



NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Course Syllabus for PH 203 The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas

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Semester: Spring 2015
Time: TTh, 10:00-11:25
Place: Classroom # 7

I. Course Description

This course introduces the philosophical principles which guide Thomas's metaphysics, anthropology, epistemology, natural theology, and ethics. There will be special emphasis on both the internal coherence and the synthetic, integrative nature of Thomistic philosophy. These issues will be presented not only in the context of Aquinas's historical background, but also with reference to the Modern philosophical assumptions that make a return to a realist appreciation of truth so critical for Catholics today.

II. Course Rationale

Among the scholastic doctors, the chief and master of all towers Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because "he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all." The doctrines of those illustrious men, like the scattered members of a body, Thomas collected together and cemented, distributed in wonderful order, and so increased with important additions that he is rightly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith. With his spirit at once humble and swift, his memory ready and tenacious, his life spotless throughout, a lover of truth for its own sake, richly endowed with human and divine science, like the sun he heated the world with the ardor of his virtues and filled it with the splendor of his teaching. Philosophy has no part which he did not touch on finely at once and thoroughly.... Moreover, the Angelic Doctor pushed his philosophic conclusions into the reasons and principles of the things which are most comprehensive and contain in their bosom, so to say, the seeds of almost infinite truth.... Therefore, we exhort you, venerable brethren, in all earnestness to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and to spread it far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith. (Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Aeterni Patris, 1879)

The singular importance of the thought of Thomas Aquinas for understanding and defending the Catholic faith has long been recognized. This course will introduce you to an appreciation of the philosophical principles which guide Thomas's metaphysics, anthropology, epistemology, natural theology, and ethics. There will be special emphasis on the magnificent coherence and unity of Thomistic philosophy. These issues will be presented not just in historical terms, but in the context of the modern philosophical assumptions that make a return to a realistic appreciation of truth so critical for Catholics today.

III. Course Goals/Intended Outcomes

- A deeper familiarity with the thought of Thomas Aquinas
- An adequate notion of the relation between faith and reason
- An understanding of the human capacity to know metaphysical and ethical truths
- A preparation for theological studies by providing the intellectual groundwork on which theological speculation relies.

IV. Instructional Methods

1) Lecture; 2) Discussion; 3) Socratic Question and Answer; 4) Student Presentations

V. Texts (Required and/or Recommended)

- Thomas Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, tr. by Timothy McDermott (Oxford, 1993).
- Pieper, Josef. *A Guide to Thomas Aquinas*. (There will be no specific assignments from the Pieper book. The book provides valuable background material, and it is a fairly easy read, so it is suggested that you finish it by midterm so as to better understand the material we deal with in class.)

VI. Bibliography

Aertsen, Jan. *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996.

----- *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988.

Boland, Vivian, O.P. *Ideas in God According to St. Thomas Aquinas: Sources and Synthesis*. New York: E.J. Brill, 1996.

Bradley, Denis J.M. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997.

Copleston, Frederick C., SJ. *Aquinas*. New York: Penguin Books, 1955

Davies, Brian, OP. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

Gilson, Etienne. *Being and Some Philosophers*. Second edition. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952.

----- *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Translated by L.K. Shook, C.S.B. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.

Klubertanz, George, SJ. *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2009.

Kretzmann, Norman, and Eleonore Stump. *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Pieper, Josef. *Living the Truth: The Truth of All Things and Reality and the Good*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989.

Torrell, Jean-Pierre, OP. *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work*, tr. by Robert Royal. Washington: Catholic University Press of America, 1996.

Wippel, John F. *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000.

VII. Glossary

1. Science: Demonstrated knowledge of fact; knowing the cause so as to have an explanation why something is the case
 - a. Physics: Science of the necessary principles explaining the material world as mutable (subdivided into natural science and philosophy of nature)
 - b. Mathematics: Science of the necessary principles explaining the world in terms of unchanging quantity (subdivided into geometry and arithmetic)
 - c. Metaphysics: Science of the necessary immaterial principles behind the material world (subdivided into metaphysics proper, concerning being qua being as the universal intrinsic principle, and natural theology, concerning God as the universal extrinsic principle)
 - d. Theology: Science of God based on the borrowed principles of revelation, which perfects natural theology
2. Transcendentals: a property that belongs to every being as being, adding a notional aspect to the idea of being.
 - a. Being: the active presence in the world brought about by the act of existence actualizing a delimiting essence
 - b. One: Being as undivided; a focused center of activity
 - c. True: being under the aspect of the intelligible actuality of being; adequation of mind and thing based on the intelligibility of act
 - d. Good: being under aspect of desirability, based on the perfection of being
3. Act and Potency: What a being is, and what it can become
 - a. First Potency: the passive potency of matter to receive a form, thus constituting an existing substance in first act
 - b. First Act: an existing substance, which has an active potential to actions as specified by that nature, its second potency
 - c. Second Act: the realization of second potency in the operative acts characteristic of that substance; also final cause, telos, perfection, good
 - d. *Agere sequitur esse*: action follows from being; the fundamental metaphysical insight of Aquinas, that what perfects a being depends on what that thing is.
4. Principles of Nature: the three elements necessary to explain how things change in the world
 - a. Form: principles of actuality, determining what a thing is in terms of universal quiddity
 - b. Matter: principle of potentiality, which receives the form, and also the principle of individuation for the universal form
 - c. Privation: the fact of being deprived of one actualizing form and taking on another
5. Four Causes: The four explanatory principles for why a being has come into existence:
 - a. Material cause: the stuff of which a substance is composed
 - b. Formal Cause: What the substance essentially is, most easily understood as shape
 - c. Efficient Cause: the extrinsic agent which unites form and matter to bring the new being into existence
 - d. Final cause: the goal of the agent acting for its perfection, and by extension, the purpose of any new substance brought into being by the efficient cause
6. Analogy of Being: The fact that the verb “to be” is used in different ways to explain distinct modes of existence
 - a. Categories: the fundamental division of real being into substance—that which is the basic unit of being—and accident as properties which exist in a substance
 - b. Predicables: those things which exist dependently on substances
 - i. Accidents: IN a substance
 - ii. Species: the universal SAID OF a substance
 - iii. Genus and Difference: the elements of a definition for a substance
 - iv. Proper accident: that which goes with a difference, but is itself not the defining property
7. Essence: That through which and in which a real being exists: the defining quiddity of the substance, providing its characteristic activity and intelligible species

8. Act of Existence: the principles by which the realization of all potency happens
9. Ladder of being: the other aspect of the analogy of being, in which substances are hierarchically differentiated according to the the degree to which they participate in existence.
10. Elements: the smallest units of material beings, whose properties are incorporated into and subordinated to the controlling form of the substance
11. Soul: the form of any living body, giving the body its shape, existence, and characteristic powers:
 - a. Vegetative: the powers of nutrition, growth, and reproduction
 - b. Sensitive: the immaterial presence of forms, received according to the ir material specificity
 - c. Rational: the immaterial reception of forms, received according to an immaterial universality
12. *Tabula Rasa*: the idea of the empiricists which states that the human mind begins as a “blank slate” lacking any innate ideas. Ideas come to the mind through experience.
13. Empiricism: the belief that truth or knowledge can be known only through sense experience.
14. Four Inner Senses: Internal functions of sensation shared by man and animals which complete the activity of the five external senses: common sense, imagination, judgment, and memory.
 - a. External Senses: The five senses by which we gather data for Aquinas.
 - b. Proper sensibles: the specific object to which each sense is infallibly directed; e.g., sight to color, hearing to sound, etc.
 - c. Common Sense: the first interior sense which unifies and distinguishes the information from the five exterior senses.
 - d. Imagination: the second interior sense which forms an image or phantasm from the data.
 - e. Judgment (estimation): the third interior sense which allows for instinctual reactions to the particular, present in both animals and man.
 - f. Memory: the fourth interior sense, which allows us to recall an image even when it is not present.
15. Active Intellect: the operation of the intellect in which the form is separated from the matter in the phantasm so that the potentially intelligible is made actually intelligible.
16. Passive Intellect: the operation of the intellect in which the abstracted form is received and understood by the intellect.
17. Abstraction: the process by which the active intellect separates form from the matter of the phantasm, making the potentially intelligible particular actually intelligible.
18. Intelligible Species: the abstracted form as present in the intellect; this is identical to the objects form, yet present in the mind and so understood.
19. Appetite: The inclination toward actions on various levels given to a being due to its form; this motivates the movement to second act, or perfection of being.
20. Emotions: the bodily reaction to the cognitive awareness of my appetitive inclination to a good or bad object in the area; a purely instinctive reaction which can be ordered by virtue.
 - a. Concupiscible: the sensitive appetites oriented to simple love (attraction) or hate (repulsion) of good and bad things; moderated by temperance.
 - b. Irascible: The sensitive appetites oriented to cases in which good and bad objects are intermixed; moderated by fortitude.
21. Will: the rational appetite; as we know universal, so we can desire universals; hence, we desire universal goodness, that which is good in itself (happiness).
22. Free choice: the will’s ability to achieve the universal good in a number of different ways, and not by simple instinctive reaction.
23. Resurrection: NOT resuscitation, which is bringing a dead body back to life; rather, resurrection is the miraculous transformation of matter by which it is made incorruptible after it is rejoined with the soul on the last day.
24. Natural Theology: those truths about God that can be known by reason independent of all revelation.
25. Cosmological Argument: An argument for the existence of God based on the fact that the existence of the universe is not self-explanatory. Examples are Aquinas’s proofs of motion, efficient cause, and contingency

26. Divine Simplicity: that God's essence is to exist, so there is no composition in the Divine nature (neither of form and matter, essence and existence, nor substance and accident (i.e, act and potency in any way)).
27. Eternity: The simultaneous possession of the whole of being.
28. Analogy: the mode of predication in which the thing signified remains the same but the mode of signification varies according to subject.
29. Divine Ideas: the exemplar causes of all that is.
30. Creation: to make something out of nothing at all; to communicate the act of existence.
31. Divine Ideas: The exemplary causes of all being in the mind of God in terms of modes of participation in the act of existence.
32. Providence: God's foresight over all of creation; thus, creation is rationally ordered, both in terms of individuals and in terms of all the individuals' composition to a universal good.
33. Omnipotence: That God can do all that is metaphysically impossible, but not that which is logically impossible (as it violates the principle of non-contradiction, and so cannot be done through the act of existence).
34. Chance: The intersection of two independent causal lines which brings about an unforeseen effect.
35. Participation: A structure or order of relationship between beings such that they all share in various degrees of fullness in some positive property or perfection common to them all, as received from the same one source: all finite beings participate in existence from God.
36. Primary and Secondary causes: Primary cause of all things is God's creating the act of existence, causing it to be; secondary causes are the natural substances causing specific change according to their determinate nature.
37. *Exitus-reditus*: All being flows from God as the efficient cause, which then return to Him as Final cause by means of their natural activity.
38. Good *Simpliciter*: The desirability of being based on the perfection of a substance in terms of its actualization of its proper dynamisms, a perfection of second act.
39. Good *Secundum quid*: The desirability of all beings merely from the fact they exist, a convertibility drawn from the perfection of first act.
40. Evil: the privation of being.
 - a. Moral - contrary to the good of personal beings in the moral or ethical order- murder;
 - b. Natural/Physical - contrary to the ontological good of something considered in itself – blindness
41. Human act: for Aquinas, an act done with knowledge and freedom; the genus for all moral actions.
42. Act of Man: for Aquinas, an acting not emerging from knowledge or will, such as an unconscious behavior or an accident; not morally evaluable.
43. Happiness: the perfection of human nature, achieved in fulfilling the intellect's search for truth and the will's desire for the good
44. Beatific Vision: the direct apprehension of God in the afterlife; this is happiness for Aquinas.
45. Object: The act chosen in order to accomplish an end; this gives species to the moral act, making it either good or bad in itself to the degree that it is in accord with reason.
46. Circumstance: The accidental characteristics surrounding an act (when, where, to whom, etc.) that might make a good object a bad overall act (but never a bad object good).
47. Intention: the ultimate goal intended to be accomplished by the means of the object; normally it coincides closely with the object itself.
48. Virtue: a habit by which actions are directed with regularity to the perfection of our being.
49. Law: An ordinance of reason, promulgated by the proper authority, for the common good.
50. Eternal Law: the order of creation as determined by God: the application of providence in creation
51. Natural Law: the participation of a rational creature in the eternal law; the obligations that fall upon man due to the constitution of human nature.
52. Positive Law: Man-made law; these laws are meant to extend and enforce (determinations and derivations) the natural law.
53. Grace: Those gifts which come from God's free will, as opposed to our nature, in order to help direct us to perfection.

54. Theological virtues: gifts of grace that direct us toward our supernatural perfection: faith, hope, and charity.

VIII. Lecture, Presentation, and Reading Schedule

Tues. 1/13: Syllabus and Introduction.

Thurs. 1/15: Sec. 1: The Nature of Science, pp. 1-51.

Tues. 1/20: Sec. 2: Transcendentals, pp. 51-65.

Thurs. 1/22: Secs. 3-5: Principles of Nature, pp. 65-90.

Tues. 1/27: *Comm. On Liber de Causis*.

Thurs. 1/29: Sec. 6: Essence and Existence, pp. 90-102.

Tues. 2/3: Sec. 6: Essence and Existence, pp. 102-113.

Thurs. 2/5: Secs. 7-8: The Ladder of Being, pp. 115-121.

Tues. 2/10: Secs. 9-11: The Soul, pp. 121-145.

Thurs. 2/12: Secs. 12-14: Mind, pp. 145-156.

Tues. 2/17: Mardi Gras.

Thurs. 2/19: Sec. 15: Feelings, pp. 156-169.

Tues. 2/24: Secs. 16-17: Will, pp. 169-184.

Thurs. 2/26: Secs. 18-19: Immortality, pp. 184-193.

Tues. 3/3: Review for Midterm.

Thurs. 3/5: **Midterm Exam.**

Tues. 3/10: Sec. 20: God's Existence, pp. 195-202.

Thurs. 3/12: Sec. 21-22: Divine Simplicity, pp. 202-214.

Tues. 3/17: Secs. 23-24: Analogy, pp. 214-240.

Thurs. 3/19: Secs. 25-26: Divine Ideas, pp. 240-250.

Tues. 3/24: Secs. 27-28: Creation, pp. 251-270.

Thurs. 3/26: Secs. 29-30: Providence, pp. 270-284.

Tues. 3/31: Holy Week.

Thurs. 4/2: Holy Week.

Tues. 4/7: Secs. 31-32: Evil, pp. 284-297.

Thurs. 4/9: Sec. 33: Providence and Man, pp. 297-315.

Tues. 4/14: Sec. 34: Human Happiness, pp. 315-342.

Thurs. 4/16: Sec. 35: Morality, pp. 342-390 (esp. 342-361).

Tues. 4/21: Sec. 36: Virtue, pp. 390-409.

Thurs. 4/23: Sec. 37: Law, pp. 409-421.

Tues. 4/28: Sec. 38: Grace, pp. 421-425.

Thurs. 4/30: Review for Final. **Paper due.**

Mon. 5/4-Wed. 5/6: **Final Exams.**

IX. Course Requirements

- Read all assigned readings
- Participate in class and maintain good attendance record
- Prepare and deliver class presentations
- Study the notes from the class lectures

X. Important Dates

Midterm – March 5.
Paper – April 30.
Final Exam– May 4-6.
Presentation—date varies.

XI. Evaluation Criteria

- 1 *Exams:* There will be two exams, a Midterm (**March 5**); and a Final Exam (**May 4-6**). **Each test will be worth 20% of your grade.**
- 2 *Presentation:* You will pick a topic from the syllabus and prepare the class discussion for that date. **This is worth 20% of your grade.**
- 3 *Paper:* There will be a 6-8 page paper on the importance and relevance of Thomas's philosophy for pastoral situations. It can concern any topic relevant to metaphysics, human nature or God. For this, you are to critically reflect on the role of philosophy in the life of faith. **This paper will be worth 20% of your grade (due April 30).** (Note: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student guilty of academic dishonesty will receive an F.)
- 4 *Attendance and participation:* In-class accomplishment, as measured by periodic quizzes of varying formats and thoughtful class discussion—which, in turn, obviously entails your presence in class—is crucial for philosophical maturity. (NB: Anyone not present at the time attendance is taken is considered absent). **This is worth 20% of your grade.**

XI. 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.

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

Instructors are never obligated to grant a student's request for a due-date extension on a paper/project if they judge the request to be without sufficient merit or not in keeping with the fair requirements articulated in the course syllabus.

XVI. Audit Policy

For academic course audits at Notre Dame Seminary, the amount of work required of seminarians will be decided on a case by case basis by the instructor, the Academic Dean and the seminarian's Formation Advisor.

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. Seminarian status is then subject to review by the Dean.

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 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.

Letter Grade Number	Quality Points	Grade Scale
A	4.00	100 – 94
A-	3.70	93 – 90
B+	3.30	89 – 88
B	3.00	87 – 84
B-	2.70	83 – 80
C+	2.30	79 – 78
C	2.00	77 – 74

C-	1.70	73 – 70
D+	1.30	69 – 68
D	1.00	67 – 64
D-	.70	63 – 60
F	0.00	59 – 0

See Academic Catalog for Grading Guidelines Policy Narrative.

XVIII. 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.