

University of St. Thomas
Master of Arts in Catholic Studies Program
Course Offerings

CSMA 500: Catholic Thought and Culture I

The interdisciplinary study in Catholic Thought and Culture I looks at the period from antiquity to the early Middle Ages. This course will consider some pre-Christian works of intellect and imagination so that we may glimpse the contributions such works make to the later development of the Catholic tradition. Upon completion of Catholic Thought and Culture I, students will have a sense of the depth, complexity, and beauty of the Catholic intellectual tradition as it has developed up to medieval times.

CSMA 501: Catholic Thought and Culture II

This course continues the interdisciplinary exploration of the wisdom of the Catholic tradition expressed through works of intellect and imagination, from the late medieval period up to contemporary times. Classics in literature, art, theology, philosophy, music, the sciences, and/or architecture are discussed. Emphasis is placed on recognizing the integrity of the grounding Catholic vision and on tracing the unified development and expansion of that vision over time.

CMSA 510: Essentials of the Catholic Faith

This course will focus on a theological study of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in its entirety, aimed at helping students develop a broad and comprehensive grasp of the essential claims of the Catholic faith and an understanding of its unity and integrity. Particular attention is given to the scope and integrity of the teachings of the Catholic Church with regard to the inter-relationship of the four sections of the Catechism, namely, the Profession of Faith, the Sacraments, Life in Christ, and Prayer. Explicit attention will be given to ways in which Catholic teachings are manifested in the classic texts and works of art, such as those examined in Catholic Thought and Culture I and II.

CSMA 520: Contemporary Moral Problems

A philosophical study of contemporary moral problems concerning such topics as economic justice, gender fairness, race relations, the environment, medical care, genetic engineering, human sexuality, abortion, and suicide. This course centers on arguments that stand or fall on the basis of natural evidence and reason; it draws on moral theory and encourages critical reflection on opposing arguments concerning each of the topics discussed. Consideration is given to the relationship between philosophic moral arguments and the teaching of the Church.

CSMA 530: Catholicism in the United States

A historical study of the development of American Catholicism from the mission era to the present. The course explored Catholicism's encounter with American culture as well as internal issues and key personalities. Among the topics given critical reflection are: faith and ethnicity/race; the emergence of a national Catholic influence; styles of lay, religious, and clerical leadership; and Catholic social justice initiatives. Special attention will be paid to the local Church as an illustration of certain attributes of national consequence.

Topics Courses Offered

History and Theology of the Papacy

This course surveys the history of the papacy, from the New Testament period up to John Paul II. Broad themes include: the developing understanding of the Petrine office; the interactions and mutual understandings of the popes and other Christian bishops, both before the schism with Orthodoxy and afterwards; and the papacy's changing relation to the civil power, from the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages and up to the modern secular nation-state. Topics and episodes to receive special treatment include: Peter in Rome; Roman bishops/popes before Constantine; the papacy and the struggle over Chalcedon, from Popes Leo I to Martin I; the Frankish alliance and the origin of the papal states; the popes as sponsors of conversion; the papacy and the struggle with the Holy Roman Empire and with the rising dynastic states; the Reformation; the 19th c. papacy, democracy, liberalism, and secularization; relations with the Church in America; the papacy and modern totalitarianism, especially Pius XII and the Holocaust; Vatican Councils I and II. Theological reflection will focus on the Petrine office and the primacy.

Modern Catholic Literature

This course surveys a wealth of twentieth century fiction and non-fiction that participates in the Catholic tradition by expressing, to a greater or lesser degree, Catholic themes or subject matter. As critic and writer Flannery O'Connor has stated, Catholic literature is constantly "pushing its own limits outward toward the limits of mystery." "The more we learn about ourselves," O'Connor added, "the deeper into the unknown we push the frontiers of fiction." As the theoretical basis for the course, we will work to refine our conception of "Catholic literature" by discussing a number of critical sources on the topic. Our readings may include works by Muriel Spark, Annie Dillard, Ron Hansen, Shusaku Endo, Flannery O'Connor, Evelyn Waugh, Georges Bernanos, Graham Greene, Sigrid Undset, Dorothy Day, Caroline Gordon, Kathleen Norris, Dorothy Sayers, and Simone Weil.

Thomistic Moral Theology

Following the plan articulated in the *secunda pars* of St. Thomas' *Summa theologiae*, this course offers a systematic presentation of the tradition of Thomistic moral theology. By way of introduction and background, some attention will be given to the metaphysical

and epistemological presuppositions of Thomistic moral analysis, especially as these bear upon moral psychology, human action and Christian virtue. Time permitting, the course will conclude with a brief investigation of contemporary texts including *Veritatis Splendor* and the third part of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Philosophical Principles in the Thought of John Paul II

This course has two essential purposes. The first is to identify the philosophical foundations of John Paul II's thought. The second purpose is to discover how these principles are used in developing particular arguments on social, moral and metaphysical topics, as expressed in his writings, particularly his encyclical letters. Basic logical analysis will be an essential element in achieving these aims.

Europe and the Church, 1789 – Present

It is hard to overestimate the impact of the striking changes that have occurred in the world during the last two hundred years, changes that have had their focal point in European civilization. These have also been years of great moment for the Catholic Church. This course aims at dealing with key people, events, and developments in the Church in its relation to Europe since the French Revolution, and at the same time at investigating what it means to do history and to do history as Catholics. We will pay particular attention to the historical vision of Christopher Dawson, and will read almost exclusively primary sources.

Catholic Spiritual Narrative: The Rhetoric of Conversion

An intensive examination of six representative literary works of spiritual narrative/autobiography that together serve to illustrate the range of themes, subject matter, spirituality, and style that constitute the rich and long genre of Catholic personal writing. We will discuss these works in their aesthetic, historic, cultural, and religious dimensions and consider some of the many literary critical questions related to the fascinating genre of first-person narrative. Texts include Augustine's *Confessions*; Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*; Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*; Therese of Lisieux's *Story of a Soul*; Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness*; and Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

Canon Law: Basic Principles (cross-listed with LAW 810)

This course will examine the nature, history and function of law in the Catholic Church by presenting an overview of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and other ecclesiastical laws and regulations concerning general norms (Book I), the rights and obligations of the Christian faithful and ecclesiastical structures (Book II), the teaching office of the Church (Book III) and temporal goods (Book V). The course will provide students with an understanding of the structures, processes and discipline directed to harmony and order for the Christian faithful. It will seek to engender a knowledge and respect for ecclesiastical law as a pastoral instrument and practical science that translates the

Church's teaching into reasonable norms for members' everyday lives. Students will learn about the basic structures in the Church at the universal, national, diocesan and parochial levels and about resources helpful to their effective participation and ministries in the Church. The course will introduce students to a significantly different juridical system and body of law and will enhance their abilities to deal with legal issues arising in a distinctly different juridical context.

Theological Works of John Henry Newman

This seminar will focus on the principal theological works of John Henry Cardinal Newman with particular attention to the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, the *Oxford University Sermons*, the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and the *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*. The course will focus on two of Newman's most important theological contributions: the relations of history and doctrine and the relations of the magisterium and freedom of conscience.

Fides et Ratio

This course will focus upon the issues emerging within the groundbreaking papal encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason). Students will read the encyclical as a point of departure for an exploration of its teaching as well as its doctrinal and historical background and context. The course examines the way in which this encyclical is being received, the response it is eliciting in the work of contemporary theologians, and its application to issues of culture, education, and theological mission.

The Catholic Church and the Reformation

The 16th century witnessed a great convulsion in Western Christianity, a current of reforming zeal that both renewed and disrupted the Catholic Church, the effects of which are still very much with us, both inside and outside the Church. This course will attempt to understand both the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation (sometimes called the Counter-Reformation) by a reading of original texts and a locating of those texts in proper historical context. We will begin with the Papal Schism of the 14th century and end with the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church's definitive response to the two-centuries-long call for a "reform in head and members." Students will write weekly short essays on their reading and one longer paper.

Faith and Politics: Controversies

What role should faith play in politics? Does the First Amendment require a state-sponsored secularism? Can the American system survive without a consensus on basic values? Does faith or natural human rights best build consensus? Can faith tolerate religious pluralism? These and related issues shall be explored within the context of American Constitutional history, the classics of political philosophy, and Catholic social thought. Special attention will be given to the writings of John Paul II.

The Beauty of Catholicism in Art

This course is designed to allow students to experience the beauty of the Catholic heritage through the magnificent works of art that continue to shape our imagination today. During every era in Church history, a new aesthetic sensibility has been developed. Students will meet the Masters of art (Giotto, Fra Angelico, Raphael, El Greco, Caravaggio, Poussin, Rubens, Cézanne, and others), discover the ways their Catholic faith shaped their work, and examine their contributions to Catholic culture as it unfolds throughout history.

Marriage and Family in the Roman Catholic Tradition

This course will explore the subject of marriage and family as presented in the Roman Catholic tradition. Special emphasis will be given to the documents of the magisterium and the writings of John Paul II. Topics to be discussed will include, but not be limited to: the significance of marriage as a natural institution, its significance as a sacrament, the norms for sexual morality within the context of marriage, and the features of responsible parenting.

Aquinas as Theologian

St Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was one of the pre-eminent theologians in the history of the Church, second only to St Augustine in the extent of his influence on Theology. This course will introduce students to the fundamental concepts and the framework which shape Thomas's work as a theologian. Emphasis will be placed on his work in three principal areas: as an exegete, as an apologist, and as a systematic theologian. This will entail an exploration of his scriptural commentaries (such as his commentaries on Job and the Pauline letters), his apologetic works (such as the *Summa contra gentiles*), and his systematic work (such as the *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae* and several *Quaestiones disputatae*).

Christian Faith and the Education Profession

This course explores the Catholic understanding of education. Beginning with the theology of the human person, the relationship between faith and reason, and the vocation of a Catholic school educator, we will explore the goals of Catholic schools at the elementary, secondary, and college levels. In particular, we will consider how Catholic schools teach the Catholic social tradition and educate for the common good. This will entail an examination of the role of family, church, and community (local and global) in the structures, programs, and curricula of Catholic schools. Questions about religious formation in a pluralistic context as well as the relationship between the Gospel and contemporary culture will be examined. Other topics include: human freedom, the role of intellect and will in education, and the interconnectedness of various academic disciplines.