I. Introduction – Explanation of Course’s Topic [Reading: Owens, Elementary, “Historical Intro” and ch. 1.]
   A. Special Meaning of “Something as Existing” as Subject of Metaphysics
   B. Meaning of “Supernatural” and Identification with God
   C. (A) and (B) as Discreet but Causally Connected Items
   D. Why Use a Catholic Theologian, Thomas Aquinas?

II. Focusing in on the Metaphysical Viewpoint [Reading: Ibid., chs. 2 and 3.]
   A. Grasping the Distinction between a Thing and Its Existence: Conceptualization and Judgment
      1. General, Non-Metaphysical, Description of the Duplex Operatio Intellectus
         a. First Operation
            i. Preliminary Description and Labels
            ii. Lacks Particularities of the Instances
            iii. Distinctive Cognitive Dynamism
            iv. Terminologies for Object of First Operation
         b. Second Operation
            i. Reversal of Attention
            ii. Distinct Appreciation of Particularities
            iii. Composite Appreciation of the Instances
            iv. Terminologies for Second Operation
      2. Aquinas’ Metaphysical Application of the Two Intellectual Operations
         a. A Special Multiplicity of Instances – an individual thing as both really and cognitively existing.
         b. Setting up the Multiplicity
         c. Applying the Two Operations
         d. Individual Thing Itself as the Commonality
         e. Distinct Appreciation of the Thing’s Real Existence
         f. Relation of Real Existence to the Thing
         g. Terminology for Judgmentally Grasped Existence
         h. Consideration of Cartesian and Empiricist Objections to a Real Thing Cognitionally Existing

B. Prima facie Problems in the Metaphysical Viewpoint [Reading: Provided Handout from Ayer’s Language, Truth and Logic]
   1. A. J. Ayer’s Argument that the Thing’s Existence Cannot be an “Attribute”
   2. Reply from the Perspective of Esse

C. Platonic Essentialism and Aquinas’ View of Essence as Potency [Reading: Owens, Elementary, chs. 4 and 9]
   1. Meaning of “Essentialism”
   2. Essentialism and the Metaphysicians Critiqued by Ayer
   3. Famous Essentialists
   4. Debate between Plato and Aquinas
      a. Plato’s Argument from Contemplation of Commonalities
      b. Aquinas’ Reply: Contemplation via Abstraction
c. Platonic Observation of Incongruity between Commonality and Purported Data for Abstraction
d. Aquinas’ Distinction between Precise vs. Non-precise Abstraction
5. Aquinas on Essence as Absolute Passive Potency for *Esse*

D. Analogy and the Transcendentals: *Ens, Unum, Verum, Bonum* [Reading: Ibid., ch. 4; pp. 86-92]
   1. Difficulties in Conceptualizing Judgmentally Grasped Existence and the Need to Find Sameness in Difference
   2. Examples of the Sameness-in-difference phenomenon in Ordinary Experience
   3. Philosophical Elaboration under the Rubric of “Analogy”
   4. Types of Analogy: Proportion and Proportionality
   5. Application of Analogical Conceptualization to Judgmentally Grasped Existence
   6. The More Primitive Context: The Notion of Being
      a. The Commonality of Being (*Ratio Entis*)
      b. Analogous Nature of Being (*Unum*)
      c. Being as Transcendental
      d. Being as Evocative of the Intellectual Life (*Verum*)
      e. Being as the Good (*Bonum*)
      f. The Good and the Eruption of Volition
      g. The Real Freedom of the Intellector of Being
      h. Intellectors of Being and the Encounter with Obligation
      i. Integration of *Ratio Entis* and *Actus Essendi*
      j. Aquinas’ Understanding of *Ratio Entis* as *Habens Esse.*

III. Causal Implications in the Subject of Metaphysics
A. The Aristotelian Accidental and Dependency [Reading: Ibid., chs. 10-11]
   1. Introduction
   2. Previous Discussion of Attributes and Aristotle’s Notion of Accidents
B. Causality vs. David Hume’s Critique [Reading: Ibid., pp. 77-78]
   1. Aristotelian Demonstration of Efficient Causality from the Dependency of Accidents.
   2. Hume’s Critique and a Reply
      a. No Direct Knowledge of Causality
         i. in the external world
         ii. in the internal world
      b. No Reasoned *A Posteriori* Knowledge of Causality from Constant Conjunction
      c. No Reasoned *A Priori* Knowledge of Causality
      d. An Aristotelian Reply
C. Efficient Causality for *Esse* [Reading: Ibid., ch. 5, pp. 68-75; Ibid., pp. 80-81]
   1. Review of Methodology for *Esse* as *Sui Generis* Accident
   2. Application to *Esse* of Aristotelian Demonstration of Efficient Causality
   3. The Causal Regress: Finite, Infinite, Circular?
   4. Subsistent *Esse* as the First Cause of the Thing’s *Esse.*

IV. Identification of Subsistent *Esse* with the Supernatural: Metaphysical Proofs of Infinity, Simplicity, Transcendency, Unicity, Immutability, Eternity, Creative, Immensity, Spirituality, Volitional, and Omniscience. [Reading: Ibid., pp. 83-89; ch. 25]

V. Tasks of “High” Metaphysics:
A. The Creator and Human Freedom
B. The Creator and the Existence of Evil
I. Aims and Purposes: Though Aquinas was ex professo a theologian, indications exist that Aquinas mentally possessed a mature philosophical science of metaphysics just as certainly as he possessed a science of mathematics. This course aims to introduce students to the basic ideas of Aquinas’ philosophical science of metaphysics. These basic ideas are only two: the subject of the science and the implications thereof. In the lectures I pursue this aim with students, not by reading texts, but by thinking along the paths that lead to these basic ideas. This thinking includes some engagement with other historical figures. Aquinas’ texts and those of Thomists are extensively available in the references of the Owens book mentioned below.

II. Textbook: Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*. At Bookstore. Further reading, as well as recommended reading, will be assigned and mentioned during the course.

III. Marking. The final mark will be computed as follows. There will be a brief quiz on every previous week’s lecture material; the average of these quizzes will count for 10% of the final mark. The average of three in-term exams will count for 45% of the final mark. Approximate dates for the in-terms exams are: Sept. 23, Oct. 21, Nov. 23. The final comprehensive exam will count for 30%. The remaining 15% of the final mark will be determined from a 5-7 page philosophical discussion on one of the Suggested Readings for the course. For details on the paper, see the attached sheet. Due date for the paper is Dec. 2. No extensions.

MLA students will follow another regimen for a final mark. Please see the professor about this at the start of classes.

IV. Attendance. The teacher expects students to be present for every class. Lack of attendance is a basis for dismissal from the course.

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. Their offices can be reached at (713) 525-6953 or 2169.