I. Course Description
This course treats the principles and methods of Sacred Theology and offers a graduate-level introduction to Protology, i.e. the theology of Creation. Topics covered in the course include the nature and scope of theology; the nature of divine revelation; the inspiration, authority and theological interpretation of Sacred Scripture; Sacred Tradition; the development of doctrine; and the nature of magisterial authority. It concludes with an overview of the Catholic theology of creation (protology) from biblical, historical, and dogmatic perspectives.

Envisioned Outcomes: Students will be able to articulate the principles and methods of Catholic theology and the complementary relationship between reason and faith that engages philosophy, modern science and theology. Students will be able to articulate key principles of a Catholic theology of revelation that is historically grounded, a Catholic theology of creation, and the relationship between Catholic theology and modern science.

II. Course Rationale
For Fundamental Theology:
“In the seminary program, intellectual formation culminates in a deepened understanding of the mysteries of faith that is pastorally oriented toward effective priestly ministry, especially preaching... The core should include fundamental theology, the basis of the rational procedure of all theology and, thus, the introduction to the study of theology.” (Program of Priestly Formation)

For Protology:
“Christians will inevitably assimilate the prevailing ideas about the world, and today these are deeply shaped by science. The only question is whether they will do this critically or unreflectively, with depth and nuance or with a shallowness that debases the Gospel and leaves us ashamed before history. (St. John Paul II, “Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory,” 6/01/1988)
III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

- Students will be able to articulate the principles and methods of Catholic theology.
- Students will be able to articulate the complementary relationship between reason and faith in a way that engages philosophy, modern science and theology.
- Students will be able to articulate key principles of a Catholic theology of Divine Revelation that is historically grounded.
- Students will be able to articulate a Catholic theology of creation.
- Students will be able to articulate the relationship between Catholic theology and modern science.

IV. Instructional Methods

1) Lecture/Q&A
2) Seminar Discussion
3) Précis Writing
4) Research Paper
5) Book Review

V. Texts (Required and/or Recommended)

REQUIRED Books/Selections for Reading:
- A Critical Edition of the Bible
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- YouCat: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church

SELECTIONS IN PUBLIC FOLDER

REQUIRED Books for Reference:

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES (HELPFUL, BUT NOT NECESSARY):
VI. Bibliography

For Fundamental Theology (texts listed in general order of the course):
St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium ad Mentis Deum*.

For Protology:

Sloan, Phillip R. “Evolution and Christian Belief: Reflections from a Catholic Perspective.” Course Notes, University of Notre Dame.


VII. Professional Vocabulary

1. Theology – “Faith seeking understanding”; “the disciplined exploration of Divine Revelation”
2. Heresy - some post-baptismal denial of a truth of the Catholic Faith
3. *Fides quae creditur* – “the Faith that is believed”
4. *Fides qua creditur* – “the faith by which one believes”
5. Divine Revelation - the truth that God has revealed to us about Himself, about reality, about the human being, etc. = Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of Divine Revelation and the source of Divine Revelation in the order of being
6. Fundamental Theology – the branch of theology devoted to the principles and methods of theology and removing difficulties that people may have about believing
7. Sacred Scripture - the Old Testament and the New Testament writings contained in the canon recognized by the Church of sacred, inspired books; a source of Divine Revelation in the order of discovery, not in the order of being
8. Sacred Tradition - the very life and consciousness of the Church as contained in everything essential to the Church’s life; a source of Divine Revelation in the order of discovery, not in the order of being
9. General Revelation – the universal way in which the natural order and beauty of the created world and the moral law display the divine wisdom and power and so manifest God to human beings; knowledge of God accessible through reason and experience
10. Special Revelation – the particular way in which God is revealed in the history of salvation and above all in Jesus Christ; knowledge of God accessible only through supernatural faith
11. *Dei Verbum* – Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
12. Fundamentalism – the theological error that assumes that there are no hermeneutical problems in theology, since “what I take it to mean is what it has to mean”
13. Foundationalism – the theological error that assumes that since there are hermeneutical problems, we should and can resolve them before entering into theological investigation by making a iron clad ruling on how terms must be used
14. Infallibility – “inability to err”; a charism that belongs to the Church in teaching and believing
15. Magisterium – the teaching office of the Church
16. Definitive teaching – a doctrine that has been defined by the magisterium of the Church infallibly
17. *Credenda* – doctrines to be believed with supernatural faith
18. Tenenda – doctrines to be held because they are connected to credenda by logical or historical necessity
19. Development of Doctrine - growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down in Christian doctrine
20. Biblical Inspiration - the divine action stimulating the human authors of the biblical books to produce their work, a charism given them which enabled them to produce literary works
21. Biblical Inerrancy – the doctrine that there is an absence of error in the inspired sacred texts of Sacred Scripture
22. Protology – the study of the Christian doctrine of Creation
23. Creation – a Trinitarian act in which all that exists outside of God is brought into being ex nihilo, cum tempore and cum libertate

VIII. Lecture, Presentation, and Reading Schedule (NOTE: These dates are subject to change if circumstances require. If changes occur, they will be announced in class.)

M 08/25 Introduction to Course and Syllabus

Part A. The Nature of Theology
W 08/27 Lecture 1: The Definition of Theology
M 09/01 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
W 09/03 PRÉCIS SEMINAR: Faith and Theology (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: “Faith and Theology”; “What in Fact is Theology?”) PRACTICE PRÉCIS DUE
M 09/08 Lecture 2: The Task of Theology
W 09/10 Lecture 3: Divine Revelation: Jesus, the Fullness of Divine Revelation (PUBLIC FOLDER: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum)
M 09/15 Lecture 3: Divine Revelation: Jesus, the Fullness of Divine Revelation (cont.)

Part B. The Role of Reason in Theology
W 09/17 Lecture 4: The Catholic “Both/And”; Overcoming the Temptations of Foundationalism and Fundamentalism

Part C. The Magisterium as a Guide to Discernment in Theology
M 09/22 Lecture 5: The Nature of the Magisterium: Infallibility and the Absolute Mystery of God (Dulles, Magisterium ENTIRE; PUBLIC FOLDER: Mysterium Ecclesiae)
W 09/24 Lecture 6: The Response of the Theologian to the Magisterium (PUBLIC FOLDER: Donum Veritatis)
Part D. The Development of Doctrine
M 09/29 Lecture 7: The Development of Doctrine: Principles and Notes of Legitimate Development vs. Corruptions
W 10/01 Lecture 7: The Development of Doctrine: Principles and Notes of Legitimate Development vs. Corruptions (cont.)
M 10/06 CONTINGENCY DAY
W 10/08 CONTINGENCY DAY
M 10/13 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Part E. Sacred Tradition as a Source of Divine Revelation in Theology
W 10/15 Lecture 8: Tradition as a Source of Theology (Congar, The Meaning of Tradition. ENTIRE)

Part F. Sacred Scripture as a Source of Divine Revelation in Theology
W 10/22 Lecture 9: Revelation and Biblical Inspiration (CCC #101-114) THE BIBLE MADE IMPOSSIBLE BOOK REVIEW DUE
M 10/27 Lecture 9: Revelation and Biblical Inspiration (cont.)

Part G. Protology: The Catholic Theology of Creation
W 11/05 Lecture 11: Reading Genesis in the Light of Sacred Tradition
M 11/10 Lecture 11: Reading Genesis in the Light of Sacred Tradition (cont.)
W 11/12 PRÉCIS SEMINAR: BARR PRÉCIS DUE (Public Folder: Stephen Barr, “Modern Physics, the Beginning, and Creation”)
M 11/17 PRÉCIS SEMINAR: BRAD GREGORY PRÉCIS DUE (Public Folder: Chapter One, “Excluding God” in The Unintended Reformation)
W 11/19 PRÉCIS SEMINAR: JPII PRÉCIS DUE (Public Folder: John Paul II, “Letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory”)
W 11/26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
M. 12/01 Lecture 13: The Pilgrim’s Guide to the Galaxy: Learning the Levels of Being and Paths of Knowing in Catholic Theology RESEARCH PAPER DUE
W. 12/03 Lecture 14: The End as It was in the Beginning: Creation and Eschatology in the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger
M. 12/08 STUDY DAY
FINAL EXAM – TO BE ANNOUNCED
IX. Course Requirements
- Read all assigned readings
- Participate in class and maintain good attendance record
- Prepare and deliver class presentations
- Write at least one précis of a seminar assigned reading
- Study the notes from the class lectures
- Write a book review
- Write a research paper

X. Important Dates
- Midterm – October 13
- Book Review – October 22
- Research Paper – December 01
- Précis – as assigned
- Final Exam– TBA

All dates are subject to change if circumstances warrant them.

XI. Evaluation Criteria
- Seminar and Class Participation = 10%
- Précis Writing = 10%
- Midterm Exam = 30%
- Major Assignment #1: The Bible Made Impossible Book Review = 10%
- Research Paper: 10%
- Final Exam = 30%

XII. Précis Writing
Each student will be required to compose two précis of assigned readings and share them in class seminar sessions dedicated to those assigned readings. For information about précis and tips on writing a précis, please refer to the handout “What is a précis?” which is contained in the public folder. Précis must be typed, single-spaced, in 12 point font. There will be six précis seminars, and each student will compose a précis for the assigned reading for two of the précis seminars. Students who have been assigned a précis will bring two copies to class – one for themselves to use in the seminar and one to be submitted to the instructor for a grade. Each précis will be worth a possible 5% of the final grade.

XIII. Seminar Participation
Due to the nature of the course as a graduate-level academic undertaking, class participation is an irreplaceable part of the course, and counts for 10% of the grade. The form of spoken participation which will make up most of the graded class participation is discussions of various required readings. This requires that students attempt to grasp as much of the readings as possible outside of class, and then come to class prepared to discuss the readings, their own work and the work of their fellow students.

Additionally, students will be assigned to lead class discussions, which will count as half of their seminar participation grade.
Assignment: Write a 5 page book review of The Bible Made Impossible. The review should be written as a single narrative using good style, grammar and punctuation, and will be graded for the quality with which each part is written. It should be in 12-point font, Times New Roman double-spaced, one-inch margins. SECTION HEADINGS SHOULD BE GIVEN FOR EVERY GRADED ITEM BELOW. Use the following format:

- Begin with a cover sheet which includes the title of your paper (i.e. The Bible Made Impossible Book Review), your name, class, and date of submission.
- On the first page, begin with a heading which includes the title, the author, the year of publication, the number of pages of the book and the following typed statement, below which the student must type his/her full name or provide an electronic signature: “I hereby attest that I have read this book in its entirety, have not skimmed any part and have applied my best effort in understanding it.”
- Give an introduction which broadly summarizes the book for the sake of introducing it, as well as answering two questions: How does it apply to this course? How is it helpful (or not) in understanding the proper way to read the Bible? (1 point – 1 paragraph) (This section must be given the following heading: “I. Introduction”)
- Describe in some detail 3 specific lessons that a Catholic reader can learn from The Bible Made Impossible. This should be the longest part of your review, but should be no longer than 3 pages. (3 points – 2-3 pages) (This section must be given the following heading: “II. Three Lessons to Be Learned From The Bible Made Impossible”)
- Describe the strength(s) of the book. Give examples. If you liked the book, give your reasons. Also, be critical of the book. Does The Bible Made Impossible have weaknesses and shortcomings considered as a graduate-level book? (1 point - 2-3 paragraphs) (This section must be given the following heading: “III. Strengths and Weaknesses of The Bible Made Impossible”)
- Overall Evaluation of the Book: Does Christian Smith accomplish his goal of offering a thorough critique of, and alternative to, biblicism? (1 point – 1 paragraph) (This section must be given the following heading: “IV. Overall Evaluation”)
- Search the writer's thinking. Create a précis of a particularly significant section of no more than 3-5 pages. In the concluding paragraph of this section of your review, evaluate the section: What are your thoughts on the subject? Elaborate. (2 points – 3-5 paragraphs) (This section must be given the following heading: “V. A Significant Section”)
- Discuss at least one (but not limited to one) important idea you learned from reading this book. Think hard; a new view, idea or notion is important here. (1 point - 2-3 paragraphs) (This section must be given the following heading: “VI. A New Idea”)
- Conclusion (1 point – 1 paragraph) (This section must be given the following heading: IX. “Conclusion”)

XIV. MAJOR ASSIGNMENT – THE BIBLE MADE IMPOSSIBLE BOOK REVIEW
The book review must be submitted in Microsoft Word as an attachment to an email. 2 points will be subtracted from the final grade for every day that the assignment is late.

GRAMMAR AND SPELLING POLICY: Significant errors in grammar and spelling will be underlined by the instructor and then totaled. For every five errors, one point will be subtracted from the final grade. At times, major continuous errors may affect the ability of the instructor to understand what the student is trying to express; in such cases, these errors will also negatively affect the grading of a section or sections of the assignment.

XV. MAJOR ASSIGNMENT – RESEARCH PAPER

XVI. Attendance Policy

Notre Dame Seminary observes the following policy regarding class attendance: Regular class attendance is expected and required of all students who intend to receive credit for course work in the graduate school. Inevitably, extraordinary circumstances will arise that make class attendance impossible on occasion; therefore, a formula for determining regular attendance has been established as policy for the convenience of both seminarians and instructors. A student is permitted to be absent from class no more than twice the number of times the class meets per week. (You are considered absent if you are not present when attendance is taken). Thus, if a student is absent for seven classes from a course that meets three times a week, the student is in violation of school policy in this regard. The normal penalty for such a violation is the grade FA (failure due to absence).

The number of absences includes those due to illness, late registration, or any other cause. Absence from class immediately before or after holidays and free weekends is considered a double cut. Only the Academic Dean may waive penalties for absence. In absences due to illness, you must inform the instructor and your formation advisor prior to the class.

XIII. Academic Integrity

Seminarians of Notre Dame Seminary are required to commit themselves to responsible scholarship in every aspect of priestly formation, including academics. It is expected that every seminarian works and studies to the best of his ability for every course.

Seminarians also accept responsibilities and obligations as students, which include commitments to honesty, disciplined study, and integrity in their academic work. They will be expected to respect academic scholarship by giving proper credit to other people’s work, while at the same time preparing well for assigned materials and examinations in such a way that their academic integrity will never be questioned.

Those needing assistance with writing papers, or who would like tutoring, should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) for assistance. All students are encouraged to seek the direct assistance of their instructor whenever any questions arise regarding assignments, grading, course expectations, etc.
A student involved in academic dishonesty will receive an “F” for the course and will be reported to the seminary administration. Ultimately, a student found guilty of academic dishonesty may be dismissed from the Notre Dame Seminary.

TO ANY WHO REQUIRE FAIR WARNING (MY APOLOGY TO THOSE WHO DON’T): DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. YOU WILL BE CAUGHT. IT IS BETTER TO GET AN “F” FOR AN ASSIGNMENT THAN TO FAIL THE CLASS.

XIV. Disability Accommodation Policy
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Notre Dame Seminary provides disability accommodations for students with identified and/or diagnosed disabilities. Students with disabilities need not inform their instructors about the nature of their disabilities, but they are responsible for contacting and providing appropriate documentation to the Academic Resources Center. Requests for accommodations must be made each semester for which the student wishes to receive service; the Academic Resources Center will then distribute a letter of accommodation to the faculty. It is the student’s responsibility to meet with each faculty member to discuss how his/her accommodation(s) may be met within each course. Notre Dame Seminary will attempt to meet reasonable accommodations requested. A reasonable accommodation is a modification to a non-essential aspect of a course, program, or facility which does not pose an undue burden and which enables a qualified student with a disability to have adequate opportunity to participate and to demonstrate his or her ability. Such accommodations are determined on an individual basis depending upon the nature and extent of the disability. For more information, contact the Academic Dean’s Office.

XV. Extension Policy
Due-Date extensions will only be given in case of serious emergencies.

INCOMPLETE (I): A grade of “I” is only awarded when a student has a serious reason for which they could not complete all course requirements, such as a major emergency involving the student or the student’s family which the student could not anticipate and for which the student could not plan. In this event, the student must complete all course requirements within 6 weeks of the date of the final exam.

MAKE-UP WORK: Students will not be given the opportunity to do additional work or make-up work in order to change their final grade.

XVI. Audit Policy
All students auditing must follow the attendance policy, come to class regularly unless excused and do all assigned readings. Failure to do so will require withdrawal from the course.

XVII. Probation and Grading Policy
Passing grades for seminarians are A, B and C. A seminarian is put on academic probation for the following:
A seminarian who obtains a D+ or lower in any course is automatically placed on probationary status and must repeat the course in order to get credit for the course. Seminarians will be allowed to repeat a course only once and the course must be repeated at NDS. If the seminarian fails the course a second time, the Rector, after consultation with the faculty, will then review the status of the seminarian with the vocation director.

A seminarian whose semester grade point average (GPA) in coursework is below a 2.30 at any time is placed on academic probation. Two or more consecutive semesters on probation may subject the seminarian to be dismissed from academic formation at Notre Dame Seminary. To be removed from probationary status, the seminarian must complete a semester with a GPA of 2.30 or higher.

After each semester, the seminarian’s Bishop will receive a copy of his transcript and a review of the seminarians’ status.

If a seminarian fails to meet the passing grade point average requirement then he forfeits his eligibility for financial aid under Title IV Federal Regulations.

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<td>A-</td>
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See Academic Catalog for Grading Guidelines Policy Narrative.

XVIII. Classroom Technology Policy
We live in an age of distraction. Many of us find it difficult to stop fiddling with electronic devices or to take a break from checking email. Confirming what professors have long suspected, one recent study indicates that students who use a laptop in class earn significantly lower grades. To engage in prayerful study – that is, to do our work with rigor and attentiveness to the voice of
the Lord – we must learn to be quiet and focus. Therefore, the use of laptops and phones in class is prohibited entirely.

XIX. Syllabus Contract

This syllabus *obliges* the student to adhere to all policy requirements and to fulfill all academic expectations herein stated; it also *entitles* the student to a reasonable opportunity to learn the material specified in the course description in order to accomplish for himself the educational goals of the course. In order to optimize the learning process the course instructor reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to the syllabus requirements during the semester, in response to unforeseen developments or circumstances. All adjustments made must be communicated clearly to students.