



Philosophy for Theology

Hilary (Spring) 2024

Term Dates:	January 13 – March 22, 2025
Department:	Philosophy
Difficulty:	Introductory
Instructor:	Joseph Minich (j.minich@davenantinstitute.org)
Meeting Time:	Saturdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm (Eastern Time)
Zoom Link:	Populi > click My Courses tab > click course > click Conferences (left menu).

Course Description

This course assumes only the most basic “survey” knowledge of philosophy. The goal is to (re)introduce students to many of the concepts that have informed (and been shaped by!) the project of classical Christian orthodoxy. While our focus will be on the nomenclature of the scholastic tradition, we will (in both lectures and in the final session) seek to supplement this with material drawn from other - particularly modern - philosophical traditions. The goal is to very broadly cover the basic tools that will help you understand classical ontology, epistemology, and anthropology - and to help you identify when these have been (and may further prove) of crucial import in the navigation of theological questions.

Objectives

This course aims to

1. introduce students to many of the philosophical concepts that have informed classical orthodox approaches to theology,
2. dialogically engage, learn from, and help train students in the art of thinking well.
3. encourage students concerning the veracity of the Christian faith by means of an expanded (rather than calcified) imagination.

Course Texts

- W. Norris Clarke. *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).
- Jose Angel Lombo & Francesco Russo. *Philosophical Anthropology: An Introduction* (Downers Grove: Midwest Theological Forum, 2014).
- Frederick D. Wilhelmsen. *Man’s Knowledge of Reality: An Introduction to Thomistic Epistemology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1956).
- Brian Besong. *An Introduction to Ethics: A Natural Law Approach* (Eugene: Cascade, 2018).
- Peter Escalante, “Philosophy as a Way of Life: Reforming the Quest for Wisdom” (via PDF).
- Harold Raley, “Julian Marias: Philosophy of the Person” (via PDF).

Course Format

The format of the course will be a roughly equivalent mix of lecture and guided discussion. It is assumed that students will come having read and engaged with the text selection for that day, and with thoughts (and critical questions) prepared to contribute. Classes will meet via Zoom for two hours each week and will be recorded for later viewing by students who cannot participate. Supplementary student

interaction (both informal and formal) is highly encouraged, and I also aim to make myself available to you.

Course Delivery [Required]

Classroom Resources

- [Populi](#) online classrooms are used for all course content, including assignments, grades, announcements, course records, and more.
- [Zoom](#) links & recordings are provided on the Populi course page Conferences tab. Class sessions are two hours weekly (2.5 in summer) for ten weeks (8 weeks in summer) and recorded for absent students (not for dissemination outside of class).
- [Discord](#) may be used for additional student and instructor interaction as well as Davenant community discussions.

Attendance: Required for all students taking courses for credit. If the scheduled time does not work for a particular student, they may drop the course according to the Drop Policy in the Academic Catalog.

Auditors: No requirements, but may participate in all class activities.

Late work: Grade reduction of -5% per calendar day upon instructor discretion. No assignments will be accepted after the last due date without an approved extension.

Requirements

1. Participation (20%)

Attentive and sustained participation in class is the primary requirement. For-credit students may have two excused absences.

2. Reading (40%)

Students will be asked the percentage of reading they were able to accomplish.

3. Writing (40%)

3,000-4,000 word research paper due the last day of class. **A proposal is due on the 6th class meeting.** More specific instructions will be given in class.

Course Calendar

Subject to change. [Click here](#) for the most current syllabus.

Week	Dates	Topic	Reading
1	Jan 18	Introduction: Existence & Essence	Clark, 1-91
2	Jan 25	Intrinsic & Extrinsic Causes of Being	Clark, 92-211
3	Feb 1	God, Creation, and Evil	Clark, 212-313
4	Feb 8	The Metaphysics of Man	Lombo & Russo, 1-136
5	Feb 15	The Metaphysics of Knowledge	Wilhelmsen, 1-74
6	Feb 22	Epistemology Proper	Wilhelmsen, 75-184
7	Mar 1	The Metaphysics of Morality	Besong, 1-100
8	Mar 8	Morality Proper	Besong, 101-213

9	Mar 15	Personhood, History, Culture, Value	Lombo & Russo, 137-247
10	Mar 22	Philosophy as a Way of Life	Escalante, 1-53; Raley, 1-23; Wilhelmsen, 185-204. Research Paper Due

Institutional Policies

Drop Policy

The policies below apply to changes made after the registration deadline two weeks prior to term. To change registration before the term starts, please log on to Populi. To change registration after the term starts, email the registrar at registrar@davenantinstitute.org. See the Academic Calendar section for exact dates.

Drop Date (100% Refund): Before the term starts, students may drop with a 100% tuition refund. Registration fee is non-refundable.

Drop Date (50% Refund): Within the first two weeks of a term, students may drop the course with a 50% tuition refund. Registration fee is non-refundable. To drop, please email the registrar.

Withdrawal: Within weeks three and four of a term, students who drop a course will receive no refund and will earn a “W” on their transcript. Students cannot drop after this time will receive a letter grade. To drop, please email the registrar.

Attendance & Class Meeting Time Scheduling

Attendance is required for all students taking courses for credit. Most classes are scheduled for evenings or weekends, especially core classes. If the scheduled time does not work for a particular student, they may drop the course according to the Drop policy.

Extension Policy

All coursework and exams must be submitted no later than two weeks after the term end date. Before that time, homework extensions are at the discretion of the instructor. If a student requires more time, the student may submit a formal extension request by emailing the registrar at registrar@davenantinstitute.org. If approved, an extension will be granted to the student for a specific period of time agreed upon by the student and instructor. Extension requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will generally be granted for medical and family emergencies only.

Minimum Grade Requirement for Degree Students

Students enrolled in one of our degrees must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B average). If the students' GPA falls below 3.0, Davenant will initiate conversation with the student to judge whether the student is ready for their program. If the student earns a grade lower than a “C” (2.0) on a course required for their degree, they must retake the course in order to graduate. Their new grade will replace their former grade. If a degree student earns a grade lower than a “C” (2.0) on an elective, they are not required to retake the course, but they may request to retake the course or a close equivalent as a substitute for their former grade.

Grading Scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93	90	87	83	80	77	73	70	67	63	60	

Passing: ≥93:A • ≥90:A- • ≥87:B+ • ≥83:B • ≥80:B- • ≥77:C • ≥73:C

Retake if Core: 70–72:C- • ≥67:D+ • ≥63:D • ≥60:D- • <60:F.

For a complete list of policies, see the Academic Catalog at davenanthall.com