

AQUINAS:
An Approach to the Mystery of God
TESP 143
M/W 3:30-5:15
SCU
Fall 2008

As of 9/22/08

INITIAL SYLLABUS

[This first session of the Seminar has two parts: After reviewing the Syllabus and Schedule of the Seminar (Part One), I should like to introduce the students to the Context – institutional and methodological -- in which theology was to be done in the Middle Ages (Part Two).

A. Description:

This seminar will explore -- in an admittedly introductory and incomplete manner -- divergent lines of inquiry into the mystery of God traced out by the problematic-speculative theology of Thomas Aquinas. The central texts will be taken from the first and third part of the *Summa theologiae*.

The focus of the course will be on the actual texts of Aquinas. The general question that will govern the examination of these texts is "what is theology for Thomas Aquinas, and how does this bear upon contemporary theology?" The pace of the course will be deliberately slow in order to allow this examination to proceed carefully and thoroughly. The seminar will study the meaning of the technical terms, the fundamental assertions that they will comprise, the basic evidence for and the coherence of individual arguments, and the Christian experience to which they allude and whose intelligibility constitutes the content of theology.

As an assist to this fundamental exploration, the course will review more general works. These should situate the central texts under consideration and enrich their analysis through a broader appreciation of their intellectual and cultural background. Selections will be taken from such authors as Leonord Boyle, G.K. Chesterton, and Thomas O'Meara, while additional essays may be added as the course progresses.

Lectures and seminar discussions will supplement these readings. The student will periodically be called upon to do some mild research into questions, topics, and subjects whose problematic character has emerged during the course and to report their findings to the entire seminar. Finally, the student may be asked to submit written reflections upon the matter touched upon in the discussions of the class.

B. Objectives: The objectives of the course are indicated in its description. In this very introductory course, it is hoped that the student will gain an increased ability:

1. To read and to engage in sound theological reflection, and to grow in precision in the use of technical terms and in the understanding of critical assertions [grammar];
2. To follow, construe and criticize the central arguments in a theological text -- questions, articles, prologues and journeys -- both in the principles and evidence alleged as well as in the appropriateness of methodology [rhetoric and logic];
3. To locate a medieval theology within the intellectual and institutional situations that gave it a problematic situation and context;
4. To command the tools and participate in the discoveries that will aid theologians to do solid research in historical and theological issues;
5. To take part in the discussions and discoveries that animated medieval philosophy and theology;
6. To move from the understanding of texts and authors to a deeper apprehension and appreciation of those theological subjects and methods of inquiry to which medieval theologians dedicated their attention and their lives. This should lead the student to grasp something of the possibilities for pluralism in theological methods.

C. Requirements:

1. To read the assigned matter carefully and analytically, both preparing the text for a particular class and completing the more general readings by the required date.
2. To contribute to the class analysis and discussion.
3. To research subjects or to reflect upon issues designated by the instructor. Students should be ready to report to the class upon the results of their research. These reports or reflection papers may be handed in writing to the instructor for evaluation after having been delivered orally in class.
4. To meet with satisfaction the demands of two examinations on the material of the seminar: one mid-term and the other final.

D. Procedures: The seminar will be conducted with progressively more dependence upon the leadership and contribution of the students.

1. Initially: A careful consideration of the text for its meaning, its argument, its embodiment of an ordo disciplinae, etc. This phase will be conducted by the instructor. It will be supplemented by reports, conversations, and formal lectures.

2. As the students become more proficient, the seminar will be conducted increasingly by them. What this should amount to will be determined by the development of the seminar.

E. Initial Schedule: Must be radically revised!

[Note: The following schedule is a first attempt at putting the pace of the seminar and the material to be considered in chronological order. It will yield before the concrete progress of the students, the issues that arise during the course of the readings, and the directions discovered as new avenues suggest themselves during the work of the seminar. This schedule, then, is neither a canon nor an anticipation; it is a bearing taken at the beginning of the course and to be adjusted periodically as the weeks ensue.]

9- 22 Introduction to the Course: Lecture
"Prologue" of the *Summa theologiae*

9-24 "Prologue" of the *Summa*.
ST I. 1. 1-2.

9-29 ST I. 1. 2-5
Chesterton 1

10-1 ST I. 1. 6-8
Chesterton 2

10-6 ST I. 1. 8-10
Chesterton 3

10-8 ST I. 2. 1.
Chesterton 4

10-13 ST I. 2. 1-2
Chesterton 5

- 10-15 ST I. 2. 2.
Chesterton 6
- 10-20 ST I. 2. 3.FF
Chesterton 7
- 10-22 ST. I. 3. 1-4
Boyle
Chesterton 8
- 10-27 MIDTERM EXAMINATION
- 10-29 ST III.1.1-2
O'Meara Introduction ix-xxi
- 11-3 ST III. 1. 3-4.
O'Meara 1 "The Life and Career of Thomas Aquinas"
- 11-5 ST III. 1. 5-6.
- 11-10 ST III. 46. 1-2
O'Meara 2 "Patterns in the Summa theologiae"
- 11-12 ST III. 46. 3-4.
- 11-17 ST III. 46. 10-11.
O'Meara 3 "A Theological World" 1-4
- 11-19 ST III. 47. 1-3
- 12-1 ST III. 47. 4-6
O'Meara 3 "A Theological World" 5-8
O'Meara 4 "Traditions, Schools, and Students"
- 12-3 Review for Final Examination
O'Meara 5 "Thomas Aquinas Today"

F. Required Texts

1. Primary Texts:

Aquinas, Thomas, "*Summa theologiae*":

- a. I. Prologue, I-XIV,
ET (May, 2008): Alfred J. Freddoso.

Students can obtain a copy of this text at:
<http://www.nd.edu/~afreddos/>

- b. III. 1. 1-6; III.46-47
ET (1947): Fathers of the English Dominican Province.
New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947.

Chesterton, GK, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*. New York. Image Books. 1974.

O'Meara, Thomas, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian*.
University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

2. Articles:

Boyle, Leonard, "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of Saint Thomas."
Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982.

G: University Policies

Academic Integrity: For University policies regarding academic integrity, please consult Undergraduate Student Handbook.

Disability Accommodation Policy:

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students are asked to contact Disability Resources located in The Drahmman Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations.

Part Two

A. The Context in which Aquinas did Theology; Structure of the First Article

1. "Summa"
2. "Theologiae": three characteristics [cp. "beauty"]

B. Prologue: Three sentence – What does he do in each?