



# UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

## Faith, Reason, and Revelation

Corey Stephan, Ph.D.

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- Office Hours: Mondays from 11:00AM - 12:00PM in Hughes House #201  
*and by appointment (email in advance)*

### Spring 2024

- THEOC-1301C, 8:10-9:00 MWF, Malloy Hall 014
- THEOC-1301D, 9:10-10:00 MWF, Malloy Hall 014
- THEOC-1301E, 10:10-11:00 MWF, Malloy Hall 014
- THEOC-1301OA, asynchronous (arranged by the Dean for B.S.N. students with specific clinical scheduling requirements)

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### Notes:

1. As of the start of the semester, some aspects of this syllabus remain to be determined.
2. I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at any time during the semester.

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Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.

Pope St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §1

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An introductory course in fundamental Catholic theology, presenting the basic openness of the human person to divine revelation, the historical veracity of that revelation, and selected major theological themes in the Catholic worldview, with an eye to their coherence with one another and with the human person.

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## **Journey**

In this course, you will be introduced to what Catholic theology is, what its distinctive features and principles are, and why Catholic belief is reasonable. In so doing, you will deepen your understanding of yourself as a rational, free being, capable of affirming what is true and of freely embracing the purpose of your existence.

## **Destination**

By the end of the semester, you will be able:

1. To explain the reasonableness of the Christian worldview in terms of human rationality and freedom.
2. To define the central Christian principles of faith, nature, grace, creation, and sin.
3. To explain the historical veracity of the Gospel accounts through a thorough analysis of issues of dating, genre, authorship, and external and internal witnesses.
4. To articulate the notion of Christian revelation, as well as modern objections.

I, Dr. Stephan, will consider anything short of this to be a failure—most likely mine, but possibly yours. This must be a team effort.

To that end, we have a "Faith, Reason, & Revelation Class Survey and Contract" in the "Start" page in Blackboard that everyone, myself included, is required to complete and sign by the end of the first week.

Above all, note that you are expected:

1. To do all assigned readings and watch or listen to all assigned lectures every week.
  2. To be prepared for engaging full-group and small group discussions at every required meeting.
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## **Required Books**

All of these books are required in order to participate in the class:

1. *The Catholic Study Bible: Third Edition* [Catholic Study Bible]
  - ISBN 9780190267230
2. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC]
  - ISBN 0385508190 or 1601376499
  - Also available online on the Vatican website

3. Mother Teresa, *Where There is Love, There is God* [Teresa]
  - ISBN 9780385531801
4. Brant Pitre, *The Case for Jesus* [Pitre]
  - ISBN 978-0-385-36593-2

I distribute other assigned readings in Blackboard either as .pdf scans or via hyperlinks to online materials in the public domain.

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## Themes

The course is divided into three thematic units:

1. What are Faith and Reason?
  2. Apparent Clashes of Faith and Reason
  3. Revelation
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## Grades

The total class grade is weighted out of 100 points.

1. Start of Term: (2.5%) CLASS SURVEY AND CONTRACT
2. Semester Long: (15%) ATTENDANCE
  - To receive **full credit** for this category, you may miss **up to 5 class periods** (over 1 full week's worth), *including for undocumented sickness*.
  - This category will be tabulated with a simple percentage *at the end of the term*.
    - That means that if you look in your gradebook in Blackboard and see that you have, say, 3 absences, you actually still have a score of 100% for attendance. Blackboard does not allow the instructor to automatically exempt up to a certain number of absences.
  - University-excused absences are excluded from the attendance grade tabulation, provided that you remind me of your official excuse.
    - Tracking any excused absence(s) that you might have, and ensuring that they end up entered into Blackboard (by me), is your responsibility as the student.
  - No other absences are excused (excluded from the tabulation), unless you should provide a documented medical, legal, or other circumstance that precludes you from attending class (e.g. a letter from a medical or legal office) to me, the instructor.

*Asynchronous: For you, the attendance grade category will be determined by your participation in your Truth Troop Team's recurring Study Group Recordings. I will communicate with you separately about this by email.*

3. Semester Long: (20%) TRUTH TROOP TEAM TASKS
  - Graded tasks with in-class learning groups

*Asynchronous: For you, the Truth Troop Team Tasks grade category will include recurring Study Group Recordings. I will send details to you by email.*

4. Unit 1: (20%) ONE-ON-ONE MEETING (Early Term Exam)
  - 1st one-on-one meeting / oral exam with the instructor (me, Dr. Stephan)
5. Unit 2: (20%) PARTNER/GROUP DEBATE (Midterm Project)
  - Partner or small group 'staged' argument for and against one aspect of traditional Christian belief
  - Each pair or group will be required to provide critical feedback on 3 other pairs' or groups'
6. Unit 3: (20%) IN-CLASS ESSAY (Final Exam)
  - In-class, handwritten or typed (details TBD) cumulative essay
7. End of Term: (2.5%) LEARNING OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT QUIZ
  - Online assessment quiz required for University accreditation

#### **Totals**

- Individual Grades = 60%
    - Class survey, 2.5%
    - Attendance, 15%
    - One-on-One Meetings / Oral Exam, 20%
    - In-class Essay, 20%
    - Assessment Quiz, 2.5%
  - Group Grades = 40%
    - Truth Troop Team Tasks, 20%
    - Partner / Group Debates, 20%
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#### **Schedule**

You are expected to have completed each week's lectures and readings *prior to* the marked class period.

Items marked "Asynchronous" are only *required* for online (asynchronous) students in THEOC-1301OA. They are, however, *recommended* for all students, which is part of why I have included them in a 'master syllabus' for all four of my current Faith, Reason, and Revelation class sections.

Everything not marked "Asynchronous" is required for all students across all class sections.

#### **Unit 1: What are faith and reason?**

**1: Introductions** Complete the Faith, Reason, and Revelation Class Survey & Contract in Blackboard by 11:59 PM on Friday, January 19 (2.5% of class grade)

1/17

*What are we doing here?*

- Asynchronous: What is this Faith, Reason, and Revelation class?

1/19

*How will this Faith, Reason, and Revelation class work?*

- Asynchronous: Faith, Reason, & Revelation: Syllabus & Class Bones

1/22

*What is theology? How should I start doing it?*

Lectures

- What is Catholic theology? 30 Minute Guide
- How to Read and Think Like a Theologian

1/24

*How should I use our class resources?*

Lectures

- How do I use the Catholic Study Bible?
- How do I use the Catechism of the Catholic Church? 5 Minute Guide
- Asynchronous: The Best Free Computer Sources for Catholic Theology
- Asynchronous: Oxford Reference Website: Theology & History Usage Guide

*Truth Troop Teams assigned.*

**2: What is faith?** *Sign up for one-on-one meetings / oral exams.*

1/26

*Faith & Reason*

Lecture

- Faith and Reason: Friends or Foes?

Readings

- CCC #36-43
- Spe Salvi 1-31

1/29

*Faith in Human Experience, Giving Joy*

Lecture

- (Historical Recording) Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech

Reading

- (Blackboard 2) Robert Cardinal Sarah, *The Day is Now Far Spent* (44-45, 224-225)

### 3: What is reason? 1/31

*What can we say about God?*

Lecture

- Apophatic and Kataphatic Theology: What can we say about God?

Reading

- CCC #153-161

**One-on-One Meetings w/Instructor** 2/2, 2/5, 2/7 NO CLASS on 2/2, 2/5, or 2/7, since one-on-one meetings / oral exams will take place during those class hours

### Unit 2: Apparent Clashes of Faith and Reason

#### 4: Creation(ism) and Evolution(ism) 2/9 (Back in class after Meetings / Exams)

*Genesis & Creation*, part 1: Genre

Lecture

- Genesis and Creation: Genre Matters

Reading

- (Blackboard 4) The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation, pages 1-61

2/12

*Genesis & Creation*, part 2: Genesis 1

Lecture

- Asynchronous: Genesis 1-3 Theological Dive: Why did God create us? What does it mean that we are fallen?

Reading

- Catholic Study Bible: Genesis Reading Guide (RG pp. 120-134), Genesis Introduction (Bible pp. 9-11), and Genesis 1 (Bible pp. 11-13)

In-class: Genesis 1, First Account of Creation

2/14, Valentine's Day Special

*Genesis & Creation*, part 3: Genesis 2-3

Reading

- Catholic Study Bible: Genesis 2-3 (Bible pp. 13-16)

In-class: Genesis 2-3, Second Account of Creation (Adam & Eve)

2/16

*Creation(ism) & Evolution(ism)*

Lecture

- Creation(ism) and Evolution(ism): Five Minute Breakdown

Reading

- (Blackboard 4) St. John Paul II's Letter to Scientists

2/19, 2/21, 2/23, and 2/26

*Prepare and present Creation Myth Truth Troop Team projects* (Details TBD)

### **5: Original Sin 2/28**

*Original Sin*

Lecture

- Asynchronous: What is original sin? CCC 385-390 & 396-421 Deep Dive

Reading

- CCC #396-401

3/1

*Am I a sinner?*

Lecture

- Am I a sinner? What is sin? St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 71, A. 6

Reading

- CCC #1849-1863

### **6: The Problem of Evil 3/4**

*What is the Problem of Evil?*

Lecture

- Asynchronous: What is the Problem of Evil?

Readings

- Larrimore, *The Problem of Evil: A Reader*, Introduction (Blackboard 6)
- CCC #309-314

3/6

*C.S. Lewis on the Problem*

Lectures

- Sr. Albert Marie on the Problem of Evil (Blackboard 6)

Reading

- C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, ch. 2: Divine Omnipotence (Blackboard 6)

3/8

*Classical Solutions to the Problem*

Readings

- Plato, *Timaeus* 27c-31b (scanned from Larrimore, Blackboard 6)
- St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* IV.1-2 (scanned from Larrimore, Blackboard 6)

3/11, 3/13, & 3/15 -- SPRING BREAK

3/18

- St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Book VII, Chadwick Translation (Blackboard 6)

3/20, 3/22, 3/25, & 3/27

*Partner/Group Debate week*

- Asynchronous: Faith, Reason, & Revelation Class Partner Debates

3/28-4/1 -- TRIDUUM / EASTER BREAK

**Unit 3: Revelation**

**7: Biblical Inspiration: Divine & Human 4/3**

Lecture

- Sr. Albert Marie on Biblical Inspiration (Blackboard 8)

Readings

- Catholic Study Bible: Reading Guide, pp. 11-32 ("The Biblical Texts and Their Backgrounds" and "The Bible in Catholic Life")

**8: Ecclesiastes** *A week-long intensive dive into the Book of Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth as it pertains to the themes of the class*

*As this is a new module for this term, video lectures and other materials for it are TBD.*

4/5 Readings

Catholic Study Bible: Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth Reading Guide (RG pp. 298-302) and Introduction (Bible p. 879)

4/8

Reading

Catholic Study Bible: Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth, 1:1-6:9 (Bible pp. 879--884)

4/10

Catholic Study Bible: Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth, 6:10-12:14 (Bible pp. 884-890)



## **9: What are the Gospels?** 4/12

*What are the Gospels?*

Reading

- Pitre, ch. 1, 2, 3, & 6

Lecture

- Asynchronous: What are the Gospels?

4/15

*Who did Jesus claim to be?*

Lecture

- Who did Jesus claim to be? An Introduction to Jesus's Profession(s) about Himself in the Gospels

## **10: Christ and the Church** 4/17

- Pitre, ch. 9

Lecture

- Who are the Fathers of the Church?

*Samples of Father of the Church*

*In-class homilies and other Patristic texts shared by the instructor*

## **11: Grace & Virtue** 4/19

*Grace & Virtue*

Lectures

- Asynchronous: Grace, Central A/C, and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Sr. Albert Marie on Grace (Blackboard 7)

Readings

- CCC #1804-1831
- Teresa, p.307-319

**12: Miracles -- OPTION 1 for 4/22** *Classes will choose between 12: Miracles and 13: Resurrection for 4/29.*

4/22

*What are miracles?*

Lecture

- Asynchronous: What are miracles? (Live Class Recording)

Reading

- Nichols article, p. 703-714

*Lourdes*

- Miracles in Lourdes (Blackboard 12)

**13: Resurrection -- OPTION 2 for 4/22** *Classes will choose between 12: Miracles and 13: Resurrection for 4/29.*

4/22

Reading

- Pitre, ch. 12

Lecture

- Bishop Barron on the Resurrection of Jesus (Blackboard 15)

**Cumulative Essay (Final Exam)** 4/24

*What is this cumulative essay assignment? How should I approach it?*

4/26

*Full class cumulative review, Day 1*

4/29

*Full class cumulative review, Day 2*

5/1

**CUMULATIVE ESSAY**

*by "Blue Books" (hand-written) or live typing (computer keyboard) -- details TBD*

**Class Wrap-Up** 5/3

Learning Objective Assessment Quizzes (2.5% of class grade)

Class Round-Table Discussion

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## University Policies

### Accommodations

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the University of St. Thomas will provide academic accommodations to ensure access for students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for this class, must register with the Office of Access & Disability Services (ADS) and provide documentation of a disability to determine what accommodations are most appropriate. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations are not provided until a Course Accessibility Letter has

been provided to the instructor. For questions regarding academic accommodations and accessibility, please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services by email at [ACCESS@STTHOM.EDU](mailto:ACCESS@STTHOM.EDU), or visit the ADS website at [STTHOM.EDU/ACCESS](http://STTHOM.EDU/ACCESS).

### **Preparation**

You must have all the required textbooks, ideally as soon as the class begins. Their ISBN numbers must match those on the syllabus. It is your responsibility, not the bookstore's, to arrange to have the proper books.

### **Meetings**

I encourage you to meet with me (Dr. Stephan) outside of the classroom, especially for guidance on the readings and assignments. Generally, appointments will be handled during my office hours (as listed at the beginning of this document).

### **Communication**

You must use university email for electronic correspondence with me. Any lost or missed communication as a result of using third party email, or failing to maintain one's UST email account under quota will be considered the student's fault.

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## **Other Class Policies**

### **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices such as laptop computers and digital tablets are only permitted in class when situationally required, such as for doing a group project or accessing a specific digital reading -- or, of course, for students with documented medical conditions (notably, visual impairments) that require the use of specific electronic accessories. Otherwise, they should not be used in class. I (Dr. Stephan) strongly prefer that such electronic devices be kept in students' bags.

I might ask a student who distracts other students and/or the instructor with out-of-place electronic device usage to leave the class for the day; that student would then be marked as "Absent" against his/her attendance record (grade).

Cell phone usage is never appropriate in a classroom. If you should have an urgent matter to address that requires making a telephone call or text messaging, then you ought to step out of the room to take care of it.

### **Late Submissions**

I (Dr. Stephan) know that life happens, and I know that the best work sometimes has to be submitted late (the Sistine Chapel's painting went behind schedule, after all). At the same time, this class is a team effort, so we all must strive to have our work to share with each other on time. Even one 'weak link' can tear

down everyone's experience; you (as an individual student) really do matter to the class as a whole.

With all that in mind, I have structured class assignments in such a way that there should not be any legitimate reason for anyone to make a late submission. Most late submissions will incur a late penalty, and, occasionally, I will not be able to accept a late submission at all.

### **Statement on Software Freedom**

I (Dr. Stephan) am a longtime advocate of Free Software as defined by the Free Software Foundation. I encourage you to teach yourself about software freedom. For my part, I promise that I will never require you to use non-free software, except tools that are currently required as part of our experience at the University of St. Thomas (e.g. Microsoft Teams and Blackboard). To the contrary, whenever possible, I will encourage you to prepare your work in free software and submit it in formats with open standards.

### **Class Prayer**

A Prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas

Grant, O Merciful God, that I may ardently desire, prudently examine, truthfully acknowledge, and perfectly accomplish what is pleasing to Thee for the praise and glory of Thy name. Amen.