PH 4011: Twentieth-Century Thomism
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology

Spring 2015
Thursdays, 12:40—3:30 PM
DSPT 2

Fr. Justin Gable, O.P., Ph.D.
Office: DSPT 119
Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 PM
e-mail: jgable@dspt.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

In the wake of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), the study of St. Thomas Aquinas underwent a revival, inspiring a number of brilliant minds to engage the thought of Aquinas in various areas of philosophy and theology. This course presents a survey of some of these twentieth-century Thomists, and examines their development of the thought of St. Thomas in dialogue with the challenges of modernity and the problems of contemporary society. The course will examine their contributions in such areas as philosophical methodology, the theory of knowledge, the relationship of philosophy and theology, political philosophy, aesthetics, the philosophy of language, and the nature of the person. Students will have the opportunity to read and discuss the works of such Thomists as Maréchal, Lonergan, Maritain, Gilson, Owens, Pieper, Clarke, and McInerny. This course, an advanced seminar for M.A. and Ph.D. students, presumes the student’s already existing familiarity with St. Thomas.

By the end of the semester, students will have gained a deeper understanding of the ways the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas has been brought to bear on issues in contemporary philosophy and culture, and the great diversity even among thinkers who claim St. Thomas as their philosophical and theological touchstone. Students should be able to articulate what it at stake in the central debates among contemporary Thomists and the differences between the positions of key thinkers, critically evaluating arguments and their relationship to key issues external (e.g., modernism, secularism, idealism) and internal (e.g., critical realism, Christian philosophy, analogy, the nature of the art or the person) to Thomism.
Course Requirements:

As an advanced seminar course, this class will focus primarily on the discussion of assigned texts, although the instructor will provide background material in lecture form from time to time. Students will be expected to carefully prepare assigned readings in order to actively participate in the conversation and raise thoughtful questions in class. Each week several students will be asked to begin the class discussion by introducing a particular text and raising several substantive questions for discussion. Because this class is structured as a seminar, attendance and participation in the discussion is essential. Absences will significantly affect the students’ final grade. Students with disabilities or whose first language is not English are encouraged to speak with the instructor about any special needs they might have.

Students will be evaluated according to the quality of their class participation and presentations, and a final research paper of 15-20 pages. These assignments are designed to help students develop their own critical thinking on principles articulated by St. Thomas Aquinas and contemporary Thomists, and articulate their understanding of contemporary approaches to the thought of Aquinas both orally and in writing. They also offer students the opportunity to show their growth in the DSPT’s institutional goals of integrative thinking, self-direction, collaborative learning, and leadership. All sources in the final research paper should be cited using proper “Turabian” format (see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Eighth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Students should conscientiously avoid plagiarism, and are asked to consult the *DSPT Student Handbook* for the DSPT’s policies regarding academic honesty. A paper proposal consisting of a short paragraph describing a student’s chosen topic, along with a preliminary bibliography, should be submitted by April 17. The final research paper is due no later than May 29, 2014.

Grading: Weekly Class Participation: 25%

Class Presentations: 25%

Final Research Paper: 50%
Assigned Texts:


Weekly reading assignments will be taken from these assigned texts, as well as from readings posted on Moodle [(http://moodle.gtu.edu)](http://moodle.gtu.edu).

Course Schedule:

2/5: Introduction to the Course

The Twentieth-Century Thomistic Revival

*Aeterni Patris*


Brian J. Shanley, O.P., *The Thomist Tradition*, Ch. 1

2/12: Transcendental Thomism I: Rousselot and Maréchal

Joseph Maréchal, S.J., selections from *The Maréchal Reader*


Joseph Donceel, S.J., “Transcendental Thomism”


2/19: Transcendental Thomism II: Lonergan

Bernard Lonergan, S.J., selections from *Insight*

2/26: No Class (American Maritain Association Conference)

3/5: Introduction to Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson

The Idea of Christian Philosophy


Ralph McInerny, “Reflections on Christian Philosophy”

Jacques Maritain, selections from *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*

Étienne Gilson, selections from *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*  
and *Christian Philosophy*

Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, I.§4
3/12: Maritain, Gilson, and “Critical Realism”

Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Ch. 3

Étienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, Chs. 5-8

John F. X. Knasas, *Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists*, Ch. 4

3/19: Existential Thomism and Contemporary Issues in Thomist Metaphysics

Jacques Maritain, selections from *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Ch. 5

Étienne Gilson, selections from *Being and Some Philosophers*

Joseph Owens, C.S.sR., selections from *An Interpretation of Existence*

W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Limitation of Act by Potency: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism?


3/26: No Class (Reading Week)

4/2: No Class (Holy Thursday)

4/9: Contemporary Thomist Approaches to Art

Jacques Maritain, selections from *Art and Scholasticism*, Chs. IV-IX

Étienne Gilson, *The Arts of the Beautiful*, Chs. 2-5

4/16: Church, Freedom, and Democracy

Jacques Maritain, Man and the State, Chs. IV-VI

John Courtney Murray, selections from We Hold These Truths

4/23: Pieper on Leisure and Tradition

Pieper, Leisure as the Basis of Culture

Pieper, Tradition: Concept and Claim

4/30: Contemporary Thomist Approaches to Language

John C. O’Callaghan, selections from Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn

Étienne Gilson, selections from Linguistics and Philosophy

5/7: Analytic and Wittgensteinian Thomism

John F. X. Knasas, “Haldane’s Analytic Thomism and Aquinas’ Actus Essendi”

John Haldane, “Analytical Thomism: How We Got Here, Why It Is Worth Remaining, and Where We May Go Next”

Steven Long, Natura Pura, Ch. 3

Robert Pouivet, After Wittgenstein, St. Thomas, Chs. 1-4

5/14: Aquinas and Analogy

Ralph McInerny, selections from Aquinas and Analogy

Bernard Montagnes, selections from The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being According to Thomas Aquinas

Steven Long, selections from Analogia Entis
5/21: Aquinas and Personalism

W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being*

W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First Century Thomism”

5/29: Final Research Paper Due by 5 PM

N.B.: The instructor reserves the right to revise the course syllabus as the need arises.