

Philosophy for Theology

Dr. Joseph Minich, Instructor

Course Description

This course assumes only the most basic “survey” knowledge of philosophy. The goal is to (re)introduce students to many of the concepts that have informed (and been shaped by!) the project of classical Christian orthodoxy. While our focus will be on the nomenclature of the scholastic tradition, we will (in both lectures and in the final session) seek to supplement this with material drawn from other - particularly modern - philosophical traditions. The goal is to very broadly cover the basic tools that will help you understand classical ontology, epistemology, and anthropology - and to help you identify when these have been (and may further prove) of crucial import in the navigation of theological questions.

Course Format

The format of the course will be a roughly equivalent mix of lecture and guided discussion. It is assumed that students will come having read and engaged with the text selection for that day, and with thoughts (and critical questions) prepared to contribute. Classes will meet via Zoom for two hours each week and will be recorded for later viewing by students who cannot participate. Supplementary student interaction (both informal and formal) is highly encouraged, and I also aim to make myself available to you.

Course Objectives

This course aims (1) to introduce students to many of the philosophical concepts that have informed classical orthodox approaches to theology, (2) to dialogically engage, learn from, and help train students in the art of thinking well, and (3) to encourage students concerning the veracity of the Christian faith by means of an expanded (rather than calcified) imagination.

Course Requirements

1. Weekly reading (due before each class). 40% of grade.
2. Prepared critical comments or questions (due during each class). 10% of grade.
3. Paper proposal (due on the 6th class session). 10% of grade.
4. 12-16 page integrative paper (due on the final day of class). 40% of grade.

Course Texts & Schedule

W. Norris Clarke. *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

Frederick D. Wilhelmsen. *Man's Knowledge of Reality: An Introduction to Thomistic Epistemology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1956).

Pierre-Marie Emonet. *The Greatest Marvel of Nature: An Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000).

Harold Raley, "Julian Marias: Philosophy of the Person" (via PDF).

Peter Escalante, "Philosophy as a Way of Life: Reforming the Quest for Wisdom" (via PDF).

Week	Dates	Discussion Topics	Reading
1	TBD	Being, Existence, & Essence	Clarke, 1-91
2	TBD	Intrinsic Causes of Being	Clarke, 92-177
3	TBD	Extrinsic Causes of Being	Clarke, 178-244
4	TBD	Metaphysics (Conclusion)	Clarke, 245-314
5	TBD	Being and Knowledge	Wilhelmsen, 1-74
6	TBD	Epistemology Proper	Wilhelmsen, 75-184
7	TBD	The Metaphysics of Man	Emonet, 1-128
8	TBD	Modern Philosophical Tools	Escalante, 1-53 & Raley, 1-23