

Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology
PHRA 4310 – Poetry & Creative Intuition
Fall 2023

Christopher J. Renz, O.P.
510-883-2084 / crenz@dspt.edu
Last updated 09/05/2023

Course Overview. Students in this seminar course will examine the relationship between creative intuition (sometimes called connatural knowledge) and the fine arts, particularly poetry. Focusing on the work of Jacques Maritain, students will develop a scholastic understanding of how this kind of knowledge is engaged during the creative act. Using contemporary authors, students will then examine how poetry functions to bring humans towards a deeper (connatural) knowledge of transcendent aspects of key human experiences such as suffering, death, resurrection, and the environment. Students will engage the material through seminar discussion. A research paper and class presentations will be used to assess mastery of the material.

Goals. This course is designed to help students understand:

1. connatural (affective) knowledge;
2. the role of connatural knowledge in human creativity, especially poetry;
3. how connatural knowledge aids the human person in experiencing the Transcendent and in negotiating key experiences of human life.

Learning Outcomes. At the end of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to

1. define connatural knowledge using scholastic terminology (see [Institutional Goal A.1](#));
2. compare and contrast the scholastic understandings of connatural knowledge with ideas of Jacques Maritain, particularly as presented in *Creative Intuition in Art & Poetry* (see Institutional Goals A.1-3);
3. discuss poetry not only from an "analytical" perspective but also from a "connatural" perspective (see Institutional Goals A.1-3; and B);
4. apply the principles learned in this course to a chosen research topic (see Institutional Goals A.1-3, and B);
5. present their ideas in a formal presentation which is both informative and facilitates group involvement (see Institutional Goals A.1-3).

Course Requirements. This course is conducted as an upper-division MA seminar. As such, students are expected to play a more active role in each class session. Regular attendance is expected, and normally students may not miss more than one class period during the semester. Student learning is assessed in three areas: a) class participation; b) a research paper; and c) a class presentation on a portion of the research work. The assessment is guided by a set of common rubrics related to the DSPT institutional core abilities (see [“Rubrics for assessing student skills”](#)).

I. Reading Assignments & Discussion. Students will complete all reading assignments and come to class prepared to engage in a significant discussion on the materials. Students are expected not only to know the facts related to the assignment, but also to make deeper

connections between various readings, and so to draw conclusions and follow implications. You will be graded on class participation using the classifications defined in the “Rubrics” and by the following criteria.

Required Course Materials. Most of the required readings listed in this syllabus are available through the GTU Moodle system. Where indicated, books are also available on reserve in the GTU Library. Thus, there are no materials which need to be purchased for this course.

IMPORTANT: In order to comply with copyright laws, materials for each session are available on Moodle **only for the week prior to the date of the class**. For example, if the class meets on Tuesday, September 5th, then you will have access to the required reading materials **only** from August 29th through September 6th. After the close date, the materials will no longer be accessible. There are a few self-assessment assignments posted on Moodle. While these are non-graded assignments, their timely completion is also one of the course requirement.

For those who have not had a course similar to the DSPT course, "Philosophical Anthropology," you may find the following resources helpful introductions to the required vocabulary:

James S. Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (Albany, NY: State University of NY Press, 1998). **ISBN-13:** 978-0791435865; \$21.95. This book is a very helpful summary of the scholastic understanding and use of the term “connatural knowledge,” and its relevance to contemporary education.

II. Research Paper. Each student will write a research paper, of 15-20 pages in length, on a topic of their choosing, related to the materials covered in the course. Papers must conform to proper research format and style, including a properly formatted bibliography, according to the most recent edition of Kate Turabian; *A Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The work must demonstrate not only the ability to report and summarize the work of other scholars, but also the ability to draw relevant conclusions. Personal opinions and conclusions must flow from your research work. This paper is due the last day of the semester, **Friday, December 15, 2023**. No late papers will be accepted; no exceptions.

Outcomes: In this exercise you will demonstrate your ability to:

- integrate principles of connaturality with ideas related to your own personal interest;
- explore the relationship between this topic and other components of the life, e.g. contemplation, mysticism, charity, etc.;
- communicate the results of your research in a professional format.

III. Class Presentation. Each student is required to present a *synopsis* of their research project to the class for analysis and discussion. Presentations should be clear, concise, and organized. The total presentation time of 30 minutes is to be organized as follows:

- 1) a 15 minute summary which includes:
 - a) the problem or topic of exploration, including any background information
 - b) how you have integrated ideas from this course into your research

- c) (tentative) conclusions
 - d) the topic for discussion with the members of the class – which may be a question or dilemma which has arisen for you as a result of your research;
- 2) 15 minutes of discussion.

Outcomes: In this exercise you will demonstrate your ability to:

- summarize your work in an organized way;
- convey that summary to others in a way which helps them to engage the material;
- effectively lead a group discussion.

Proposal/Outline: To facilitate your successful completion of both the paper and presentation, you also must submit a proposal and outline of your research project, including a preliminary bibliography, by **Tuesday, November 7, 2023**. The document should include a brief description of the proposed topic, a thesis statement, the proposed methodology, and a sample bibliography. Students may find it useful to consult the "[Thesis Proposal Guidelines](#)," posted at the DSPT website. In addition to focusing your ideas for the research paper, this exercise is intended as a practice preparation for the thesis proposal requirement for MA and PhD students.

Course Grade. In determining the final grade, these three components will be weighted as follows: Class Participation: 40%; Research Paper: 40%; Class Presentation: 20%.

SYLLABUS

Classes are held Tuesdays from 12:40 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in DSPT 2. It is possible for students who are away from the Bay Area to participate via Zoom. However, if you are in the Bay Area then you are expected to be present onsite unless you have contacted the professor beforehand.

Session 1: September 5 – Introduction

BEFORE COMING TO THIS FIRST SESSION: Please ensure that you have done the at-home review exercise on Moodle, and come prepared to ask any questions about the definitions.

- a. Review of syllabus and course expectations
- b. Review of basic principles of philosophical anthropology: 1) human as composite; 2) rational soul (intellect/will); 3) human passions; and 4) human body as “icon”
 - i. *Summa Theologica* Ia QQ 75-76; IaIIae QQ 22-25
 - ii. James S. Taylor, *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education* (Albany, NY: State University of NY Press, 1998), 42-57. Available through the GTU Library in the [e-book collection](#).

Session 2: September 12 – Scholastic Definition of Connatural Knowledge

Required Reading:

- a. Victor White (1943). “Thomism and ‘Affective Knowledge’ (II), *Blackfriars*, 24 (277): 126-131.
- b. Victor White (1944). “Thomism and ‘Affective Knowledge’ (III), *Blackfriars*, 25 (294): 321-328.
- c. Antonio Moreno (1970). “The Nature of St. Thomas’ Knowledge *Per Connaturalitatem*,” *Angelicum* 47 (1): 44-62.
- d. Jacques Maritain, “On Knowledge Through Connaturality,” *Review of Metaphysics* (IV, 4: 473-481).

For Further Study:

- Thomas Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 49-68.
- For an interpretation of White, see Ann Conrad Lammers, *In God’s Shadow*, Chapt.2, especially pp. 56-65.

Session 3: September 19 – Jacques Maritain on Connatural Knowledge: *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* [available on the “Reserves” shelf in GTU Library]:

Required Reading:

- Chapters 1-2

For Further Study:

- James S. Taylor, op. cit., 59-85.
- *Summa Theologica*, IaIIae, Q57, On the Intellectual Virtues.

Session 4: September 26 – Jacques Maritain on Connatural Knowledge: *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*

Required Reading:

- Chapter 3 – Role of preconscious in poetry & art
- Chapter 4 – Creative Intuition and Poetic Knowledge

Session 5: October 3 – Virtue and the *Fine Arts*: Contemplation, Wisdom and Charity

Required Reading:

- Plotinus – *Ennead* Treatises:
 - i. I.6, “On Beauty”
 - ii. III.8, “On Nature and Contemplation and the One”
 - iii. V.8, “On the Intelligible Beauty”
- St. Thomas Aquinas:
 - i. *Summa Theologica*, IaIIae Q27, a. 2, on the causes of love; and Q28, a.1-2, on the effects of love.
 - ii. *Summa Theologica*, IIaIIae, Q45, a 2-3, on the relationship of connaturality to wisdom and charity.
- Maritain, Chapter 5, "Poetry and Beauty"

For Further Study:

- Ralph McInerny, "Maritain and Poetic Knowledge" in *Being and Predication: Thomistic Interpretations* (CUA Press, Washington, D.C., 1986), 303-313.

Session 6: October 10 – A Scientific Interlude: complex emotions and cognition
Neuroaesthetics and Cognitive Metaphor Theory.

Now that we have a foundation for understanding the two ways of acquiring knowledge in this system, this session will introduce you to some interesting discoveries from cognitive science that support scholastic anthropology. The learning objective is to understand how contemporary science understands "aesthetic emotions," in particular awe (which for our purposes is equivalent to "wonder").

There is no required reading for this session, but do listen to the VoiceThread lecture at Moodle, which highlights important points. The suggested readings there are provided for those who are interested to explore this approach.

Session 7: October 17 – The Work of the Poet: Wonder and "Symbolization"

- Joseph Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, trans. Alexander Dru (Chicago, IL: Random House, Inc., 1963), 69-111. N.B. Any translation is fine; read "The Philosophical Act," Parts I-III.
- Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 69-85.

- Andrew Greely, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000): Introduction.

For Further Study:

- Helen C. White, "Prayer and Poetry," *Logos*, 2(3): 178-202.
- Deacon, T. (2011) "The symbol concept." In M. Tallerman and K. Gibson (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Language Evolution*. Oxford University Press.
- Ron Hansen, "Writing as Sacrament," *Image*, (No. 5, Spring 1994).

October 24 – Reading Week (Academic holiday): no class.

REMINDER: Research Proposal **due 11/7**. SEE ASSIGNMENTS DUE for 10/31

Session 8: October 31 – Integration Exercise: "Learning via connaturality"

- Watch movie, "Contact" – science (speculative knowledge) versus poetry (connatural/intuitive knowledge).
- Listen to "Les Roses" N.B. Please follow *precisely* the format described at Moodle for this exercise.

Session 9: November 7 – Thematic Explorations, theological considerations: Human Suffering

- Michael Dodds, "Thomas Aquinas, Human Suffering, and the Unchanging God of Love," *Theological Studies*, 52 (1991): 330-344.
- John Paul II, "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering," (*Salvifici Doloris*).
- Jack Kornfield, "The Heart as Mother of the World: The Gate of Sorrow," in *after the Ecstasy, the Laundry* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000).

Session 10: November 14 – Thematic Explorations: Human Suffering, Death, and Resurrection (preliminary list)

- Rita Dove, *Grace Notes*: "Crab-Boil," "Particulars," "Arrow," "Dialectical Romance".
- Pablo Neruda, *The Sea and the Bells*: pp. 13-14, 19-20, 35, 67, 97-99, 117.
- Kathleen Norris, *Little Girls in Church*: "The Ignominy of the Living," "Land of the Living," "The Tolling," "Hide and Seek".
- Li-Young Lee, *Book of my Nights*: "The Eternal Son," "Restless".
- N.B. Students are welcome to suggest works by other poets

Session 11: November 21 – Thematic Explorations: Environment

- William Stafford, *Passwords*: "News Every Day," "The Origin of *Country*," "Climbing Along the River," "Late, Passing Prairie Farm," "Bonuses".

- b. Mary Oliver, *New and Selected Poems*: "Lilies," "Five A.M. in Pinewoods," "The Summer Day".
- c. Wendell Berry, *A Timbered Choir*: 87-94, 135-149, 187-194.
- d. Kathleen Norris, *Little Girls in Church*: "In Praise of Darkness," "The Monastery Orchid in Early Spring," "Emily in Choir"
- e. N.B. Students are welcome to suggest works by other poets

Session 12: November 28 – Mystical Poetry

T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets* in *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (NY: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1991 [1963]) [available on the "Reserves" shelf in GTU Library].

December 5 & 12 – Class Presentations

Selected Bibliography

- Arraj, James. *God, Zen and the Intuition of Being*. Chiloquin, OR: Inner Growth Books, 1988.
- Baars, Conrad and Anna A. Terruwe, M.D. *Psychic Wholeness and Healing*. New York: Alba House, 1981.
- Berry, Wendell. *A Timbered Choir*. Washington, D.C., Counterpoint, 1998.
- _____. *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994.
- Burrows, Ruth. *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*. Denville, NJ: Denison Books, 1980.
- Cavalletti, Sophia. *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children*. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992.
- _____, Patricia Coulter, Gianna Gobbi, and Silvana Quattrocchi Montanaro, M.D. *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994.
- Chauvet, Louis-Marie. *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Colledge, Edmund and Bernhard McGinn. *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981.
- Dodds, Michael. "Thomas Aquinas, Human Suffering, and the Unchanging God of Love," *Theological Studies*, 52 (1991): 330-344.
- Dove, Rita. *Grace Notes*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1989.
- Eliot, T. S. *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. Orlando, FL: Hartcourt, Brace & Co., 1991.
- Diana Fritz Cates. *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry*. Georgetown, MD: Georgetown University Press, 2009.
- Hansen, Ron. "Writing as Sacrament," *Image*, (No. 5, Spring 1994).
- Hopcke, Robert H. *There Are No Accidents: Synchronicity and the Stories of Our Lives*. NY: Riverhead Books, 1997.
- Impastato, David, ed. *Upholding Mystery: An Anthology of Contemporary Christian Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1997.
- John of the Cross. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel in John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., Editor. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987.

John Paul II. "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering" (*Salvifici Doloris*), 11 February 1984 http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html, (accessed on August 14, 2015).

Johnson, Robert A. *Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1986.

Keating, Thomas. *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel*. Warwick, NY: Amity House Inc., 1986.

Klauder, Francis J. *Knowledge of the Heart, a Christian Epistemology: An Integrated Study of Human Knowledge*. Bangalore, India: Kristu Jyoti Publications, 1997.

Kornfield, Jack. *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path*. New York: Bantam Books, 2000.

_____. *A Path With Heart: a Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1993.

Lammers, Ann Conrad. *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C. G. Jung*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994.

Lauridsen, Morten. "Les chanson des roses" (1993) in *Nocturnes*, Polyphony with Britten Sinfonia, Stephen Layton, conductor. London: Hyperion Records, Limited. CDA 67580. 2007.

Lee, Li-Young. *Book of my Nights*. New York: BOA Editions, ltd., 2001.

Mariani, Paul. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. New York, Penguin Group (USA), Inc., 2008.

Maritain, Jacques. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York: Meridian Books, (1954) 1965.

_____. *Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*. Translated by Joseph W. Evans. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962.

_____. "On Knowledge Through Connaturality," *Review of Metaphysics* (IV, 4: 473-481).

McInerney, Ralph. *Art and Prudence: Studies in the Thought of Jacques Maritain*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.

Moody, A. David. *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Moreno, Antonio. "The Nature of St. Thomas' Knowledge *Per Connaturalitatem*," *Angelicum* 47 (1): 44-62.

Neruda, Pablo. *The Sea and the Bells*, trans. By William O'Daly. Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 1988.

- Noffke, Suzanne. *The Prayers of Catherine of Siena*. 2nd ed. Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press, 2001.
- Norris, Kathleen. *Little Girls in Church*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995.
- Oliver, Mary. *New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Ollivant, Douglas A., ed. *Jacques Maritain and the Many Ways of Knowing*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2002.
- O'Meara, Dominic J. *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982.
- Pieper, Josef. *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. Translated by Alexander Dru. New York: Random House, Inc., 1963.
- Plotinus. *The Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna. New York: Penguin Books, 1962.
- Ramos, Alice. *Dynamic Transcendentals: Truth, Goodness and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*. Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America, 2012.
- Renz, Christopher J. "Christian Education and the Confirmation Debate: Towards a Theology of Catechesis," *J. of Christian Education*, 41, 1 (1998): 53-65.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. *The Complete French Poems*. Translated by A. Poulin, Jr. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, (1979) 1986.
- Ryan, Thomas. "Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 49-68.
- Sanford, John A. *Dreams: God's Forgotten Language*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1984.
- Snell, R. J. "Connaturality in Aquinas: The Ground of Wisdom," *Quodlibet Journal* 5 No. 4, October 2003. <http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/snell-aquinas.shtml> (accessed on Feb 3, 2013).
- Southam, B. C. *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, 6th ed. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994.
- Stafford, William. *Passwords*. NY: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1998.
- Strand, Mark and Eavan Boland. *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*. NY: W. W. Norton and Co., 2000.
- Suto, Taki. "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics*, 58, n. 1 (Sep 2004): 61-79.
- Taylor, James S. *Poetic Knowledge: The Recovery of Education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Taylor, Barbara Brown. *Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 2000.

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*.

Trapani, John G. *Poetry, beauty, & contemplation : the complete aesthetics of Jacques Maritain*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

White, Helen C. "Prayer and Poetry," *Logos*, 2(3): 178-202.

White, Victor. *God and the Unconscious*. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications (1952) 1982.

_____. "Thomism and 'Affective Knowledge' (II), *Blackfriars*, 24 (277): 126-131.

_____. "Thomism and 'Affective Knowledge' (III), *Blackfriars*, 25 (294): 321-328.

Wolfe, Gregory. *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age*. ISI Books, 2011.

The following table lists the outcomes for this course. To assist students in approaching course requirements and expectations, each outcome is associated with the particular activities and/or assignments that will be used to measure student performance. The last column indicates how the outcome and related work related to both Institutional and Program Outcomes. Descriptions of the DSPT Institutional Goals and Program Outcomes are listed on the pages that follow.

Course Outcome	Activities &/or Assignments to Measure Course Outcome	Related Program and Institutional Goals/Outcomes
1. the nature of lay participation in the Liturgy through active participation in the Paschal Mystery, understood as the ongoing work of Jesus Christ	a. Weekly reflection assignments b. Participation in discussions c. Midterm and Final exams	Institutional Goal A.1, “Integrative Thinking” MATHTG1 – foundational RC knowledge MDivO1-communication, MDivO2-evaluation
2. the primary catechetical role of liturgy for communicating the Trinitarian Mystery	a. Weekly reflection assignments b. Participation in discussions c. Midterm and Final exams	Institutional Goal A.1, “Integrative Thinking” MATHTG1 – foundational RC knowledge MDivO1-communication, MDivO2-evaluation
3. the relationship between Catholic worship and culture – the “times and seasons” of Catholic life	a. Weekly reflection assignments b. Participation in discussions c. Midterm and Final exams d. Class Presentation	Institutional Goal A.2, “Intellectual Humility”; A.3 “Self Direction”; and B.1, “Ability to Collaborate” MATHTG4-oral communication skills MATHTG5-integrating RC & contemporary theology MDivO3-application, MDivO4-collaboration
4. the nature of “eucharistic consistency” and the integration of Eucharist with daily life in contemporary culture	a. Weekly reflection assignments b. Participation in discussions c. Midterm and Final exams d. Class Presentation	Institutional Goal A.2, “Intellectual Humility” A.3 “Self Direction”; and B.1, “Ability to Collaborate” MATHTG4-oral communication skills MATHTG5-integrating RC & contemporary theology MDivO3-application, MDivO4-collaboration