This course explores the philosophical pillars of the Western public life, as they are rooted in the Catholic and, more broadly, Christian tradition. The main topics are: common sense, natural law, and capitalism. Students are expected to conceptually appropriate this philosophical foundation and to be able to apply it to our contemporary public life. The syllabus is subject to changes.

M Jan 22 Introduction

COMMON SENSE

Mirela Oliva, “The Challenge of the Thomistic sensus communis: A Hermeneutic View” (on BB)

M Feb 5 Philip K. Howard, *The Death of Common Sense*, ch. 1, *The Death of Common Sense*.

NATURAL LAW

Michael Baur, “Aquinas on Law and Natural Law” (on BB)


M Feb 26 Jacques Maritain, *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, ch. II.

M March 5 Team work: Discuss a problem of the contemporary public life from the perspective of the natural law. Recommended reading: D. Forte, *Natural Law and Contemporary Public Policy*.

March 12 Spring Break

M March 26 Presentations

CAPITALISM

M Apr 2 Jacques Maritain, “Person and Property” (in *Freedom in The Modern World*) (on BB)
The Rule of St Benedict (on BB)


Apr 30 Presentations
REQUIRED READINGS:

*Additional required readings are posted on Blackboard.*

RECOMMENDED READINGS:


GRADE:

- 30% class participation (attendance, active participation at class discussion. Only two unexcused absences are accepted. For each further absence your class participation grade will be lowered with half letter.)
- 30% presentation
- 40% paper, topic of your choice (15 pages, 12 pt, 1.5 lines, due May 10)

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

No computers, no phones, no ipads. No food.

DISABILITY:

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.