

THEOLOGY 60293—THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS AQUINAS

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 Office hours: by appointment

This course offers an introduction to the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, exploring such central topics as: sacred doctrine and theological method; God as transcendent beginning and end of all things; God as active in the world, through Christ, grace, and sacrament; and, the movement of the rational creature to the triune God as beatifying end. Most of the primary readings are drawn from the greatest of Aquinas's writings, the *Summa theologiae*, with occasional glances at his other writings. The course will proceed by a judicious mix of lecture, and, informed, text-based discussion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through this course, students will become familiar with:

1. Aquinas's main claims about God, Christ, humans, church
2. the range of his writings; and,
3. the structure of his greatest writing, the *Summa theologiae*

Students will also be able:

4. to identify the main theological tasks that Aquinas pursues; and,
5. to read Aquinas in a theologically-responsible way

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

-**ten** (10) daily **reading responses in written form** (70%; 7% per response)

For each class day, I am providing study questions (see the following **Schedule**); the study questions are meant to facilitate/focus your reading of assigned primary texts. Please use these study questions in preparing for class.

I am requiring you to submit **written** responses to the study questions on **ten** occasions/for ten class days. The class days for which you submit these ten written responses can be left to your discretion (you will decide what best suits your personal schedule, and interests). But, you do need to submit **ten written** responses in total.

Each written response should be at least 250 words in length. Each response should answer in written form the study questions that I have posed for that day. You should submit each written response to me by email attachment (jwawryko@nd.edu); please mark clearly in the subject heading of your email the class day for which you are writing. Please make sure that your name appears in the attachment itself. Our class session begins in the noon hour; please send me the written response for that class **by 11 am** that day; I want to read over the written responses *before* class, and will make use of them at the class at which that assigned material is being discussed.

I have listed the study questions for each class day on the **Schedule** below.

I will evaluate each of your written submissions using the following rubric:

+	=	exemplary work/A
Check plus	=	solid grasp of assignment/B+
Check	=	general grasp of assignment/B
Check minus	=	basic, but incomplete grasp of assignment/B- or C
NC	=	no credit, insufficient completion of work

Through the written responses, you will show that you have read the assigned readings and are familiar with their contents, and are able to see and assimilate what is important in each text.

On occasion, I will supplement the plus, or check plus, or check, or check minus, with brief written comments.

I will return the evaluated written responses from the first week at the beginning of the second week of classes; those from the second week, at the beginning of the third week; and those from the third week, at the end of the course.

-a **take-home final** exam (20%)

At our final class meeting (Thursday, July 3), I will distribute the essay topic on which you are to write as the final exam; the topic will help you to synthesize the material covered in the course. I will give you precise instructions when I hand out the final exam. For the moment, I will simply note that you should write your final-exam essay, at your convenience and in a place of your own choosing, over the span of no more than two and a half hours. The take-home exam should, therefore, be approximately 5-6 pages (typed, double-spaced) in length. It is to be submitted to me, by email attachment, **no later than** Sunday, July 6, 10 pm.

-**prepared, regular participation** in the classroom discussions (10%)

I expect you to attend each class session and to contribute to the class discussion; your participation in the discussion will manifest your careful reading of the assigned material prior to the session. The study questions distributed ahead of time will help to promote fruitful discussion.

ACCESSING TEXTS

The *Summa theologiae* in English translation is available online at www.newadvent.org/

The *Summa contra Gentiles* is available on-line in English translation:

<http://dhspriority.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm>

Other primary texts will be distributed in pdf or hard copy.

The following books may be purchased at the **Bookstore**:

R. Van Nieuwenhove and J. Wawrykow (eds.), *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*
Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol.1: *The Person and his Work*

The **Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow volume** contains essays on the major areas of theological discourse in Aquinas. On the following Schedule, I have indicated (under **BACKGROUND READING**) which essays you should read for each Part of the course. Given the stress on primary texts in this course, it may be best to reserve the reading of these essays to the end of each Part, to facilitate your own synthesis of Aquinas's position on given topics. On the other hand, the essays might also be read earlier in the Part, to give you an orientation to Aquinas on the topics covered in that Part.

The Torrell book offers a fine overview of the career and writings of Aquinas, placing Aquinas into his historical context and helping the reader to gain a better sense of the range and purpose(s) of his writings. Please read this book at your leisure, paying particular attention to the chapters on the *Summa contra Gentiles*, and, the *Summa theologiae* (chs.VI, VIII). Especially deserving of close study is the Brief Catalogue of Aquinas's writings prepared by Gilles Emery (pp. 330-361).

ELECTRONICS POLICY

You may use your laptop in class *for course-related purposes*. Otherwise electronic devices are not permitted in the classroom.

SCHEDULE

NOTE: The course is divided into **four main parts**.

Under each main heading, I have suggested the principal themes and issues for that part of the course; these headlines should be helpful in keeping track of our progress.

For **each class day**, I indicate the main topic(s) of the day, and list the assigned **primary readings**. You are required to have read those assigned primary readings *before* class, and to be able to discuss them at class. Study questions have been provided to facilitate your preparations. I have also listed, at the end of a Part of the course, **Background Readings** these are the essays in the Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow volume that should be read for that Part of the course.

I. THOMAS THE THEOLOGIAN

The responsibilities of the scholastic theologian—the formation, academic and non-academic, of the scholastic theologian—the thomistic corpus: principal genres, writings; sacred doctrine and theology: what and why—the approach to authorities, Christian and non-Christian; the structure/organization of the *Summa theologiae*; faith; knowing and naming the transcendent God; life as journey (first glance); learning how to read a question in the *Summa theologiae* a glance at the *Summa contra Gentiles*

6/16 Introduction to the course; on citing the *Summa theologiae*; on the scholastic theologian; sacred doctrine and its theology

Reading: ST I.1 (focus on articles 1; 8-10)
ST II-II.1.6-10

Study questions: What is sacred doctrine/teaching? Who is the teacher in sacred doctrine? Who else might be considered a teacher in sacred doctrine? What is taught in sacred doctrine? What is the connection between scripture and statements of faith established by the church meeting in council?

6/17 Sacred doctrine as providing a double context: for theology; for the human journey to the beatifying God; on knowing (and naming) God in this life

Reading: re-read ST I.1 (and become familiar with the contents of aa.2; 4; 6)
ScG Bk.I, chs.1-9
ScG Bk.IV.1
ST I.12-13
Prologue to the ST

Study questions: what can be known of God in this life? On what basis is that known? What can be known about God in the next life (at the end of this life's journey)? On what basis is such knowing possible?

6/18 (hour one; for the rest of this class session, see immediately under Part II of course)

Final comments on the theology of sacred doctrine, and the theologian (first hour of today's session)

Reading: The Two Inaugural Lectures (to be distributed)

BACKGROUND READING for Part I of course: in Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, the essays by Marshall (on theology) Burrell (God-talk); and Prügl (on scriptural exegesis)

(6/18) Part Two of the course, begun

II. AT THE CENTER OF THOMAS'S THEOLOGY: CHRIST/TRINITY

Thomas's incarnational Christology: incarnation as act and as reality—Person and Nature talk: Christological; Trinitarian—the subject of statements about Christ, and kinds of predication: observing the grammar of “one Person, two natures”—Thomas's principal claims about Christ and His importance—the debt to scripture (and tradition)—the tasks pursued by this scholastic theologian in treating Christ in different writings

(6/18, continued: the remainder of this session) Incarnational Christology, introduced: principal claims, tasks pursued (in ScG)

Reading: ScG IV, chs.27-39; ch.41; ch.40

Study questions: In ScG IV, chs.27-39, Aquinas presents the orthodox teaching about Jesus. He uses ‘person’ and ‘nature’ talk in presenting Jesus. What does ‘person’ mean, what does ‘nature’? Aquinas also introduces various heretical teachings about Christ. Which heresies/heretics are mentioned in these chapters? Name them. And, what is involved in the heresy of Nestorius? In which chapter does Aquinas discuss that? In terms of ‘person’ and ‘nature,’ how does Nestorius's Christology differ from that of Aquinas (that is, from the orthodox teaching on Christ)?

6/19 *Cur deus homo?*

Reading: ST III.1

ScG Bk. IV, chs.53-55

Study questions: God became human. Why? Why does it matter that Christ is truly God, truly human? How does Aquinas tie his ideas about the ‘why’ to his ideas about the purpose of human existence? Need God have become human to promote God's saving plan for humans?

6/20 On the person of Jesus/the Trinitarian background to talk of incarnation

Reading: ScG Bk. IV, chs.2-9; ch.11; chs.12-13; ch.42

Study questions: On the basis of ScG IV.2-3, what are the main claims that Aquinas advances about the person who becomes incarnate? What is the basis for those claims? In ScG IV, ch.11, Aquinas provides a model for ‘understanding’ or ‘clarifying’ the relation of the second to the first divine person: what is the source of that model (that is, where does Aquinas get that model, or is it his own innovation)? And, suggest how that model (offered in ch.11) figures in the teaching in the later chapter, ch.42.

6/23 More on the person of Jesus; and re-stating the act of incarnation

Reading: ST III.3

Study questions: In ST III.3, we meet the distinction between principle and term. What does ‘principle,’ what does ‘term,’ mean? In the actual order (that is, as proclaimed in scripture and tradition), who/what is the principle, who/what is the term of the act of incarnation? In several articles in this question (aa.5-7), Aquinas contemplates other possible

incarnational scenarios. What is he envisioning in a.6, and who/what is the principle, who/what is the term, in that scenario?

6/24 More on the link between Christology and soteriology: what does Jesus do, and why is that soteriologically-significant? On the humanity as the personal, conjoined, animate instrument of divinity (a discussion resumed). And, interpreting statements about Christ

Reading: ST III.48; II-II.85
ST III.16

Study questions: on **ST III.48** (and II-II.85): in III.48, Aquinas is discussing ways in which Christ's work on the cross contributes human salvation. He mentions several ways: 'merit;' 'atonement' or satisfaction; 'sacrifice;' 'redemption.' To the extent that it is possible on the basis of this reading, define each of these terms. And, then, choose one of these terms (e.g., merit), and relate that to what we discussed on 6/19 and the *cur* (why) of incarnation. Does it matter that the savior is God, or human, in speaking about merit (or whichever term you focus on)?

Study questions: on **ST III.16:** where does Aquinas get the statements considered in the articles of this question? Does he make them up? What does someone have to know in order to make correctly any of the statements considered in this question? How does one come to know that?

PLEASE NOTE: if you are submitting a written response for this day, you need write on only one set of these study questions (that is, either those on ST III.16, or those on ST III.48)

BACKGROUND READING for Part II of course: in Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, the essays by Rikhof (on Trinity), Emery (Trinity and creation), Wawrykow (hypostatic union), Gondreau (Christ's humanity), Van Nieuwenhove (soteriology).

III. THE HUMAN STORY/GOD'S STORY:

PROVIDENCE, PREDESTINATION, AND HUMAN ACTION (3 weeks)

Life as journey, anew: the human person on the way to God as end—virtues/vices; the gifts; action—God's providential and predestining will—on the loving, wise communication of God's goodness—Christ in God's plan for human salvation

6/25 The need for grace. Needs? The kinds of grace

Reading: ST I-II.109
ST I-II.111.2c

Study questions: According to I-II.109, what does grace do? Is it concerned only with sin? And, in q.109 and 111.2c, how many kinds of grace does Aquinas mention? How does each kind of grace contribute to the human journey to God as beatifying end?

6/26 The cause of grace; the virtues

Reading: ST I-II.112
ST I-II.55
ST I-II.66-67

Study questions: on ST I-II.112: who causes grace? To what extent can human beings be said to 'cause grace'? Which of the graces named in ST I-II.109 and 111.2c figure in the discussion in aa.2-3 in ST I-II.112?

Study questions: on ST I-II.55; 66-67: what is a virtue? How many kinds of virtue does Aquinas name? What is the difference between an acquired and an infused virtue? Of all the virtues named by Aquinas in these questions, which is the most important? Why? And which of the virtues do *not* remain in heaven? Why not?

PLEASE NOTE: if you are submitting a written response for this day, you need write on only one set of these study questions (that is, either on ST I-II 112 and the cause of grace, or on the questions on the virtues).

6/27 The gifts of the Holy Spirit. And, on God's causal love

Reading: ST I-II.68
ST I.20

Study questions: on ST I-II.68: what are the gifts, and what do they do? Given grace and infused virtues, why are gifts necessary? Do they remain in heaven?

Study questions: on ST I.20: what is love? How does God's love differ from that of humans? What does it mean to say that 'God loves the better more'?

PLEASE NOTE: if you are submitting a written response for this day, you need write on only one set of these study questions (that is, either on ST I-II.68, or, on ST I.20)

6/30 Providence and predestination, and God's plan for human salvation

Reading: ST I.22-23

Study questions: define 'providence' and 'predestination' and be able to state the relation between the two. Is providence, predestination, a matter of God's *knowing*, or, of God's *willing*, or both? If a matter of willing, and God is an utterly successful cause, does that mean that everything that happens, happens 'by necessity'? Or, are secondary causes—that is, causes other than God as primary cause—causes in the genuine sense, producing effects that are within their scope?

7/1 Jesus re-visited: on Christ's personal grace and virtue; on Christ's place in God's saving plan; on predestination in a Christological key

Reading: ST III.7.1-6
ST III.24

Commentary on Romans 8 (to be distributed)

Commentary on John 1:14 [lecture 8] (to be distributed)

Study questions: on ST III.7: did Christ have grace? Did he have the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Did he have the virtues? Did he have all of the virtues? Why/why not?

Study questions: on ST III.24: was Christ predestined? What is the connection between the predestination of other human beings and Christ? Which scriptural passages are important for this teaching on predestination and Christ?

PLEASE NOTE: if you are submitting a written response for this day, you need write on only one set of these study questions (that is, either on ST III.7, or, on ST III.24)

Study questions on the extracts from the two biblical commentaries: according to Romans 8, what is the goal of human existence? How do Christ, and the Spirit, contribute to the realization of that goal? To what extent does Aquinas's commentary anticipate the claims that he makes about Christ in texts from the *Summa* that have been previously assigned? As for John 1:14: what is the connection between Christ's spiritual gifts and those that others receive from him? Does it matter to others that he is a human being who is perfect in grace and virtue? Is the teaching of the Commentary in conformity with ST III.7.1-6?

PLEASE NOTE: you are free to write on the biblical commentaries assigned for today; it is probably advisable, however, to write on either ST III.7, or, ST III.24: these are shorter, more manageable texts.

BACKGROUND READING for Part III of the course: in Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, the essays by Goris (providence), Merriell (trinitarian anthropology), te Velde (original sin), Porter (moral theology), Wawrykow (grace), Leget (eschatology)

IV. CHURCH AND SACRAMENT

Sacrament as cause and sign—Instrumental causality: sacraments, and, ordained priests—Fruitful reception and apt subjective disposition—the Eucharist, the greatest of the sacraments—the Christological dimensions of sacramental theology—Christ as Priest—the Church as Christ’s mystical body

7/2 General observations about the sacraments: what (cause and sign); how many; their place in the human journey

The Eucharist as sign and cause; the threefold sacramental formula; on the effects of the sacrament. Real presence

Reading: ST III.64

ST III.73

ST III.75.1; III.76

ST III.79.1

Study questions; on ST III.64: this question is on the causes of the sacraments, meaning the various agents who can be said to be involved in sacramental performance. Which causes are named in this question? Who is the most important? In terms of ordained ministers, to what extent is personal faith, grace and virtue, important for their sacramental work?

Study questions on ST III.73; 75.1; III.76: A sacrament is both cause and sign. The Eucharist is a sacrament. What does this sacrament cause? What does it signify? Aquinas thinks that this is the greatest of the sacraments. On what basis does he offer that characterization? In terms of q.79.1: to what extent does the talk here of the Eucharist causing grace depend on the limning of the threefold sacramental formula, in q.73? (That formula has to do with what the Eucharist, in its components, signify, and, in some sense cause.)

PLEASE NOTE: if you are making a written submission today, it must be on ST III.73; 75; 76; and 79.1.

7/3 The Eucharist, continued: on recipients of the Eucharist, and fruitful reception. The Eucharist and Cross, and the priesthood of Jesus. Reflections on the Church and Christ’s headship

Reading: ST III.80

ST III.22

ST III.8

Study questions: on ST III.80: Aquinas refers here to an eating that is sacramental, and an eating that is spiritual. He also knows of an eating that is both sacramental and spiritual. Define each kind of eating; who does what sort of eating? What are the personal

attributes of the different sorts of eaters? Does each have faith? Grace and virtue? Rational intelligence?

Study questions on ST III.22 and III.8: In what sense is Christ a priest? Is this a designation that refers to his divinity, or to his humanity, or to both? (You might think here of what we saw in III.16, discussed on 6/24.) What is the Church, and in what sense is Christ the head of the church? What attributes do members of the Church possess? To what—the humanity, or divinity, or both—is the designation of Christ as head due?

PLEASE NOTE: if you are submitting a written response for this day, you need write on only one set of these study questions (that is, on ST III.80, or, on III.22 and 8)

Distribution of take-home final exam

BACKGROUND READING for Part IV of the course: in Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, the Walsh essay on sacraments

END OF TERM