

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Summer 2023

Date: February 14, 2023

Note: All seminars are two credits.

Honors seminars are all published in the Schedule of Classes under HONR. Honors seminars all have a course number of HONR 480 or HONR 481. The word "Honors" or an abbreviation of honors, such as "HONR," is at the beginning of the course title.

Please contact Ray Baldwin at bald8138@stthomas.edu if you have any questions.

Summer 2023 - 1st Session

HONR 481-01 (CRN 30384) - Honors Galileo: Man, Method, Myth

Summer 2023 - TR 10:00AM - 12:00PM Location: JRC 246 (In-Person)

1st Summer Session - 5/24/23 - 7/06/23

Faculty: Peter Distelzweig (Philosophy)

NOTE: As this is a one-professor seminar, students will not be able to register for this seminar without instructor approval. Please contact Peter Distelzweig directly (dist0011@stthomas.edu) if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was celebrated (and sometimes vilified!) in his own time for his astronomical discoveries, scientific and theological defense of Copernicanism, and his expansion of mathematical tools into the study of natural phenomena. His appeals to telescoping observation and controlled experiment, as well as his deft employment of mathematical tools in the study of nature have earned him a place in the modern psyche as a founder and champion of the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century. His conviction, by the Roman Inquisition, on "vehement suspicion of heresy" in 1633 and the surrounding debates about the status of Copernicanism, mathematical astronomy more generally, and the principles of proper interpretation of scripture have made him a central figure in older stories of a war between Science and Religion, and in newer, more nuanced stories, about the transformations of philosophy, science, and religion late in the age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

In this course we will get to know Galileo, the man, and his writings, in historical context. Galileo's work raised important philosophical questions about how to study and understand the natural world—i.e., questions in the philosophy of science. Galileo, himself, knew this and reflects at various points in his work on the nature of his scientific enterprise. In this course, we will explore the philosophical issues raised by Galileo's scientific work as well as his own explicit philosophy of science. This includes questions, relevant today, regarding the relationships between natural philosophy, mathematics, and epistemology; between common experience, scientific instrumentation, and controlled experimentation in understanding the natural world; and between faith and reason. Along the way, we will explore Galileo the Myth, considering various popular images of Galileo, their historical and philosophical adequacy, and cultural influence.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- ***Integrations in the Humanities***