texts including sections of the professor's textbook and responding (via Moodle) to the weekly questions. Two sixty-minute synchronous in-person sessions per week (separated by a twenty-minute break), comprising lecture/discussion of the weekly subject matter. Students should also expect to spend an additional six hours per week in personal study and reflection on the weekly readings and other assessment requirements for the course*

Course modality: *Asynchronous reading and Moodle assignment: 35 %*
 Synchronous in-person lecture/discussion meeting: 65%

- Sep. 7 Introduction
- Sep. 14 Existence of God
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 1-44 [This assignment is also posted on Moodle.]
 Anselm, Proslogian; Reply, in Hick, *Existence*, 25-30
 ST I, Q.2, aa.1-3. (Esp., first, second and third "ways")
 Gilby, Appendix 1; Appendixes 4-7 [located at the top of the Moodle page]
- Sep. 21 Existence of God
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 44-56
 ST I, Q.2, a.3, (Esp. fourth and fifth "ways")
 George, "On the Occasion of Darwin's Bicentennial: Finally Time to Retire the Fifth Way?"
 Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*, 14-46
 Maritain, *Approaches to God*, 1-15
- Sep. 28 Atheism
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 56-60.
 Flew, "Theology and Falsification" in Hick, *Existence of God*, 224-228
 Lash, "Where Does *The God Delusion* Come From?"
 Hyman, "Atheism in Modern History"
 Schall, "Thomism and Atheism"
 Turner, "On Denying the Right God: Aquinas on Atheism and Idolatry"
- Oct. 5 Divine simplicity, perfection, and goodness
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 61-67
 ST I, Q.3, prologue and a.1-4, 7-8; Q.4, 1-3; Q.6, 1
 Gilby, Appendixes 12-13

- Oct. 12 Divine infinity, presence, immutability, eternity, and unity
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 67-79
 ST I, Q.7, 1; Q.8, 1, 3; Q.9, 1-2; Q.10, 1-3, Q.11, aa. 3-4
 Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p.342-351.
 Gilby, Appendixes 14-16
- Oct. 19 Knowing and speaking of God
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 80-101
 ST I, Q. 12, 1, 5-6, 12-13; Q.13, 1-3, 5-8, 11
 Dodds, "Ultimacy and Intimacy"
 McWhorter, "Aquinas on God's Relation to the World"
- Oct. 26 READING WEEK (No class meeting)
- Nov. 2 Divine knowledge and life
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 102-109
 ST I, Q.14, 1-5, 8, 13, 15; Q. 18, 3
 Placher, *Domestication of Transcendence*, p. 1-107
- Nov. 9 Divine will, love, justice, compassion
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 110-125
 ST I, Q. 19, 1-8, 10; ST I, Q.20, 1-2, Q.21, 1, 3-4,
 Hill, "Two Gods of Love"
 John Paul II, "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering"
 FIRST RESEARCH PAPER DUE FOR STUDENTS DOING TWO PAPERS
- Nov. 16 Providence, predestination, theodicy, power, and beatitude
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 126-157
 ST I, Q. 14, 10; Q. 19, 9; Q.22, 1-4; Q. 23, 1-3, 5, 8; Q.25, 1-3, 5-6; Q. 26, 1
 [Optional: ST I, Q.48, 1-5; Q. 49, 1-2]
- Nov. 23 THANKSGIVING DAY (No class meeting)
- Nov. 30 Divine creation and governance
 Dodds, *The One Creator God*, 158-162
 ST I, 44, 1, 3-4; Q.45, 1-3, 5; Q.46, 1-2; Q.103, 1, 5-7; Q.104, 1-2.
 Placher, *Domestication*, p.111-27
 Barnes, "Natural Final Causality and Providence in Aquinas"
- Dec. 7 Divine action
 Dodds, *The One Creator God* 162-175
 ST I, Q.105, 5-6.
 Placher, *Domestication*, p.128-45, 181-200
- Dec. 14 Final week of semester (No class meeting)
 RESEARCH PAPER DUE DECEMBER 15

ASSIGNED READINGS:

Two books are required:

Michael J. Dodds, OP, *The One Creator God in Thomas Aquinas and Contemporary Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2020), ISBN: 978-0813232874 (available through Amazon.com. \$29.95).

William Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), ISBN: 978-0664256357. (available through Amazon.com. \$22.50).

All of the readings from Aquinas are in the *Summa Theologica* (ST). There are copies of this in the GTU Library. It is also available online: <https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/summa/index.html>

The other readings are on Moodle.

STRUCTURE:

The structure of the class is lecture/discussion. Active participation is expected, and this presupposes a careful reading of the assigned texts.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS:

To help focus the class in reading the texts, I will give a few questions for each class which deal with the weekly reading assignment. These questions will not be graded as such, but their absence will have a negative effect on your grade. You should write a brief (50-70 word) response to each question. The response is not meant to be exhaustive, but only to indicate a few principles or points that would be involved in answering the question. Alternatively, you may be asked to formulate one or two questions of your own regarding a certain text. Your responses should be turned in each week on Moodle by date of the class meeting for which they are assigned.

RESEARCH PAPER

The course will require either two 7-10 page research papers (due on Nov. 9 and Dec. 15) or one 15-20 page research paper (due on Dec. 15). Each paper should explore a particular aspect of the course (e.g., monotheism in Scripture; atheism; the existence of God; divine attributes; divine knowledge and will; divine providence; creation; divine action). If you are doing the two shorter papers, you should present a "working title" and a one-paragraph "thesis statement" (explaining what you plan to research/argue/present in the paper) for the first paper on October 12, and a thesis statement for the second paper on Nov. 16. If you are doing one longer paper, you should submit a "working title" and thesis statement on Nov. 2. **All of these papers and thesis statements should be turned in electronically as email attachments**

ASSESSMENT

Students will be graded on class participation and completion of written assignments (30%), and on the research paper(s) (70%). Papers will be graded according to the quality of their research and engagement with the topic, as well as their creativity, clarity, style, focus, organization and development. They must be written in accordance with the norms of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, regarding form, footnotes and bibliography. Work is also evaluated in terms of the institutional goals of the school. For these, see page 1 of the DSPT Student Handbook:

[\[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb9a2438b5a4f0e028988d6/t/649f5102bd94602e27d03eed/1688162563699/DSPT-StudentHandbook-2023-2024.pdf\]](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb9a2438b5a4f0e028988d6/t/649f5102bd94602e27d03eed/1688162563699/DSPT-StudentHandbook-2023-2024.pdf).

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Appendix: Course & Curricular Outcomes Table

In the following table, each Course Outcome is listed, followed by course activities and/or assignments by which the Course Outcome is to be measured, along with the DSPT Institutional Outcomes and Program Goals/Outcomes to which the given Course Outcome contributes. The DSPT Institutional Goals and Academic Program Goals/Outcomes are listed below the table with a key to the abbreviations.

<u>Course Outcome</u>	<u>Activities &/or Assignments To Measure Course Outcome</u>	<u>Related Program and Institutional Goals/Outcomes</u>
(1) Students will be conversant with the notion of analogy in the thought of Thomas Aquinas and be able to apply it to contemporary issues in God-talk.	Reading assignments and weekly written questions for: 10/19; class discussions	IGA1, IGA3, IGB1; MATHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG4; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2
(2) They will be able to analyze and critique arguments for and against the existence of God.	Reading assignments and weekly written questions for:9/15, 9/21, 9/28; class discussion4	IGA1, IGA3, IGB1; MATHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG4; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2
(3a) They will be able to discuss the meaning of divine attributes	Reading assignments and weekly written questions for: 10/5, 10/12; class discussions	IGA1, IGA3, IGB1; MATHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG4; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2
(3b) They will be able to discuss the understanding of divine knowledge and will in relation to creaturely contingency and freedom	Reading assignments and weekly written questions for: 11/2, 11/9, 11/16, 11/30; class discussions	IGA1, IGA3, IGB1; MAHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG4; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2
(3c) They will be able to discuss the possibility of divine action in the world as the world is understood by empirical science	Reading assignments and weekly written questions for: 12/7; class discussions	IGA1, IGA3, IGB1; MATHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG4; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2
(4) They will also be capable of serious academic research regarding the subject matter of this course	Research paper proposal Annotated bibliography, Research paper outline Research paper	IGA1, IGA2, IGA3, MAPHg3, MAPHt3, MAPHtG5, MATHeG1; MATHeG2; MATHeG3; MATHeG4 ; MATHtG1; MATHtG2; MATHtG3; MATHtG5 ;MDivO1; MDivO2

DSPT Goals and Outcomes

DSPT Institutional Goals:

Pedagogical Goal: Deep Learning. Motivated by a thirst for truth, the disciplined inquirer is a life-long learner who recognizes fundamental principles in a given field of inquiry and applies them in creative or innovative ways to broader contemporary issues which are of importance to Church, the academy, and/or society. Disciplined inquiry includes the following characteristics:

- 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.

Vocational Goal: Collaborative Leadership. A collaborative leader inspires within others the desire to realize the common good by articulating to academy or society a coherent vision rooted in the mission of the Church, all the while leading by example.

- 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.

Abbreviations: IGA1-Integrative Thinking, IGA2-Intellectual Humility, IGA3-Self-Direction, IGB1-Ability to Collaborate

MAPh – Exam Option: Goals

1. a comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Western philosophical tradition;
2. a detailed understanding of systematic philosophy;
3. skills for academic research;
4. an ability to integrate historical and systematic knowledge in a chosen area of interest;
5. skills for effective communication of philosophical ideas.

Abbreviations: MAPhEG1-knowledge of history of phil, MAPhEG2-understanding of systematic phil, MAPhEG3-research skills, MAPhEG4-integration of knowledge, MAPhEG5-communication skills

MAPh – Thesis Option: Goals

1. a comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Western philosophical tradition;
2. a detailed understanding of systematic philosophy;
3. skills for academic research;
4. a focused knowledge in one specific topic of philosophical inquiry;
5. skills for advanced academic writing and publication.

Abbreviations: MAPhTG1-knowledge of history of phil, MAPhTG2-understanding of systematic phil, MAPhTG3-research skills, MAPhTG4-specialized knowledge, MAPhTG5-skills for advanced writing

MATh – Exam Option: Goals

1. a foundational knowledge of the fundamental areas of theological inquiry in the Roman Catholic tradition (reflected in the required core areas);
2. a specialized knowledge of one area of theological inquiry (area of concentration) chosen by the student;

3. the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through scholarly research and writing;
4. the ability to integrate contemporary theological issues with the tradition of the Catholic Church, especially with the theological tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Abbreviations: MATHEG1-foundational RC knowledge, MATHEG2-specialized knowledge, MATHEG3-communication skills, MATHEG4-integrating RC & Aquinas & contemporary theol,

MATh – Thesis Option: Goals

1. a foundational knowledge of the fundamental areas of theological inquiry in the Roman Catholic tradition (Biblical Studies, historical theology, dogmatic theology, and moral theology);
2. a specialized knowledge of one area of theological inquiry (area of concentration) chosen by the student;
3. the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through scholarly writing;
4. the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through oral presentations and discussions;
5. the ability to integrate contemporary theological issues with the tradition of the Catholic Church, and where possible with the theological tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Abbreviations: MATHTG1-foundational RC knowledge, MATHTG2-specialized knowledge, MATHTG3-writing skills, MATHTG4-oral communication skills, MATHTG5-integrating RC & Aquinas & contemporary theol.

MDiv Outcomes

1. [communication] to communicate simply, accurately, and effectively the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church through preaching, teaching, and writing;
2. [evaluation] to analyze, assess, and critique theological perspectives and situations through scriptural, historical, systematic, and pastoral theological methods, and to assist others in doing the same;
3. [application] to apply Catholic teaching and theology, especially as exemplified by St. Thomas Aquinas, to pastoral situations, recognizing both the difficulties and the opportunities they present;
4. [collaboration] to lead and to work collaboratively with others in a just, charitable, and generous manner, respecting the relevant cultural, social, and ecclesial circumstances, all the while maintaining professional, ethical boundaries;
5. [Church-uniting] to foster Church communion, demonstrated through consistent dedication to community life, participation in prayer, and leading others in worship and theological reflection.

Abbreviations: MDivO1-communication, MDivO2-evaluation, MDivO3-application, MDivO4-collaboration, MDivO5-Church-uniting