

Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph

PHIL 4410/6320: MAJOR TEXTS IN PHILOSOPHY/  
MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. PETER EARDLEY  
OFFICE: MACKINNON 336  
OFFICE HOURS: BY APPOINTMENT  
PHONE EXT.: 53211

CLASSROOM: ROZH 107  
TIME: TUESDAYS, 11:30-12:50  
TERM: FALL 2014

**Course Description**

The best known thinker of the high Middle Ages is undoubtedly Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1224-1274), and his best known work the *Summa theologiae*. In this course we will focus on the sections of the *Summa* devoted to Aquinas's philosophical anthropology, chiefly as contained in the *Treatise on Human Nature*. We will examine such issues as the relationship of the soul to the body, the nature of cognition and the nature of desire, both sensory and rational. Through weekly lectures, class discussions and presentations, the course will concentrate not only on understanding the content of Aquinas's views on human nature in their own right, but on contrasting them, where appropriate, with ancient sources such as Aristotle, and even with modern and contemporary views on the nature of the human person.

**Required Text**

Thomas Aquinas, *The Treatise on Human Nature*. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by Robert Pasnau (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002).

**Evaluation:**

- Reports on Weekly Readings: 6 x 5% = 30%
- Presentation: 30 %
- Term Paper: 40 %

*Weekly Reports:*

Every week, participants in the seminar will be required to submit a 300-word response to the reading for that week, which will act as the basis for discussion in the class. This is not intended to be a summary of the material for the day. Rather, I would like you to focus on a few sentences or a paragraph from Aquinas that struck as you philosophically interesting, and write a short response to it, explaining what you think it means, and why it is philosophically interesting or significant. At the end of the response, I would like you to pose a question for discussion. These are to be uploaded to the dropbox on Courselink by

11 PM the previous evening of our Wednesday meeting (i.e. on Tuesday night) so that I can look them over.

**Note:** you will get credit for these papers ONLY if you not only submit the response, but attend the relevant class. Needless to say, attendance and participation are mandatory in a seminar such as this one. We only meet 12 times this term. Please try to make sure that you attend all classes and submit the weekly assignments.

### *Presentation*

This will consist of a 30-minute presentation to the group on a topic that is relevant to the course and that has been approved beforehand by me. By Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, I would like to have met with each of you to discuss your presentation topic, so make sure to set up an appointment with me by that date. Even if you only have a rough idea of what you would like to talk about, that's fine. I can help you narrow the focus when we meet one on one. As for the presentation itself, the idea is to use it as a way to elicit feedback for what you will ultimately turn into your term paper. Because it is important for the rest of the class to have read some material that is relevant to your presentation, I would like each of you to notify the class of the primary sources from the *Treatise on Human Nature* that are relevant to your presentation, so that the class can re-read this material, along with one or two relevant secondary sources (specifically journal articles) which you will discuss in your presentation and which I would like you to upload to the dropbox on Courselink.\* These must be available no later than the Sunday night before your presentation.

### *Term Paper*

This will be a refined version of your presentation, written in a clear, accessible style, with a thesis that is stated at the beginning and that is defended in the body of the essay. The length of the paper should be roughly 3500 words. It is due on Wednesday, December 03, 2014, exactly one week after our last meeting. Late papers will be penalized 3% a day.

### **E-mail Communication**

As per University regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

### **When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

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\* Note: you may, and indeed are encouraged, where applicable, to use more than two secondary sources for the presentation and the final term paper.

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

### **Drop Date**

The last date to drop one-semester Fall 2014 courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday, October 31, 2014**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **Copies of out-of-class assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Each student at the University of Guelph has rights which carry commensurate responsibilities that involve, broadly, being a civil and respectful member of the University community. The Rights and Responsibilities are detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c14/c14-strightsrespon.shtml>

### **Academic Misconduct**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### **Recording of Materials**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

### **Resources**

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the undergraduate advisor in your program, or the BA Counselling Office: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/baco/contact.shtml>

### **Course Schedule**

Please Note: unless otherwise indicated, all readings are from the Pasnau translation.

#### *September*

10: Introduction to Course

17: Metaphysical Background (Readings on Courselink)<sup>†</sup>

24: What is a Human Being? (QQ. 75-76: Pasnau pp. 2-47)

#### *October*

01: The Nature of the Intellect (Q. 79: Pasnau pp. 77-105)

08: Self-Knowledge (Q. 87: Pasnau pp. 186-195)

15: Appetite and Will (QQ. 80-82: Pasnau pp. 105-125)

22: Free Decision (Q. 83: Pasnau pp. 126-133)

29: Subsistence after Death (Q. 89: Pasnau pp. 203-219)

#### *November*

05: Student Presentations

12: Student Presentations

19: Student Presentations

26: Student Presentations

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<sup>†</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature* and selections from the *Summa theologiae* on God's existence.