



**The Alcuin Institute for Catholic Culture
& Newman University
CATH 3013A**



M-F 9:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.
Chancery, Bld. A
12300 E 91st St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

Professors:

- Richard Meloche, Alcuin Institute (richard.meloche@dioceseoftulsa.org)
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Course Description:

In *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 32, a. 8, St. Thomas Aquinas says this about wonder, and he employs definitions from Aristotle's work on poetry and rhetoric:

It is pleasant to get what one desires, as stated above (q. 23, a. 4): and therefore the greater the desire for the thing loved, the greater the pleasure when it is attained: indeed the very increase of desire brings with it an increase of pleasure, according as it gives rise to the hope of obtaining that which is loved, since it was stated above (a. 3, ad 3) that desire resulting from hope is a cause of pleasure. Now wonder is a kind of desire for knowledge; a desire which comes to man when he sees an effect of which the cause either is unknown to him, or surpasses his knowledge or faculty of understanding. Consequently wonder is a cause of pleasure, insofar as it includes a hope of getting the knowledge which one desires to have. For this reason whatever is wonderful is pleasing, for instance things that are scarce. Also, representations of things, even of those which are not pleasant in themselves, give rise to pleasure; for the soul rejoices in comparing one thing with another, because comparison of one thing with another is the proper and connatural act of the reason, as the Philosopher says (Poet. iv). This again is why it is more delightful to be delivered from great danger, because it is something wonderful, as stated in Rhetor. i, 11.

So, Aquinas connects the pleasure of representation with wonder (*admiratio* in Latin) and desire. Poetry is a kind of representation, of course. Broadly speaking, one of the goals of this series of courses is to intentionally develop this poetic sensibility to wonder and desire.

This course is the second in a series that progresses through the historical development of Catholic literary culture, both in its antecedents and its manifestations into modernity. Greek and Roman antiquity play a decisive role in the development of Catholic literary culture, both in the case of the European Middle Ages, and continuing into the Church as it is known worldwide today. Therefore, it is foundational to immerse ourselves into the symbolic and poetic horizon of these two ancient cultures that made an enduring imprint on the Catholic imagination, both throughout time and across the different cultures the Church eventually interacts with. The hope is to combine the spirit of wonder and the habit of mind outlined above to explore the imaginative worlds of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, and contemplate the enduring legacy that lives within the Catholic Cultural horizon today.

Learning Objectives:

This course employs a different pedagogical framework than most college courses. We desire to develop poetic knowledge (as described above by St. Thomas Aquinas) in our students, and not only the scientific and dialectical forms of knowledge that are more familiarly offered in the classroom. (This is not in any way meant to detract from those means of approaching truth. They are also good and necessary). The primary goal of this course is to inspire a poetic-contemplative response to the literature of the Medieval period in Europe.

The overarching objective of these courses is the inculcation of wonder and what St. Newman called “the philosophical habit of mind.” Using St. Newman’s words once more, this objective is specifically achieved in this course by “cultivating the mind” with, by, and through the classics of the Medieval period in Europe.

Required Texts:

1. *The Inferno* by Dante Alighieri (trans. Mark Musa; ISBN: 9780142437223)
2. A reader will be provided for the second week, with selections from *The Rule of St. Benedict*, St. Gregory the Great’s *The Life of St. Benedict*, St. Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

In-Class Expectations

Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to enter into real and meaningful discussion. To be able to do so, each student should do more than simply read words on the page. Upon completion of the reading assignment each student should be able to answer the following questions: (1) What is the book about as a whole? (2) What is being said? (3) Is the reading true, in whole, or in part? (4) How has it altered my understanding of reality? Only students who have “chewed” upon the reading in this way can have anything significant to add to a discussion.

Class Requirements

1. Participation (20%). Much of the work of the course will be carried out in the classroom. Of crucial importance will be attentive in-class participation—characterized by a willingness to learn from others, mutual respect, and readiness to contribute one’s own insights and questions.
2. Two essay exams (15% each). Both of these will use the course description at the beginning of the syllabus as a launching pad. As you read the assignments, think about what you are reading has to do with wonder and desire, and the poetic sensibility. In the essay exams, you will offer concrete examples of how the assigned readings represent the interplay between our desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful and the hopeful wonder experienced in pursuit of that desire.
3. Weekly selections from your florilegium, and substantive responses to your classmates (30%). A florilegium (“bouquet of readings”) is a collection of quotations from your reading and your musings upon them.
4. Engagement in Socratic discussions (20%).

Grading Scale

F < 60	D = 60 - 69	C = 70 - 79	B = 80 - 89	A = 90 - 100
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Your instructors have a no-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Work containing plagiarized material will receive a 0% automatically, and the student will be reported to the Provost.

Proposed Schedule

Week 1

Day 1: *Rule of St. Benedict; Life of St. Benedict*

Day 2: *Summa*

Day 3: *Summa*

Day 4: *Sir Gawain*

Day 5: *Sir Gawain*

Week 2

Day 1: *Inferno* (no class because of July 4)

Day 2: *Inferno* (including material from Day 1 reading)

Day 3: *Inferno*

Day 4: *Inferno*

Day 5: *Inferno*

Attendance

Students who do not attend classes regularly may have difficulties in keeping current with class assignments and deprive themselves of opportunities to develop their understanding of the course material. Some absences are unavoidable, but students are still responsible for staying current in their reading and completing assignments in a timely manner. Attendance will be considered in assessing the class participation grade.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted for this course.

Classroom Behavior and Etiquette

Both the professor(s) and the students have the responsibility of ensuring that the classroom provides an optimal environment for the pursuit of Truth. Behavior that violates this responsibility includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- failing to bring to class the required texts (or other course materials, such as a notebook, pens, etc.);
- interrupting or talking over other students or to other students in side-conversations;
- using class as a mealtime (a drink is fine, but most snacks and all meals tend to be disruptive);
- making rude comments or gestures, including placing one's feet on the seminar table or on a neighboring chair;
- failing to turn off or silence cell phones, pagers, or MP3 players of any kind upon entering the classroom;
- *looking at a face-up cellphone, or leaving earbuds in one's ear during class;*
- using a laptop computer whose internet access is enabled;
- checking email on any capable device during class;
- reading material unrelated to the course during class;
- dressing inappropriately for class;
- sleeping, dozing, or otherwise carrying oneself with "bored out of your mind" body-language in seminar.

Dress and Decorum

Each student is expected to observe standards of dress and decorum befitting a professional academic environment. A student's manner of dress and conduct reflects his attitude towards those around him and towards his obligations as a student. Decorum includes speech, body language, manner of expression, and decent deference to fellow students.

Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all of their work.

1. Stated positively, “academic integrity” means that a student completes all of his assigned work on his own, avoiding where prohibited any and all use of secondary sources, or, alternatively, employing the use of secondary materials only when and as required by the assignment’s written instructions. Unless otherwise stated, it is to be assumed that secondary material is not to be consulted in preparation for class or for completion of an assignment. When and where secondary material is permitted or assigned, it is to be assumed that the sources indicated in writing by the professor constitute the sum of all permissible secondary materials for a particular course or assignment.
2. In addition, “academic integrity” entails the thorough documentation of all source-material in the preparation and submission of all written assignments, however brief a given assignment might be. “Thorough documentation” of source-material, for the purposes of this program, will be constituted by strict adherence to the standards laid out in detail in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Works cited and consulted must appear in a bibliography appended to each written assignment. Specific phrases (defined as three words or more, or, where appropriate, two words for a coinage such as “objective correlative”) must be enclosed in quotation marks and their source must be cited as specified by *The Chicago Manual of Style*, i.e., with both a footnote and a bibliographic entry. Sources which have been consulted but not quoted must be cited where appropriate and must also be included in a bibliography appended to any completed assignment. Sources to which allusions are made must be cited where appropriate. Whenever paraphrasing secondary material, the student will be held to strict standards of citation and the standard academic expectation that the paraphrased source has undergone (i) a change in diction or word-choice and (ii) a change in syntax or sentence-structure.
3. Inspectional recollection or summary of a primary source need not be documented in any other detail than a brief tag suggesting the origin of the material. E.g., a student might write, without the obligation of footnoting, *Dickens’s A Christmas Carol tells the story of a man named Ebenezer Scrooge who, after three encounters with other-worldly apparitions, chooses to amend his life in conformity with the sweet yoke of the law of love.* Specific quotations from primary sources, however, must be cited. E.g., *In response to Scrooge’s conversion, Tiny Tim proclaims, “God bless us, every one!”*¹
4. Failure to adhere to the standards above constitutes a breach of academic integrity and may be prosecuted accordingly.
5. In this course, additional acts which constitute violations of academic integrity include the following:

- I. any and all varieties of cheating on assignments and exams submitted in this course, including any *facilitation* of the same by another party;
- II. giving assistance to or receiving assistance from another person during an examination or quiz or assignment for which collaboration has not been specifically permitted by the professor in writing;
- III. plagiarism, either material or formal, defined as:
 - a. improper use, incomplete documentation, improper acknowledgement, or failure to acknowledge the work of another to whom you are indebted in the preparation of an assignment;

¹ Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol & Other Christmas Stories* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), 116.

- b. use of another's work (through un-quoted borrowing, partial quotation, improper paraphrase or summary of an author's ideas) *without proper acknowledgement*, where "proper acknowledgement" is constituted by
 - i. quotation marks enclosing **all** quoted words **AND** citation of your primary or secondary source in *Chicago Manual of Style* format;
 - ii. or, in the case of paraphrase of a secondary source, changing your source-material's word-choice and sentence structure **AND** citing all works cited and consulted in a bibliography page at the close of each assignment;
 - c. use of another student's work as one's own, or use of another student's work as *the basis* for one's own;
 - d. purchase or use of a prepared essay which is subsequently submitted as one's own;
 - e. use of one's own work (from a previous course) with identical or similar content;
 - f. incomplete or inaccurate citation, either through misquotation or incomplete footnote or bibliography;
 - g. use of specifically prohibited sources, secondary or otherwise, in the preparation of an assignments;
- IV. obtaining, or attempting to obtain, copies of uncirculated examinations or examination questions;
 - V. falsifying any academic record or any record which counts towards course-credit in this class.

6. Students found to have committed any one of the above infractions may receive an F for the assignment and, if deemed appropriate by the professor, for the course as well.

Disclaimer

The instructors reserve the right to alter the syllabus should the need arise. Students will be informed should such a change be necessary.