Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology  
Syllabus for ST-1091 – Theology: Nature & Method  
Fall 2018 • Fridays, 12:40 pm to 3:30 pm • DSPT classroom TBD

Fr. Bryan Kromholtz, OP (DSPT), available at DSPT East Building, room 120, during office hours (posted on door), or by appointment • 510-883-7151 • bkromholtz@dspt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course (formerly titled “ST-1710 Theology: Method & Structure”) is an introduction to the nature, method, sources, and structure of theology, focusing on (but not limited to) the Roman Catholic tradition, including St. Thomas Aquinas in particular. Issues to be considered include: the nature and method of theology, the relationship between philosophy and theology, the theology of revelation, and the role of scripture, tradition, magisterium, faith, and reason in theology. The course also introduces students to writing research papers in theology (3.00 units).

COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES: Through this course, students will come to an introductory grasp of key issues in fundamental theology, concerning theological method, revelation, scripture, and tradition; they should also become better able to discuss these issues in oral and written form, to engage in dialogue about them, and to engage in independent academic research on them. Specifically, upon successful completion of the course, students will become better able (terms in underlined italics refer to the relevant DSPT MATh Program Outcomes, listed near the end of this syllabus):

● to describe and to apply the principles of theological method (foundations, writing, presenting);
● to describe the place of Scripture, tradition, Magisterium, faith, and philosophy in theology and to apply them in their own theological work (foundations, writing, presenting);
● to distinguish theology from other forms of inquiry (foundations);
● to use Church documents and the work of St. Thomas Aquinas for theological research (foundations, writing, integrating).

FORMAT: Lecture, discussion, and student presentations. In most class sessions, the majority of the time will be spent on lecture with questions and discussion, with some time for student reports and discussion.

INTENDED STUDENT PARTICIPANTS: This is an introductory-level Master’s course, intended for MDiv and MA students (and auditors with my permission). Although it is an introductory course, much of the subject matter is inherently difficult, due to its necessarily fundamental, theoretical, and philosophical nature. Thus, the course requires significant attention on the part of each student.
ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER REQUIRED ACTIVITIES: Students will be required to attend class, to prepare oral presentations, to submit written assignments, and to take written exams. Specifically, students will be assessed on:

1. Attendance and Participation: Students’ attendance and active participation in class lecture and discussion are integral parts of the course. Any student who misses three or more classes cannot receive a grade for the course. Quizzes on the assigned readings may also be given. Quizzes and Brief Assignments are not listed on the “Plan for the Semester” given below. (10% of grade)

2. Oral Reports with Outlines, and Brief Assignments: Students will be assigned (or, in some cases, will choose) texts from the assigned readings that they are to present to the class as Oral Reports. The student must prepare an Outline (no more than one side of one page) for each Oral Report. A copy of the Outline is to be submitted to me at that time. The number of students taking the class may affect how many times each student must prepare such reports. Each student should count on offering a report two to six times over the course of the semester. Certain Brief Assignments may be given, depending on the interests and abilities of the students. Brief Assignments and Oral Reports are not listed on the “Plan for the Semester” given below. (10% of grade)

3. Research Paper Proposal: Students are to do preparatory work as if for a research paper of 5000 to 7000 words in main text, without writing the paper itself. It is to be on a topic pertaining to the course’s goals and outcomes, to be agreed upon by each student and me. The research must include not only the collection of bibliography, but also a significant amount of reading in the topic, so that an adequate Proposal, including a hypothesis, may be developed. The Proposal is to be completed according to the following assigned progression:

   a. Topic Suggestions: Each student must put forward, orally in class, one to three potential themes or topics of interest for the student’s own work, including possible thesis statements (hypotheses). Each student must be prepared to discuss these suggestions in class. Each topic (i) must concern one of the issues central to the nature or method of theology, and (ii) must involve some kind of comparison, such as a comparison of theologians on a topic, of the respective theological methods of two theologians, or of some other aspect related to the topics covered in the course. The topic or topics should suit the goals of the course and the student’s own learning goals. Each student must then consult me to obtain approval for the topic to be pursued. (5% of grade)

   b. Initial Proposal: With one topic approved, the student must next submit the Initial Proposal electronically, with 400-600 words in main text, i.e., not counting Outline or Bibliography (or notes, if any). The Initial Proposal is to follow the DSPT’s MA Thesis Proposal Guidelines form (found at the DSPT website), using that format (with exceptions to be explained below). Thus, it is to begin with an Information header that includes student name, title of paper, date, and course number (“ST-1091”); an explanation of the Scope and Nature of the paper, including relevant background; a Thesis Statement (in this case, a hypothesis that could be revised as one pursued writing a research paper); Description, including (a) a description of methodology (a very brief description, of one to two sentences

---

1 Advice for topics: Make sure the topic is precise and very limited. It may seem so small as to be insignificant, but, in fact, you will need to understand a great deal about the topic in order to do research on one particular area.
in length) and (b) a description of the project to be done, including a formal description of the kinds of primary sources to be consulted (not a bibliography, but a description of the criterion or criteria used to select the sources, e.g., “all of the author’s writings in which our topic is treated extensively”), as well as secondary sources, naming the reasons, in both cases, for choosing that kind of source, and (c) a brief outline (normally, as simple as a mere list of about three to five section headings); the likely Significance of the work, to the field, to Church and/or society; an initial Bibliography including all primary sources and 10-15 secondary sources (not meant to be exhaustive, but targeted at the needs of the paper), including at least some journal articles and some books, all in “Turabian” format. This corresponds to DSPT’s MA Thesis Proposal Guidelines form, except for two differences: first, your proposal must include a brief section Outline; and second, the specification of the number of sources is different. No Initial Proposal will be accepted without a thesis statement (or hypothesis). The student must then submit (electronically) the Initial Proposal for editing, to me and to two other students in the class (“respondents”), assigned by me. The filename of the saved file must begin with the student’s own surname and first initial, followed by a brief title (example for a student named Neal Emery: “EmeryN-InitProposal”). See the “Grading Criteria,” later in this syllabus, for further details on what is expected. (5% of grade)

c. Edited Copies: Each student will receive two Initial Proposals (from other students). Each student must then edit each of these received documents, making comments and corrections regarding substance, style, structure, spelling, grammar, etc. The student must then give two electronically Edited Copies, one for each of the two Initial Proposals, to both the writer and me. Please add “-ed” + your initials to the end of the original filename (example for a student named Cheryl Smalley for the Initial Proposal example above: “EmeryN-InitProposal-edCS”). I will evaluate each respondent on the quality of his or her editing and comments. Among other things, responses may: 1. point out insights that one has found to be particularly noteworthy; 2. indicate problems or offer criticisms in a helpful and constructive manner; 3. suggest a solution to a difficulty, either in the ideas discussed or in the manner of the presentation. Respondents’ comments should be concise; a single sentence should normally suffice for each comment. The respondent may include an overall evaluation (comment and critique) of no more than 100 words. The total amount of time spent on editing each Initial Proposal (including reading, correcting, and commenting on it) should be no more than one hour. (5% of respondent’s grade)

d. Presentation: Each student is to give a very brief (5 min.) Presentation to the class on his or her own Initial Proposal’s hypothesis. Students are free to ask questions and to make constructive comments on the substance of the proposal. (5% of grade)

e. Final Proposal: The Final Proposal (submitted electronically) is then to be sent to me. It should include any needed revisions based on advice from me and from the other students. (20% of grade)

---

3 For any electronic files containing coursework or other work that you send to professors, students, and staff for all work at DSPT, I recommend that you begin its title with your surname and first initial (for example: SmithJ-Paper1), unless the intended recipient (e.g., a professor in a class) directs you otherwise.
4. Written Exams: Two Written Exams on the course content, addressing the central issues of the course, will be given, to be completed by the students in class. See the “Grading Criteria,” later in this syllabus, for further details on what is expected. (40% of grade)

Each written assignment is to be submitted by computer copy. It must include the student’s name, date, course number and title, professor’s name, and title of assignment; it must have 1” to 1.5” page margins, with page numbers on each page (at least beginning with page 2). All main-body text should be in 12-point type; work typically should be double-spaced.
EXPLANATION OF GRADES

A summary of grade composition is given in the following table:

1. Attendance and Participation: 10%
2. Oral Reports, Outlines, & Brief Assignments: 10%
3a. Topic Suggestions (with brief presentation): 5%
3b. Initial Proposal (with brief presentation): 5%
3c. Edited Copies (of others’ work): 5%
3d. Presentation: 5%
3e. Final Proposal: 20%
4. Written Exams: 40%

Total: 100%

Grading Scale: A=100, A-=97, B+=93, B=90, B-=87, C+=83, C=80, C-=77, D+=73, D=70, F=0.

No late work of any kind will be accepted (except, at my discretion, for very serious reasons).

Grades for assignments and exams are assigned according to the rubrics on the following pages. The following table describes how grades are applied to students’ work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Deep understanding and insights are expressed in a clear, penetrating, and engaging</td>
<td>mostly “E”s &amp; no “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>manner, with virtually no errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Content, structure, and expression are all adequate, free of significant faults.</td>
<td>no “U”s – or mostly “E”s with very few “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Significant errors or shortcomings are present, although many basic elements of the</td>
<td>a few “U”s, few or no “E”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assignment are done adequately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Many serious deficiencies in content, structure, and expression are present, although</td>
<td>several “U”s, few or no “E”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at least a few basic elements of the assignment are done adequately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>There is a failure to execute the most basic elements of the assignment.</td>
<td>mostly “U”s (or no work submitted)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Research Paper Proposal – Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Style</th>
<th>U – scholarly standards achieved <strong>Unsatisfactorily</strong></th>
<th>S – scholarly standards achieved <strong>Satisfactorily</strong></th>
<th>E – scholarly standards achieved w/ <strong>Excellence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.a. Grammar, Spelling, etc.</td>
<td>The student… makes many errors in grammar, spelling, etc., that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>The student… makes few errors in grammar, spelling, etc., that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>The student… makes no errors in grammar, spelling, etc., that distract the reader from the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.b. Sentence Structure</td>
<td>writes with awkwardly or unclearly; or there is too little variation in sentence structure.</td>
<td>writes with adequate clarity; but writing may lack variation, or with some awkwardness.</td>
<td>writes very clearly, with variation in pattern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Parts</th>
<th>U – scholarly standards achieved <strong>Unsatisfactorily</strong></th>
<th>S – scholarly standards achieved <strong>Satisfactorily</strong></th>
<th>E – scholarly standards achieved w/ <strong>Excellence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.a. Headings &amp; Divisions</td>
<td>does not give headings or divisions, or uses the wrong format.</td>
<td>gives headings &amp; divisions that follow the proper format, with a minor exception.</td>
<td>gives headings &amp; divisions following the proper format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.b. Scope and Nature</td>
<td>gives confusing or insufficient background for understanding the question.</td>
<td>gives some background for understanding the question.</td>
<td>clearly gives a helpful background for understanding the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.c. Thesis Statement</td>
<td>does not state a hypothesis, even indirectly or vaguely.</td>
<td>states a hypothesis, though it may be somewhat unclear in expression.</td>
<td>states the hypothesis clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.d1. Description: Methodology</td>
<td>does not name the method to be used adequately.</td>
<td>names adequately the method to be used.</td>
<td>names and describes succinctly and clearly the method to be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.d2. Description: Project</td>
<td>does not describe how the research will be organized.</td>
<td>adequately describes how the research will be organized.</td>
<td>clearly describes how the research will be organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.d3. Description: Primary Sources</td>
<td>fails to explain how the set of primary sources was selected.</td>
<td>adequately explains how the set of primary sources was selected.</td>
<td>precisely explains how the set of primary sources was selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.d4. Description: Secondary Sources</td>
<td>fails to describe how secondary sources will support exposition or argumentation.</td>
<td>adequately describes how secondary sources will support exposition or argumentation (e.g., to explain context or implications).</td>
<td>succinctly and clearly describes how secondary sources will support exposition or argumentation (e.g., to explain context or implications).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.e. Significance</td>
<td>fails to show paper’s potential contribution to theology, or connections to other areas of theology, or implications for academy, Church, &amp;/or society.</td>
<td>adequately explains paper’s potential contribution to theology, or connections to other areas of theology, or implications for academy, Church, &amp;/or society.</td>
<td>skillfully explains paper’s potential contribution to theology, or connections to other areas of theology, or implications for academy, Church, &amp;/or society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.f. Bibliography</td>
<td>makes many errors in formatting bibliography, and/or important information is lacking.</td>
<td>makes only a few errors in formatting in bibliography; no important information is lacking.</td>
<td>makes no errors in formatting in bibliography; all pertinent information is present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WRITTEN EXAMS – GRADING CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>U – course standards achieved Unsatisfactorily</th>
<th>S – course standards achieved Satisfactorily</th>
<th>E – course standards achieved w/ Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Breadth of Knowledge</td>
<td>Does not adequately draw from sources (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>Adequately draws from sources (historical or contemporary).</td>
<td>Readily draws from a variety of sources (historical or contemporary).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Thoroughness</td>
<td>Misses most of the important aspects of the topic.</td>
<td>Covers most of the important aspects of the topic.</td>
<td>Covers all the important aspects of the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Accuracy &amp; Reasoning</td>
<td>Gives answers with at least one major error, or with many errors.</td>
<td>Gives answers that are free of major errors, with only a few minor errors.</td>
<td>Gives answers that are accurate in virtually all details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Insight</td>
<td>Makes observations that betray a shallow or un-nuanced understanding.</td>
<td>Makes observations that indicate an adequate grasp of the topic.</td>
<td>Makes observations that are particularly deep, penetrating, or nuanced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REQUIRED TEXTS:


———. *Mysterium Ecclesiae. Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against Certain Errors of the Present Day* [24 June 1973]. AAS 65 (1973): 396-408. [at this time, CDF was still called SCDF; available online]


Vatican Council I. *Dei Filius: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*. Session 3 [24 April 1870]. [available online]

———. *Pastor Aeternus: First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*. Session 4 [18 July 1870]. [available online]


———. *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. AAS 57 (1965): 5-112. [available online]

*Note that only a work marked with an asterisk (*) will require any purchase. All prices listed are as found at bookfinder.com (new/used, shipping included); prices may vary considerably; the 13-digit numbers beginning “978-” are ISBN references. At my discretion, some additional readings may be assigned as the course progresses, depending on the students’ needs or interests, or other considerations.*
OPTIONAL READING / BIBLIOGRAPHY

General / Various Topics:


St. Thomas Aquinas on Sacra Doctrina:


Postmodernism and Postliberalism:


Penner, Myron B. *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005.


DSPT MATh PROGRAM OUTCOMES

In the Master of Arts in Theology Program, for either the Thesis or Exam Option (here, the goals are taken from the Thesis Option, since they include within them the Exam Option Outcomes), in addition to the stated institutional goals, students develop:

MAThO-1 (foundations): a foundational knowledge of the fundamental areas of theological inquiry in the Roman Catholic tradition (Biblical Studies, historical theology, dogmatic theology, and moral theology);

MAThO-2 (specialization): a specialized knowledge of one area of theological inquiry (area of concentration) chosen by the student;

MAThO-3 (writing): the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through scholarly writing;

MAThO-4 (presenting): the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through oral presentations and discussions;

MAThO-5 (integrating): the ability to integrate contemporary theological issues with the tradition of the Catholic Church, and where possible with the theological tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

(Each term labeling its respective outcome, underlined in italics, is my own.)
**PLAN FOR THE SEMESTER**

**Note:** Assignments are to be completed by 6:00 AM of the due date for which they are listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 07</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong></td>
<td>(Students should arrive at class having a copy of this syllabus available for reference.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sept 14 | **Introduction to Theological Method**   | ITC, *Theology Today*  
R. R. Reno, “Theology after the Revolution” |
| Sept 28 | **Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas:**  | *SCG, ST,* and The Compendium of Theology  
*SCG:* bk. I, chaps. 1-9; bk. IV, chap. 1  
*ST:* Prolog; and bk. I, q. 1, arts. 1-8  
Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology,* pp. 315-322, 322-331 |
| Oct 05  | **Scripture and Tradition, part 1**      | Neuner & Dupuis, Chap. II, “Tradition and Scripture”  
*ST,* bk. I, q. 1, arts. 9-10  
Vatican I, *Dei Filius,* chap. 2 (opt.: all)  
Vatican II, *Dei Verbum,* nos. 1-13 (opt.: all) |
| Oct 12 | **Scripture and Tradition, part 2**      | Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini,* nos. 1-49, esp. nos. 17-49  
Mansini, chaps. 2-3, pp. 43-110 |
| Oct 19 | **First Exam**                           | Mansini, chap. 5, pp. 143-183 |
| Oct 26 | — no class —                            | Reading Week — |
| Nov 02 | **Philosophy in Theology, part 2**      | Mansini, chap. 6, pp. 184-212  
Vatican I, *Dei Filius,* chap. 4; *Humani Generis; Fides et Ratio,* Pope Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University” (“Regensburg Address”) |
| Nov 09 | **Faith and Theology, part 1**          | *ST* II-II qq. 1-6  
Mansini, chap. 7, pp. 213-243 |
**Nov 16**
Initial Proposal due

Faith and Theology, part 2

*ST* II-II qq. 7-16; q. 45, art. 2
Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Chap. 3
Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 5
CCC, nos. 153-184
(Opt.: ITC, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church* [2014])

**Nov 23**

— no class — Thanksgiving break —

**Nov 30**
Edited Copies due

Theology and the Magisterium, part 1

Mansini, chap. 4, pp. 111-139
Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternis*
Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Intro, nos. 1-9 (handout)
Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 22-29
CDF (SCDF), *Mysterium Ecclesiae* [1973]
*Code of Canon Law*, nos. 747-755, 833
CDF, *Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity* [1989]
Handout on the exercise of Magisterium
(Opt.: ITC, *On the Interpretation of Dogmas* [1989])

**Dec 07**
Theology and the Magisterium, part 2

“Land O’Lakes Statement” [1967]
ITC, *Theses on the Relationship between Ecclesiastical Magisterium and Theology* [1975]
Ratzinger, *Nature and Mission of Theology*, pp. 7-41;
CDF, *Donum Veritatis* [1990]
Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* [1990].
Mansini, chap. 8, pp. 244-272

**Dec 14**
Course Review & Summary; Exam; Presentations

Second Exam

**Dec 21**
Final Proposal Due

*Not a class session*