“In the end, only something endowed with mystery is worthy of love. It is impossible to love something stripped of mystery; at best it would be a thing one uses as one sees fit, but not a person whom one could look up to. Indeed, no progress in knowledge, not even when it occurs in love, may lift the veil from the beloved. Love itself demands, not only possession and unveiling, but just as forcefully reverence and, therefore, veiling....if love is to endure to the very end, then unveiling must not be ultimate, but only penultimate...True love is so full of the true mystery of being’s intimacy that it need never stagnate. Love remains vital because in its eyes the object itself, even apart from what love might add, is always ever greater and never wholly comprehensible.”


Course Description:
Who is God? How does the infinite God relate to the finite world? How can human beings come to know God? What is the nature of mystery itself? The general aim of this course is to introduce students to the rich doctrine of God as Trinity, which is, as first and foremost a doctrine of salvation, the fundamental mystery of Christian profession and human life. Traditional reflection upon the Trinity evinces both a high degree of intellectual rigor as well as a precision--even elegance--of language, but these attempts at crisp articulation do not compromise the nature of the Trinitarian God as mysterium. The course explores this essential mysteriousness of God through the historical development of normative Trinitarian doctrine, with particular attention to the biblical, patristic, and creedal formulations, as well a selection of representative contemporary Trinitarian thinkers, both Catholic and Orthodox.

Course Objectives:
1. To gain knowledge of the historical and theological development of Trinitarian doctrine.
2. To appreciate the nature of the Christian theological tradition as intellectually rigorous, dynamic, and living.
3. To understand how Christian theology strives to express the wordless spiritual reality of God’s Trinitarian mystery without reducing that mystery to a verbal or conceptual idol.

**Course Materials:**
The following texts are available in the Notre Dame Hammes Bookstore for purchase, as well as widely available online. Used copies are abundantly available through retailers like [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**Required:**


**Highly Recommended:**


**Recommended for Further Research.**


----------. *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).


The remaining texts will be available on Sakai, course reserves, or online, as indicated in the individual reading assignments below. If possible, these texts should be printed out and brought to class on the relevant days with your annotations. *Short supplemental readings may also be distributed as necessary.*

**Course Requirements:**
1. **Regular, punctual, and attentive course attendance** and **informed, active participation in class discussion (10%).** This class values the democratic quality of discussion of texts as an equivalently important component next to the lectures, so please do prepare accordingly by reading
the assigned texts carefully and critically.

2. **Reading journal (25%)**. Each student will keep a journal which responds in some way to the texts we read, whether outlines of texts, sketches, significant questions, important quotes, and/or other thoughts about the material, to be submitted for checking at the end of each week. In this notebook you may note points of particular significance, difficulty, or beauty, identify important or problematic passages, as well as note any clarifying or interpretive questions about the text itself or its relation to other texts or authors we have treated. Please feel free to tailor the content of these journals to your own academic, pedagogical, or professional interests. These journal entries are casual, brief, and meant to assist the student in assimilating difficult material. Students are entitled to one free skip per week, in order to account for the exigencies of life.

3. **Reflection paper/essay/homily/retreat talk/lesson plan (3-4 pages, 12 pt. standard font) 30%**. Depending on individual interests, students will prepare a written component that “translates” some of the more dense theological material we have covered for possible use in their own work. The form is ultimately up to the student, but should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time.

4. **Final Essay Exam (35%)**.

**Attendance Policy**
Successful completion of the course and assignments depends on regular attendance. Because we will be covering an extensive amount of material in quite a compressed time, please make every effort to attend each class session. The class meets daily for 2 hours and 40 minutes, with one 10-15 minute break in the middle. If an absence is unavoidable, in the case of severe illness, family emergencies, or service to the University, please contact me in advance if possible.

**Proposed Course Schedule**

**WEEK ONE:**

**Tuesday, July 5**
*The Revelation of the Mystery of the Triune God: What is the nature of mysterium?*


**Wednesday, July 6**
*The Trinity in Scripture*
Required: Gilles Emery, O.P. *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God.*

*Please bring a Bible to this class session if possible.

**RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**
From the *Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*:
Simon Gathercole, Chapter 4, “The Trinity in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts,” 55-68.


Thursday, July 7
The Trinity in the Ante-Nicene Fathers
St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book III. 16-19 (Sakai).

RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Friday, July 8
The Trinity in the Fourth Century Fathers; The Arian Controversy
Arius’s Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia (Rusch), pp. 29-30.
Arius’s Letter to Alexandria of Alexandria (Rusch), pp. 31-32.
Alexander of Alexandria’s Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica (Rusch), pp. 33-44.
“The Creed of the Synod of Nicaea, June 19, 325” (Rusch), p. 49

RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
Athanasius’s Orations against the Arians, Book I (Rusch, pp. 63-129), especially pp. 63-83.

WEEK TWO
Monday, July 11
The Trinity & Theological Personhood as Relation: The Cappadocian Contribution, The Rahnerian Supplement

RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:


----------. *Communion & Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Bloomsbury/T & T Clark, 2007).

**Tuesday, July 12**

*The Trinity in the West: Augustine*

Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book VIII, Book X (e-reserves).

**RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book IX and Book XV


**Wednesday, July 13**

*The Trinity & The Apophatic Tradition*


Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* (selections, TBA)

**RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**


**Thursday, July 14**

*The Trinity & Mysticism*


**Friday, July 15**

*The Trinity in Medieval Theology: Bonaventure & Aquinas*

Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* [The Journey of the Mind to God], 1-39.

RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:


WEEK THREE

Monday, July 18
Written Component Due
Practicum on Pedagogy, Homiletics, and/or Catechesis
NO EXTRA READING ASSIGNMENT

Tuesday, July 19
A Theological Synthesis

Wednesday, July 20
The Trinity and Christian Life
Gilles Emery, “Returning to the Creative and Saving Action of the Trinity,” Chapter 6, and “Conclusion,” The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God, p. 159-197.

Choose one essay for group discussion:
Francesca Aran Murphy, “The Trinity and Prayer,” Chapter 37, The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity, 505-518.

Thursday, July 21
The Trinity, Art, and the Beautiful

RECOMMENDED/SELECTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Friday, July 22
FINAL EXAM