And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3)

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:3–4)

Catalogue description
This course will explore the relation of the philosophical notions of God to the God of revelation with particular consideration of the predicament of theology in the face of atheism. The course will explore God’s self-revelation in the Old and New Testament as well as the economic and immanent Trinity. The course will trace the development of Trinitarian theology and provide an evaluation of contemporary questions about the Trinity. Prerequisite: Revelation and Faith.

This section of Doctrine of God
This section will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 9:45 am in Room 204 of the Nold Building.

In this iteration of Doctrine of God we will follow St. Thomas Aquinas’s approach in his Summa theologiae, with assigned readings from a condensed version of his text complemented by the early creeds, readings in the history of doctrine, a recent book on “the new atheism,” and a very small book reviewing the whole doctrine of the Trinity and addressing some contemporary questions. This is a relatively demanding
course, as befits the subject matter. Students wishing to read the *Summa theologiae* directly, instead of the condensed text, are encouraged to do so.

This section presupposes that all students are conversant in the Divine Scriptures, are immersed in the liturgical life of the Church, and are committed to the life of prayer and Christian perfection. The material and the manner of St. Thomas’s presentation will not make more than superficial sense otherwise.

Since the doctrines of creation and providence seem not to be taught elsewhere in the curriculum, we will follow Aquinas and include them in our study of the Triune God.

### Required books


Timothy M*CDERMOTT*, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ISBN 0870612107 (paperback $42.50)

Neil O*RMEROD*, *A Trinitarian Primer*, ISBN 0814633552 (paperback $9.95)

Note: Students are required to have printed (not electronic) copies of these books in class. Additional readings may be distributed during the semester, depending on the particular interests of the students and on questions arising in class.

### Course requirements

Each student taking the course for credit will take an exam at the end of the semester. This will be a written exam for M.Div. students (and the equivalent), but those studying for a higher degree will sit for both the written exam and an individual oral exam.

Any student may substitute an original research paper on the way authentic Trinitarian theology shapes Catholic spirituality, prayer, liturgy, sacred art, sacred music, or
preaching. Papers need to be well-written, based on appropriate reading beyond the required course texts, 2,500 to 3,000 words long, and written in accord with the current *Chicago Manual of Style*.

All students are required to read chapters 1, 3, 4, 9 and 10 of JND Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines*, all of Neil Ormerod's *Trinitarian Primer*, and at least chapters 1 and 3 of Edward Feser's *The Last Superstition*. These need not be read on any particular schedule.

The course calendar, below, indicates readings which are required in preparation for each class session. Students are advised to take notes on the readings.

Please bring your Bible, Denzinger, and the relevant part of the *Summa theologiae* (or McDermott’s *Concise Translation*) to class. You may use any notes you taken in class during any part of the final exam.

Students are required to use real books and papers in class, and to take notes by hand. No computers (including tablets, e-book readers, and smart phones) may be used in class except as accommodations to disabilities. There are three reasons for this requirement: (1) electronics are distracting to others, (2) electronics degrade their user’s engagement with what is happening in class, and (3) taking handwritten notes is demonstrably more effective than typing them. Besides, (4) most of us spend too much time looking at screens already, and (5) we are losing skills we will need during and after the zombie apocalypse.

Classes may not be recorded except as an accommodation to a disability.

**Grades**

The written exam, oral exam (if taken), and class participation will be of equal weight in calculating course grades. In the case of students writing papers, the paper and class participation will each be worth half the course grade.

Average performance will be graded B. Grades will be curved to a 3.0 average for the section. If, in the end, this seems inequitable to the professor, a different class average may result.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td>Syllabus review, intro to <em>Summa theologiae</em></td>
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<td>August 26</td>
<td>God in sacred doctrine</td>
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<td>D 39–40, 54, 428–433</td>
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<td>August 31</td>
<td>God's self-revelation</td>
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<td>D 85–86, 1785–88</td>
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<td>September 2</td>
<td>Early controversies about the divine nature</td>
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<td>D 1–18, 111a, 113–125, 148</td>
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<td>September 7</td>
<td>(Labor Day)</td>
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<td>September 9</td>
<td>ST 1a, q. 2, God's existence. Prayers from St. Anselm (handout)</td>
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<td>September 14</td>
<td>ST 1a, q. 2, continued</td>
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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Modern (“classical”) atheism</td>
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<td>September 21</td>
<td>Contemporary (“new”) atheism</td>
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<td>September 23</td>
<td>Principles for apologetics and evangelization</td>
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<td>D 1781–1820 (Vatican I, <em>Dei Filius</em>)</td>
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<td>September 28</td>
<td>ST 1a, qq. 3–13, God's essence</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>ST 1a, qq. 3–13, continued</td>
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<td>October 5</td>
<td>(Shepherd’s Cup)</td>
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<td>October 7</td>
<td>ST 1a, qq. 3–13, continued</td>
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<td>October 12</td>
<td>(Fall break)</td>
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<td>October 14</td>
<td>ST 1a, qq. 14–21, God’s knowledge &amp; will.</td>
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<td>Denzinger, texts in systematic index X g, h</td>
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Monday  October 19  ST 1a, qq. 22–26, God's power & providence.

Wednesday  October 21  ST 1a, qq. 22–26, continued.

Monday  October 26  ST 1a, qq. 22–26, continued.

Wednesday  October 28  Later controversies de Deo uno

Monday  November 2  Review of de Deo uno

Wednesday  November 4  Historical problems in Trinitarian theology

Monday  November 9  The Revelation of the Trinity

Wednesday  November 11  Early Trinitarian controversies

Monday  November 16  ST 1a, qq. 27–28, Trinitarian origins

Wednesday  November 18  ST 1a, qq. 29–32, persons in general

Monday  November 23  ST 1a, qq. 33–43, the Divine persons

Wednesday  November 25  (Thanksgiving break)

Monday  November 30  ST 1a, qq. 33–43, continued.

Wednesday  December 2  ST 1a, qq. 33–43, continued.

Monday  December 7  Review of de Deo trino

Bibliography


