

Sacred Heart Major Seminary
The College of Liberal Arts
Fall Term 2008

Course: PHL 400, Philosophical Foundations I,
Three Credit Hours; W 6:30—9:30 p.m.
Instructor: Dr. Victor Salas, Jr.
Office Hours: TR 1:30-2:30, or by appointment
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General Course Description

A survey of philosophical thought from Plato to Aquinas, with concentrated attention on the systematic thought of Aquinas. Students will learn the basic concepts of Thomistic metaphysics, anthropology and ethics.

Specific Course Description

Our course will begin with a brief consideration of the diverse approaches to philosophical inquiry as found in Plato and Aristotle. We shall see how each of the two probes into the meaning of—among other things—nature, change, and being. Our readings from Plato will consist of selections from the *Republic* and his physico-mathematical treatise, the *Timaeus*. We shall contrast Plato's "top-down" approach with Aristotle's "bottom-up" approach. Of particular interest to us will be Aristotle's *Categories* and *Physics*.

Having established this philosophical framework, we shall consider how various theologians employ the philosophical concepts of the ancient Greeks in the task of conducting their theology. St. Anselm's method, which has as its centerpiece the so-called ontological argument for God's existence, will be examined.

Finally, we shall spend the remainder of our time forming a systematic and coherent philosophical vision adequate to prepare the student for further fruitful theological study. Here, we shall take St. Thomas Aquinas as our example and concentrate chiefly upon his metaphysics, anthropology, and ethics. In this final section to be considered are Thomas's proofs for God's existence, possible knowledge about God's nature, the metaphysical constituents of a human being, and the last end of man.

Required Texts

Diogenes Allen and Eric Springsted, *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Louisville: Westminster Knox Press, 2007, 1992)
Francis Selman, *Aquinas 101: A Basic Introduction to the Thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Christian Classics, 2007)

Prerequisites

None

Course Requirements

The course requirements will be as follows:

1. Exam I: 30%
2. Exam II: 30%
3. Exam III: 30%
4. Class Participation: 10%

N.B. No extra credit is offered under any circumstances.

Attendance Policy

The student is expected to attend every class unless there is a “grave reason” not to do so. I, not the student, am the sole person who determines what is or is not a “grave reason.” The student should be advised that if he or she misses four or more classes, he or she will be automatically dropped from the course.

Academic Honesty

You are expected both by the policy of this Institution and by the demands of charity to be honest in all your work, academic or otherwise. Any form of academic dishonesty cannot and will not be tolerated. Occurrences of academic dishonesty will result both in the student’s receiving a failing grade on the assignment and in the notification of all appropriate authorities.

Grading Scale

95-100	A	80-82	B-	65-69	D+
90-94	A-	77-79	C+	60-64	D
87-89	B+	73-76	C	0-59	F
83-86	B	70-72	C-		

Tentative Schedule of Readings

1. Plato	The Sun, the Line, and the Cave	Diogenes Allen reader: pp. 1-15
2. Plato	“Creation”	“ “ “ : pp. 16-38
3. Aristotle	Substance and Its Predicates	“ “ “ : pp. 39-46
4. Aristotle	Nature and the Four Causes	“ “ “ : pp. 56-66

Exam I

5. St. Anselm	The Ontological Argument	“ “ “ : pp. 83-90
6. St. Thomas Aquinas	The Existence of God	“ “ “ : pp. 91-97
7. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 1, 2	<i>Aquinas 101</i> : pp. 19-42
8. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 3, 4	“ “ : pp. 43-70

Exam II

9. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 5, 6	“ “ : pp. 71-98
10. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 7, 8	“ “ : pp. 99-136
11. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 9, 10	“ “ : pp. 137-166
12. St. Thomas Aquinas	Chs. 11, 12	“ “ : pp. 167-188
13. St. Thomas Aquinas	Ch. 13	“ “ : pp. 189-204

Exam III