



Decennial Core Curriculum Review Committee

Report of the Catholic Mission Focus Group

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Executive Summary

The Catholic mission focus group was asked to address the ways in which Notre Dame's core curriculum could not only sustain but also deepen our institutional commitment to Catholic character. The longstanding tradition of Catholic liberal arts education has been to recognize the value of the full array of arts and sciences disciplines and to accord with special significance the disciplines of theology and philosophy. We reflected on this two-fold commitment in the light of (1) learning goals; (2) strengths and weaknesses of our current model, including the special tradition of these two disciplines, the intellectual rationale for their privileged status, and developments in both disciplines over time; (3) changes in the preparation of our students and in the world they will enter since the current requirements were introduced 45 years ago; (4) potential innovations to address our goals more effectively; and (5) the content and delivery of courses.

By a clear majority, the focus group endorsed the retention of two courses in Theology and one or more courses in Philosophy. At the same time, we have an array of suggestions for improving the learning goals, course selection, course delivery, and continual assessment and enhancement of these courses. Fortunately, adjustments are now already underway in both departments.

Beyond learning goals unique to these two disciplines, we elevated two other learning goals that involve having students explore questions pertinent to theology and philosophy as they arise in other disciplines and enhancing students' capacities to speak intelligently about faith issues in a pluralistic world. Many courses in Theology and Philosophy already serve these goals, and we encourage still more.

We also present a new concept, "Catholicism and the Disciplines," which will recruit scholars from across the University into the group of course offerings that explicitly address faith concerns and normative issues. Notre Dame has energetically recruited Catholic intellectuals into a diverse array of departments, and we would like to invite these colleagues and others to contribute to our students' faith journeys and their explorations of what is normatively true. These courses will engage Catholic content from the perspective of one or more disciplines and require students to engage faith questions or normative questions critically and constructively as they process the material. These courses are to be structured so as to require students not simply to process the material but to think for themselves, to articulate and defend their own positions. **The majority of the focus group recommends that students take as their fourth Catholic mission course either a second course in Philosophy or a course in Catholicism and the Disciplines.**

Finally, we encourage and invite all faculty to look for ways to develop connections between their disciplines and the distinctive nature of a Catholic university. Such an invitation should begin with a more robust orientation for new faculty members as well as continuing opportunities for faculty to understand the distinctive tradition and goals of Catholic higher education.

Charge

The Committee received the following charge from the Core Curriculum Review Committee:

The Catholic mission focus group will examine how we can “not only sustain but also deepen our commitment to Notre Dame's Catholic character” through the core curriculum. The focus group will weigh the learning goals, the “knowledge, dispositions, and skills,” that are central for our Catholic character and will consider the content and delivery of courses that could meet those goals as well as possible overarching thematic emphases that resonate with our distinctive mission.

Membership

Mark Roche, Chair (German and Russian Languages and Literatures -- member of CCRC)

Susan Collins (Political Science)

Peter Holland (Film, Television, and Theatre -- member of CCRC)

Ed Maginn (Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering)

Tim Matovina (Theology -- member of CCRC)

Mark McKenna (Law School)

Chris Smith (Sociology)

Jeff Speaks (Philosophy)

Ann Tenbrunsel (Management)

Tom Tweed (American Studies)

Rebecca Wingert (Biological Sciences -- member of CCRC)

I. Introduction

Catholic Mission

Our focus group on Catholic mission takes as our point of departure the following statement from the University mission statement:

Notre Dame's character as a Catholic academic community presupposes that no genuine search for the truth in the human or the cosmic order is alien to the life of faith. The University welcomes all areas of scholarly activity as consonant with its mission, subject to appropriate critical refinement. There is, however, a special obligation and opportunity, specifically as a Catholic university, to pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning.

Pursuant to the core curriculum, we take this statement to mean that all instructors and courses within the core serve the Catholic mission of Notre Dame: they all contribute to a search for knowledge about human life and the world in which we live. Thus we confirm with the University mission statement that even courses which do not explicitly address Catholicism or faith concerns serve an essential role in Notre Dame's Catholic identity and mission. We urge the

Core Curriculum Review Committee to make it clear in their own report that every course in the core, and not only those of philosophers and theologians, contributes to the Catholic mission of the University.

General Statement on Learning Goals

The focus group began by discussing learning goals for those courses that have a more direct bearing on students' development of philosophical and theological capacities, on their engagement with works and ideas central to the Catholic tradition, and on the development and articulation of their own faith perspectives. Not surprisingly, it quickly became apparent that many of these goals would best be met by disciplinary courses in theology and philosophy. We recognize, therefore, the value of speaking not only of learning goals but also of disciplinary requirements. There is clear majority support for two courses in theology as well as universal support for one or more courses in philosophy. Our discussion took account of the historical connections between these disciplines and the ways in which they complement one another.

Beyond learning goals unique to theology and philosophy, we identified as central for a Notre Dame graduate also the capacity to speak with intelligence and nuance about his or her faith orientation (or none) in a pluralistic world, including a world skeptical of faith. Both Theology and Philosophy already offer courses that help students in this regard. We would like to see still more, for example, more courses in comparative theology or on the encounter between theology and the secular world. We discuss below an additional way to meet this goal, a goal that reinforces our bond to the history of Holy Cross, which has traditionally stressed developing capacities to speak about one's faith in a skeptical world.

The final learning goal we elevate involves the capacity to connect knowledge in one discipline with material in another discipline and to do so from a distinctively Christian or Catholic framework. The concept draws on the University's mission statement, which highlights as one of our distinctive goals providing a forum where "the various lines of Catholic thought may intersect with all the forms of knowledge found in the arts, sciences, professions, and every other area of human scholarship and creativity." We believe that this goal can be met in some of the regular theology and philosophy courses, but we would like to see even more integration of knowledge and questions from other disciplines in the two departments' offerings. Both Philosophy and Theology are now moving many of their second courses in this direction.

We are also excited to present below a new concept, "Catholicism and the Disciplines," which, we think, can enhance both students' capacity to speak intelligently about their faith in a pluralistic world and to explore topics in the disciplines from a distinctively Christian or Catholic framework.

Integration as an Overarching Goal

The liberal arts tradition speaks of developing the whole person, and the Catholic university tradition speaks of the unity of knowledge across disciplines. In the spirit of both, we would like

to see more connections that take us beyond the common fragmentation of the university and of student intellectual life. We elevate in this aspiration above all the Catholic idea of integration.

Although the term “integration” is complex and multifaceted, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is very clear on its importance for a Catholic university:

Integration of knowledge is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, “has to be a 'living union' of individual organisms dedicated to the search for truth ... It is necessary to work towards a higher synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person.” Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the Logos, as the centre of creation and of human history. (para. 16)

This central document on the Catholic university continues:

While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that “methodical research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God.” A vital interaction of two distinct levels of coming to know the one truth leads to a greater love for truth itself, and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of human life and of the purpose of God’s creation. (para. 17)

In the spirit of these statements, we aspire to varying levels of connections.

- We would like students to see their studies and courses fitting together in a less compartmentalized way.
- We want to encourage not only disciplinary work but also interdisciplinary work, which is of great interest to students and which is needed to solve many complex problems.
- Philosophers and theologians have traditionally sought to integrate knowledge from other disciplines, and we wish to encourage such opportunities.
- At a Catholic university we would like to see more integration in the spirit of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which involves bringing together insights and questions from diverse disciplines and seeking to unify them within a Catholic framework, which stresses the ultimate harmony of faith and reason.

Encouraging More Connections to Catholic Thought

We encourage and invite all faculty to look for ways to bring their discipline into conversation with Catholic understandings of what is and what should be. Not every course will connect, but we would like to invite and encourage as many faculty as possible to develop connections whenever the opportunity arises and whenever faculty feel comfortable drawing or inviting connections.

Such an invitation should begin with a more effective orientation for new faculty members than is reportedly the case at the moment. Small-group discussions with questions might be one strategy. Further, there should be, perhaps spread across the first year or first few years, more nuanced discussion of the Catholic mission, with the reading of appropriate documents to elicit discussion and debate. Ideally, this will include some discussion of the core, so that faculty see how their teaching in the core or how their students' participation in the core fit into the overall Notre Dame experience.

Continuing further engagement of faculty with the mission and the core would be welcome across the University. Incentives should be considered to achieve this end. Reading groups and workshops have occasionally been offered in the past; these should be reintroduced. When members of the CCRC had a retreat that included discussion of documents central to the history of Catholic higher education, those for whom the discussion was new reported being both energized and encouraged. The mission of the University would be enhanced if on a regular cycle faculty were directly invited to participate in similar discussions. These invitations could come, for example, after promotion, upon appointment anniversaries, or when faculty teach in the core after a longer absence. Multiple options exist, but we believe more opportunities and incentives to learn about Notre Dame's distinction would be strongly desirable.

One long-term goal might be to imagine closer ties between Theology and Philosophy and the other disciplines. Are there ways to strengthen what has traditionally been seen as the integrative function of these two disciplines?

II. Learning Goals and Courses

Today's Students

Many college-age Americans today, including Catholics, hold simplistic and misguided ideas about religions generally and Christianity specifically: for example, that religious faith is not reasonable but merely a matter of personal opinion; that religion is essentially a moralistic list of rules; that all religions are essentially the same; and/or that the Bible is a set of "Sunday school" stories irrelevant to modern life (or else, for some, to be read literally). Their instincts, categories, and presuppositions are often secular and shallow. Some have rejected versions of God that are not even reasonable representations of what Christianity teaches. American emerging adults are also generally suspicious about all institutions and traditions, including

religious ones. Similar problems arise with young Americans' ideas about reason, which tend to be narrow or skeptical and differ radically from what Catholicism has taught across the ages.

This general picture of young Americans derives from recent sociological research. We are well aware that the picture does not fully match Notre Dame students, with their high academic quality and overwhelmingly Catholic orientation. Still, by the time Notre Dame undergraduates take their required theology classes, nearly 30% do not identify as Catholics, and virtually all of our students will have encountered this broader cultural framework.

We sense that Notre Dame students could be seen representing a range, with important moments involving those who are unengaged with, or skeptical of, religion; those who are deeply religious; Catholics who have a truncated grasp of Catholicism; and highly literate young Catholic intellectuals. We realize that this is simply an initial reflection and perhaps the beginning of a conversation, but when it comes to the effective teaching of theology, philosophy, and related courses on Catholicism, we want to be conscious of our students' range.

The challenge of teaching such students might best be addressed by a combination of student-centered learning (including approaching students where they are without falling into a consumerist model of education) and multiple Catholic mission courses, which ideally complement one another and allow students some level of flexibility.

Through such efforts, we hope that students will develop the ability to recognize the inadequate character of many widespread assumptions about God, the Bible, and the Catholic Church as well as misconceptions about morality and about the capacity of reason. Many of these misconceptions move our culture in the direction of relativism or fideism. Ideally, we want our students not only to avoid these two extremes, but to know and appreciate more profoundly the living tradition of the Catholic Church that opens us to the unexpected mysteries of God. We also want our students to be acquainted with, and able to reason about, the genuine intellectual challenges that have been raised for theism in general, and Catholicism in particular. Further, we want our students to recognize how disciplines beyond theology and philosophy can engage Catholicism, and we want them to become articulate about faith questions in a broadly diverse and partly skeptical world.

We hope to help students develop a critical lens toward shallow conceptions of religion and cultivate nuanced understandings of faith and reason, informed by the resources of theology, philosophy, and other disciplines, and the ability to sort through their own faith commitments, doubts, and understanding of reason, which will enhance their capacity to engage in informed and informing conversations with others, who often have different religious beliefs and commitments as well as different understandings about the role of reason in religion and beyond.

Beyond offering students learning goals that will allow them to develop in these ways, we want them to experience the modeling of responsible Catholic intellectuals engaged in academic work. All faculty are models and mentors for students, and in diverse ways. In this context specifically, we note that students are encouraged when they see that many of their professors are also persons of faith.

Learning Goals for Theology and Philosophy

Learning Goals for Theology

The current rationale for the theology requirement notes that “what is distinctive about theology, the ‘science of God,’ is not simply that it is directed toward the study of God, but also that this study is ultimately made possible only through a prior, divinely-initiated relationship . . . it is this that theologians confess in affirming their enterprise as that of ‘faith seeking understanding.’” Yet many of our students arrive at the university formed by a culture in which questions of faith and reason have been reduced to a sterile polarity—in which the mystery of God’s revelation to human beings is typically said to be directly at odds with science and rationality. Theology courses challenge this conceptualization. They invite our students to broaden their horizon of understanding by grappling with the mystery of the revealed word and by seeing how, in the light of God’s revelation, they may bring the fullness of reason and experience to bear in comprehending its meaning for all dimensions of human life. At its best, the science of God that is theology introduces our students to a wisdom tradition, a realm of beauty and a depth of inquiry they may never have experienced or imagined existed.

Theology as a Discipline

There are three inter-related ways of looking at theology as a discipline that inform theology’s core curriculum courses:

1. Theology is *talk about God* and about all things in relation to God, based on God’s *self-revelation*. Revelation is the Word of God, transmitted in Scripture and Tradition in and to a community of believers.
2. God’s revelation is of truths, such as the love of God, that are beyond the grasp of unaided reason but provide reason a comprehensive and fulfilling framework for understanding the world. This character is what is intended in naming them *mysteries* which are received in *faith*. Theology is *faith seeking understanding* of mystery. Such “understanding” does not use reason to eliminate mystery, nor to replace it with truths that reason uses in its other modes of knowing. Rather, theology uses reason to appreciate the meaning and significance of revealed mystery for all dimensions of human life, both individual and social.
3. Theology *mediates between faith and culture*. Human understandings of the mysteries of faith grow as theology pursues it in light of changing cultural questions and changes in our knowledge of the world, and also as it seeks to understand expressions of the faith embodied in different cultural settings.

The overarching goals of theology courses are, therefore:

- Students will be able to explain, appreciate, and engage in theology as a unique mode of inquiry, one that seeks to understand revealed mystery, using reason not to eliminate

revealed mystery but to comprehend it, appreciate it, and work out its consequences for our understanding of ourselves and our world.

- Students will learn and develop the capacity to articulate the uniqueness of categories, such as “creation,” “sin,” “redemption,” “revelation,” “incarnation,” and “grace,” in which this inquiry is conducted, and learn to use them in their relation to other categories (proper to other disciplines) through which we attempt to understand the world.

The capacity to think theologically will help our students understand the truth claims of revelation more deeply, and understanding some of the complexities of a living Tradition will help them wrestle with theological questions more effectively throughout their lives, as well as engage persons from various religious and non-religious points of view.

The First Course in theology is *foundational*. It focuses on what Vatican II states to be the “permanent foundation” of theology: “the written Word of God taken together with sacred tradition,” i.e., Scripture and Tradition. The goals by which this course fulfills the overarching theology core course goals are:

- Students will acquire familiarity with Scripture and Tradition as the two interrelated ways in which Revelation is transmitted, as well as the categories and methods by which theology seeks to understand it. This will include an awareness of the culturally and historically conditioned modes in which Revelation is mediated (both in Scripture and Tradition), as well as an understanding of how they bear revelation in and through this very mediation.
- At the same time, students will become familiar with major elements of the content of Scripture and Tradition.

The Second Course in theology is *developmental*, meaning it focuses on *doctrine in development and dialogue*. It has one principal goal with two sub-goals:

1. Students will learn how theology, as reflection on a living Tradition, is at once and inseparably both doctrinal and dialogical, and thus open to other disciplines that make up the modern Catholic research university.
 - a. Students will acquire in-depth knowledge of at least one historically significant, characteristic *doctrine* of the Christian faith (e.g., creation, revelation, or grace).
 - b. At the same time, students will grasp and appreciate the way doctrine develops in light of new questions and insights. These developments are occasioned, on the one hand, by experience in and of a particular culture that requires a new dialogue (or mediation) between faith and culture. Such occasions for us today include encounters with other religions and pressing problems that emerging social issues raise, particularly (in the modern university) as they are studied in other academic disciplines such as philosophy, the natural sciences, the humanities, the arts and the social sciences. In addition to this, such development is occasioned by the dynamism of faith in individuals and communities, as expressed in the classic definition of theology as the “faith seeking understanding” of believers striving to probe the depths of Scripture and Tradition.

Each version of the Second Course may emphasize one of the subgoals (1a or 1b), without excluding the other, depending on the nature of the course.

Representative courses for both the first and the second requirement are available in the Department of Theology's "Proposed Revision of Rationale for Theology Requirements" document submitted to the Core Curriculum Review Committee in spring 2015, and available at <http://theology.nd.edu/undergraduate-programs/nd-theology-requirements/proposed-revision-of-rationale-for-theology-requirements/>

Learning Goals for Philosophy

Most students come to the university confident that there are truths to be uncovered in mathematics and by broadly empirical disciplines, including history and the sciences. But many students also come to university skeptical that there are any truths about the world to be discovered by reason which go beyond the scope of these disciplines. This leaves questions about the existence and nature of God, ethics, the nature and destiny of human persons, the scope of knowledge, and the existence of freedom of the will — among many others — in the realm of "opinion," and outside the scope of serious intellectual inquiry.

Catholicism has always had a more optimistic view of human reason, and hence has always endorsed the value of philosophy, which is the discipline which attempts to bring reason to bear on questions, like the ones just listed, which go beyond the resources of empirical disciplines. Accordingly, the central learning goal for philosophy courses in the core is:

- the ability to use reason to uncover truths that are beyond the scope of empirical disciplines and mathematics.

This is understood as involving the following obligatory learning goals:

- the ability to examine the preconceptions build into ordinary thought and scientific thought and to uncover the significant philosophical questions behind these preconceptions;
- the ability (via reason) to argue for (and against) central ideas of Christianity and to respond to intellectual challenges to Christianity;
- confidence in the possibility that positions can be rationally adjudicated;
- acquaintance with basic concepts in logic in order to identify, construct, and assess arguments;
- recognizing the value of exploring philosophy as an end in itself and/or the usefulness of asking philosophical questions and making philosophical distinctions in a wide array of scholarly and other contexts.

All first courses in philosophy will include study of central thinkers in the history of philosophy. Almost all will include central Christian and Catholic thinkers as well as ancient philosophers who had a profound influence on Christianity. In addition, all or almost all first courses in philosophy will include substantial engagement with ethical questions and the objectivity of moral facts.

Because almost no students have had any exposure to philosophy prior to coming to the university, accomplishing all of these learning goals in a single course is a tall order. Many students, at least, should take a second course in philosophy. A second course in philosophy will also be directed to the learning goals just outlined for a first course in philosophy and will in addition have the following learning goal:

- in-depth exploration of a cluster of philosophical questions which are either of relevance to the student's chosen course of study or of particular interest to the student.

So, for example, a student majoring in science might take a second course in the Philosophy of Science; a student particularly interested in religious or ethical questions might take a second course in the Philosophy of Religion or one focusing on a cluster of applied ethical questions.

New Initiative: Catholicism and the Disciplines (CAD)

Description and Rationale

The University mission statement quoted above avows that Notre Dame's distinctive goal is to provide a forum where the various lines of Catholic thought intersect with all the forms of knowledge and creativity found in the university. To embody this goal in the core curriculum, we recommend that a "Catholicism and the Disciplines" option be made available to enhance integration for our students. This concept will have the further advantage of recruiting scholars across the disciplines into the courses that are most at the core of our Catholic mission.

Courses must meet the following two criteria:

1. CAD courses engage Catholic content from the perspective of one or more disciplines.

The committee recognizes under this expectation explorations of more broadly Christian content as long as it can be meaningfully related to Catholicism. Further, we encourage critical engagement of Catholicism with other religious traditions and secular world views.

2. CAD courses require students to engage faith questions or normative questions critically and constructively as they process the material. Further, this engagement must be connected to the first element of the course, thus resulting in a deeper exploration of Catholicism.

The courses will point back toward theology and philosophy, asking how the material affects one's understanding of faith and/or to what extent arguments exist for and against the normative positions considered. These courses are to be structured so as to require students not simply to process material but to think for themselves, to articulate and defend their own positions.

For example, a purely historical course on the history of the Catholic church would not meet the criteria, but a course that interwove opportunities for students to understand their faith more fully as a result of this new historical understanding would be more likely to do so. A purely social-scientific course on Catholics and politics, focusing on their historical party affiliations, voting patterns, and such would not satisfy the criteria, but a course that also required students to address the question--How ought Catholics to think about the political order and political issues within it?--would.

In other words, CAD courses stress learning not simply how Catholicism relates to the world but also how one might evaluate the intersection of Catholicism and the world.

Our graduates will encounter a very diverse world upon graduation, and we want them to be able to speak intelligently about their views in an environment where their presuppositions and perspectives may not be shared. Students will face challenges involving, among others, the presumed conflict of religion and science; an overwhelmingly secular culture; critiques of the Catholic Church, both historical and contemporary; and other religions that also claim validity.

Yet we know from sociological research that many American students today struggle in articulating their faith. They can do so successfully only if they have deep theological and philosophical knowledge and are aware of, and have learned how to interact with, counter-positions.

Part of the Holy Cross tradition is to prepare students "to be theologically articulate, intellectually proficient, highly skilled scholars and debaters" (Rev. James B. King, *Holy Cross and Christian Education*, pp. 25, 34). The goal remains prominent for today's students; in our 2015 survey, students ranked "learn to talk intelligently about your faith in a pluralistic world" as the highest of all theology-related goals.

CAD courses should help students develop greater resources, including from the Catholic intellectual tradition, to engage persons of other faiths and people without faith. The courses should challenge students to reflect on (or discover elements of) their own faith or non-faith and to describe the extent to which various claims are supported by faith and/or reason.

Learning Goals

CAD courses will have the following overarching learning goal:

- Students will become adept at engaging faith questions or normative questions critically as they explore Catholic content from the perspective of one or more disciplines.

This is understood as involving the following obligatory learning goals:

- the ability to explore a topic in one or more disciplines and to do so within a Catholic framework;
- the ability to speak clearly and persuasively about faith questions and/or normative questions in a pluralistic world;
- the ability to defend one's own position on selected faith questions or normative questions in the light of various alternatives.

We offer some additional sample learning goals, which are not obligatory, but which might give some sense of the kinds of issues that CAD courses could explore:

- the ability to discuss the complementarity of faith and reason, including complexities and challenges;
- the ability to understand the complex history of the Catholic Church and of Catholic theological and philosophical thought;
- the ability to examine the widespread view that commitment to any particular religion necessarily leads to conflict and violence;
- the ability to understand and give an account of the complementarity of religion and science by way of examples;
- the ability to understand and respond to objections to a faith commitment in general and to Catholicism in particular;
- the ability to integrate material and methods from more than one discipline and to explain this integration as a way of knowing.

The concept is open to disciplines throughout the University, and we hope that with the added lens of a Catholic framework courses will help students explore material in areas ranging from art and business to politics and science.

We understand that the CAD learning goals will form an essential, but not comprehensive, set of learning goals; we expect that the courses will have discipline-specific learning goals as well.

Advantages

We see the following advantages with this new initiative.

- Opportunities for More Faculty to Contribute to Mission

Some faculty come to Notre Dame and want to be deeply engaged in addressing faith issues and normative questions as they relate to their disciplines, but they may lack opportunities. Faculty are normally expected to focus their work on their own disciplines as they are regularly understood. Notre Dame has been unusually successful in attracting committed faculty members, including Catholic intellectuals, who could contribute in new ways to mission. It is our sense from talking with faculty members that the capacity is high and the interest is strong. We would like with this initiative to open a window to allow faculty members to pursue such opportunities.

A faculty member whose course is listed in the appendix expressed the hope that the new initiative might encourage faculty teaching in the arts and humanities to engage the Catholic dimensions of works in a way that makes deep spiritual issues come alive for students. This would counter the contemporary national trend whereby many professors tend to shy away from such opportunities.

Some faculty who are aware of the concept have quickly seen opportunities to imagine new courses. Chris Smith of Sociology has spoken of his desire to teach a course on “What is a Person?” Mike Desch of Political Science has indicated his interest in teaching “War and Statecraft in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.” Bill Donahue, a new hire from Duke, spoke of possibly teaching a course on “Literature and Crises of Faith.”

We could also imagine law faculty getting involved in undergraduate education, as is the case at Harvard, though we return to this point under challenges.

- More Faculty-Taught Courses Available

By drawing on faculty in departments beyond Theology and Philosophy, we anticipate being able to offer more faculty-taught core courses that explicitly address faith concerns and normative perspectives.

- Incentives for Departments to Keep Lines by Hiring More Mission Faculty

For almost 20 years Arts and Letters has had the practice that lines go back to the dean for potential reallocation. One can imagine departments seeing a stronger incentive to make so-called mission hires who can contribute to the core in order to justify searches.

- Opportunities for the Deans to Work More Effectively on Mission Hires

The innovation indirectly encourages the deans to have more interdepartmental searches (such as the one in Arts and Letters that included two theologians on the search committee and which brought us Vittorio Montemaggi, a scholar in literature and religion) and more competitive searches (in which the lines would not be guaranteed, but opportunities to hire would exist if the quality is high and the mission connection is prominent). The latter could lead to more mission focus in fields such as anthropology,

psychology, art history, film, etc. In this way the University could “pursue the religious dimensions of all human learning” more effectively.

One could imagine courses for which we don’t yet have easily identifiable faculty: for example, the idea and history of the Catholic university; faith and film; art and theology.

- More Ambitious Sense of a Catholic University

By not delegating the more directly Catholic dimensions of mission solely to Philosophy and Theology, we should see Catholic mission infuse the University more broadly, which should result in more opportunities for our students to see connections. We will not simply be helping students in their Catholicism, but also helping them navigate their Catholicism in other contexts, which is a sign of deep learning and another avenue to enhancing our commitment to Notre Dame’s Catholic character.

- Student Flexibility

The student desire for greater flexibility received strong support in the 2015 survey.

- Introduction of Competition for Philosophy and/or Theology and thus Incentives for Philosophy and Theology to Work Constantly on Improvement

The composite, overall effectiveness, and stimulation of learning CIF scores for Philosophy and Theology and the intellectual challenge scores for Theology are not as high as we would like them to be. Competition is likely to function as an added incentive, beyond intrinsic motivation, to encourage each department to perform at the highest possible level.

- Faculty Development

Some faculty will want to stretch toward these new courses. This will help reinforce our distinctive Catholic mission. We could see, thereby, a reinvigoration of faculty development in support of mission.

The University should introduce some new opportunities and incentives for faculty development. We might introduce a small number of competitive one-semester leaves or one-course reductions: non-theologians and non-philosophers might apply in a competition to pursue mission learning under the tutelage of a theologian or philosopher or enroll in a graduate class, and theologians and philosophers might apply in the same competition to learn about other disciplines.

Also welcome would be less time-intensive learning opportunities for existing faculty, those who want to learn more about mission in general and those who might want to integrate a Catholic unit or two into an existing course.

We recommend giving faculty members who participate regularly in the CAD program a special designation, e.g., Zahm or Cavanaugh Fellow. We can also imagine attractive and interesting meetings of the fellows as well as opportunities for faculty seminars and workshops.

Challenges

We see a number of challenges to this initiative, all of which can be accommodated, but each of which will require some imitative and effort.

- **Administrative Oversight**

One concern expressed is that such courses could in the long run lead to mission drift if there were insufficient oversight to ensure that each course satisfy the expectations we have articulated. We are strongly supportive of a faculty facilitator in the Provost's Office with the authority and time to ensure accountability, not only of the CAD courses but of all core courses, a topic to which we return below.

We will also need a faculty administrator, aided by a faculty committee, to encourage course development and oversee accountability for this initiative as well as to mentor faculty who want to stretch in this direction. It would be advantageous for the administrator to contribute to faculty orientation.

- **Insufficient Courses**

We think that this new innovation will be appealing to students, but we also imagine that there will be only a modest number of seats, especially in the first semesters of its introduction.

We think part of the attraction is that this will be a voluntary activity on the part of faculty and departments and will not function, as do the USEM and CSEM, as an obligatory contribution each semester of x-number of classes. We think this voluntary dimension is essential for the course, especially in its early years and so reject any idea that this could be a requirement imposed on departments above and beyond four courses in theology/philosophy.

We need very much to think of incentives to ensure not so much that faculty take on this role, but that departments are willing to free faculty members from majors courses and regular service courses so that they can teach CAD courses.

We have not given much attention to the incentive puzzles, but one intriguing idea was to release funding to departments for each course or each x-number of seats they make available in CAD courses.

Some majors courses would currently fit the rubric, and we need to find strategies to help ensure that some such courses are reconfigured so as to become more accessible to non-majors.

We would like to see such courses in all colleges. So far, we have examples mainly from Arts and Letters, with one example from Business. Engineering and Science would be very desirable candidates, though it may well be that such courses would require team teaching.

The Law School and the Focus Group believe several Law School faculty members might be interested in offering CAD courses. Given the existing curricular demands on the Law faculty, however, their participation in the core would likely require incentives from the Office of the Provost.

- Coordination with Philosophy

We will need to ensure each year more than 2,000 seats in either philosophy or CAD courses, so the director of the program will need to work effectively with the director of undergraduate studies in Philosophy to gauge needs and offerings.

- Faculty Demands

Some faculty members teaching such courses may not have access to graduate students. Therefore, if such faculty members teach larger sections with the kinds of student numbers that would otherwise warrant graduate student assistance, this assistance needs to be granted. Working as a graduate assistant in innovative courses of this kind might even be an attractive opportunity for students in Theology, Philosophy, and other departments.

Additional Recommendations

For the most part mission courses should be taken only after students have taken one Theology and one Philosophy.

In order to ensure that the seats are not immediately occupied by seniors, we would imagine that 33% of the seats might be allocated to each of the three non-first-year classes. We do not envisage making CAD courses available to first-year students.

Class size would be determined by the instructors in consultation with relevant administrators. We would hope to see a range of class sizes, from small seminars to large lecture classes.

Only regular faculty members would offer these courses, not graduate students and not adjuncts (unless approved with good reason).

We will want to encourage some mission courses that explore Christian/Catholic content together with other religious traditions, so as to address a clear student need (students want to know more about religious pluralism and Catholic responses to it). In addition, such courses would directly contribute to the goal of helping students develop the capacity to speak intelligently about their faith in a pluralistic world. The expectation would be that such courses—in order to fit the rubric—could not be solely about another religious tradition.

Theology faculty members would be expected to focus their core contributions on their first and second theology courses. They would participate in Catholicism and the Disciplines only in settings where they team-teach with someone from another discipline. However, even in those cases, their courses might well count as second theology courses.

We should review and assess the initiative after five years.

Number of Courses in Theology and Philosophy

A clear majority of the focus group (8 persons) favors the following set of four mission courses: 2 Theology, 1 Philosophy, 1 Philosophy or 1 Catholicism and the Disciplines (CAD)

The arguments advanced in favor of two Theology (though not all arguments are necessarily shared by each person voting for two Theology) have been:

- Because revelation is the object of theology as a discipline and because, as such, theology possesses a unique mode of knowing and integrative force, it has a special status at a Catholic university and stands above the other disciplines, including philosophy.
- Students need two theology courses to understand Scripture as well as Tradition adequately.
- From the perspective of the centrality of the content and the level of student knowledge, at least two theology are needed.
- There are insufficient arguments to move away from our longstanding tradition of two theology, and if delivery is an issue, adjustments can be made.
- Two theology courses have come to be seen as a barometer of our support of Catholic mission, and backing away from these would be seen as backing away from our Catholic identity.
- Moving away from two required courses in theology would be a move toward secularization.

In some cases faculty members' endorsement of two theology courses presupposes real changes will take place: more appropriate student placement, more faculty-taught courses, more student choice, a greater sense that students' curiosity is being engaged in the first course, and greater efforts to measure success in relation to learning goals.

Three persons did not favor an automatic two-course requirement in theology but instead a more flexible and incentive-driven model that could lead to more or less theology. This model would involve 1 Theology, 1 Philosophy, 1 Theology or 1 Philosophy, and 1 Theology or 1 Catholicism and the Disciplines (with the understanding that philosophers could also develop these courses).

The rationale given for this model is that it preserves the centrality of Theology and gives it the opportunity for more core courses than it has now, but it also gives Theology and Philosophy new incentives. The model offers the strongest market mechanism, therefore, the most competition, the most powerful incentives, and the greatest student flexibility. Furthermore, it encourages Philosophy to develop courses under this new rubric.

For those who voted for this model, the model was viewed as superior to another involving 1 Theology, 1 Philosophy, 1 Theology or 1 Philosophy, and 1 Theology, 1 Philosophy, or 1 Catholicism and the Disciplines. A concern with this particular model is that, whereas students could get a great Catholic education with 1 Theology and 3 Philosophy, there was also the risk that, with the range of offerings in Philosophy, not all of which are especially central to the Catholic mission, three Philosophy might veer from our goals.

Ancillary Questions

Ethics

We discussed the desirability of ethics courses at Notre Dame. We expect through various strategies that students will gain insight into ethics and indeed in four different ways: first, the discipline of ethics as a field of philosophy; second, the ethical responsibilities associated with certain kinds of practices, including scholarly and professional work; third, practical issues in applied ethics; and fourth, ethical formation through course work and extracurricular activities, such as learning to conduct oneself appropriately in discussions and in personal relations with others.

We recognize the following avenues, among others, to this goal.

First, ethics is already present in many ways: most first philosophy courses include ethics; many second philosophy courses focus on ethics; some second theology courses also explore ethics; and the professional majors—architecture, business, and engineering—all have ethics components.

Second, we recommend incentives to increase courses in ethics and above all cross-college collaboration in the teaching of ethics. Connections between either Philosophy or Theology and the professional schools would greatly enrich student learning.

Third, we would like the oversight of the core to include a review of the extent to which we are succeeding in educating students in ethics.

Thematic Courses

Part of our charge involved reflecting on possible overarching thematic emphases that resonate with our distinctive mission. At various points, the following topics were raised: ecological literacy, integral human development, diversity, inequality, the preferential option for the poor, religion and science, and ethics.

Most of these courses involve moral challenges of the age, a topic emphasized in two of the most important recent documents on Catholic higher education, the *Land O' Lakes Statement* and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The first document stresses the importance of gearing an undergraduate education to the actual world, and the second places considerable importance on social justice.

Thematic courses such as those above could be linked to the Catholic mission, but the link is hardly obligatory. From an educational standpoint, topics such as the environment and diversity could be effectively addressed from a number of disciplinary perspectives and not only via philosophy, theology, and CAD courses. In terms of practicalities, requiring a fifth Catholic mission course along these lines would be too much of a burden on students and faculty. For example, most engineering students would have trouble fitting an obligatory fifth course into their schedules, and requiring that all thematic courses have Catholic content at a deep level would simply not be possible (we don't have the faculty to accomplish this).

Although we do not recommend requiring thematic courses with an obligatory link to Catholicism, we encourage theology, philosophy, and CAD courses on some of the worthy themes noted above. We further encourage scholars across the University to consider offering such theme courses. Finally, we encourage collaboration, such that faculty who teach theme courses and who would like to integrate one or two units on the theme from a Catholic framework, might be able, without great difficulty, to find appropriate resources, locate a guest lecturer, or be given needed guidance.

Knowledge of a Core Body of Works

We anticipate that most students who graduate from Notre Dame will have read certain major authors: Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Shakespeare, among others. At the same time, we do not believe requiring so many pages of any one author for all students is the most sensible path to realize a core curriculum, nor is it likely to capture wide-spread faculty support. However, because this model remains attractive to some faculty and students, we encourage small-scale efforts to experiment with seminars that offer a core body of works. Further, we encourage faculty across the university to integrate classic readings and references into their courses when appropriate.

III. Logistics

Placement

In his 2014 book, *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church*, Chris Smith reports that Notre Dame students who attended Catholic high school for four years knew significantly more on average about Catholic doctrine and moral teaching than those who did not, and they cared much more about theology and the Church (261-62). In the 2015 CCRC student survey, some undergraduates reported that they simply repeated in the first Notre Dame theology class material they had already learned in high school. Perhaps these students are mistaken about their own abilities, but we should test the notion. It is unacceptable

for a student to be bored because he or she is in a class below his or her level of knowledge and capacities.

Besides significant differences in high school theological preparation among Notre Dame students, growing differences arise in students' personal relations to religion. According to Notre Dame's Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research, 422 full-time undergraduate students reported no religious affiliation in Fall 2014; the figure ten years earlier was only 38. Moreover, as we increase the pool of international students, chances increase that more and more students will arrive with no knowledge of theology.

We see at least three strategies to deal with these challenges.

First, Theology is already experimenting this Fall with a special course for a selection of students who are basically novices with religion, Catholicism, and theology.

Second, we recommend that incoming students be invited to place themselves in a three-option menu that designates their background in Biblical and theological education: (1) Know very little; (2) Know a moderate amount; or (3) Have a solid background. This could be done easily during the confirmation-of-enrollment process, which already asks incoming Notre Dame students a number of online questions. Even if students are roughly stratified by preparation, variance among students will still exist in each class. However, such a method, which is not unlike what already takes place in the languages, mathematics, and sciences, strikes us as a sensible strategy to help foster effective peer learning, guide faculty members in terms of level, and move beyond the apparent experiences of some very capable students who have reported being bored, unengaged, or disappointed in their theology classes.

Third, Theology should introduce a placement test to identify students who can place up to a higher level. If the learning goals for the first course are analogous across three options, as was recently proposed by Theology, it does not suffice to say simply that qualified students can take any of the three courses. Provided students have met the learning goals for the first course, they should have the freedom to move to a more advanced level.

Course Selection

We developed some principles that we would like to see realized in the core courses in Philosophy, Theology, and Catholicism and the Disciplines:

- Offer greater choice in offerings for first-year students in Theology and Philosophy
Philosophy and Theology are now both moving in this direction.
- Offer students more flexibility and choice in general
- Address students' scheduling challenges

Over time the University should address two challenges students repeatedly mention: either that there are very desirable courses in Philosophy or Theology but insufficient seats in the desirable courses or that their schedules are so rigid and selection across available time options is so modest that they are forced to take courses that do not interest them. All of the required engineering courses, for example, are in firm time slots that tend not to change. Likewise, many math and science courses are fixed into requisite slots.

We recommend that Philosophy and Theology explore offering more seats in desirable courses or course topics and that the departments, under the coordination of the Provost's Office, work together with the colleges, especially Engineering, to ensure that more options are available during opportune times and that courses geared to engineering students not be offered during the slots that conflict. In general we would like to see University-level work on alleviating at least some of the wide-spread systemic scheduling problems that have been reported.

Course Delivery

- Ensure more faculty-taught sections of Introductory Theology and Philosophy

A new initiative in Philosophy will move us in this direction. According to the Department, already for Fall 2015, 71% of the seats in Introductory Philosophy were expected to be taught by regular faculty, with 69% being taught by tenure-track or tenured faculty. By way of contrast, in the 2013-14 academic year, the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research reports that only 37% the first philosophy courses were taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty.

According to the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research, only 30% of the first theology courses were taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty. The Department has begun discussions about raising this figure.

Within two years we should aspire to having regular faculty (and overwhelmingly tenure-track and tenured faculty) teach 100% of the seats in Introductory Theology and Introductory Philosophy. However, we recognize two issues: first, staffing complexities can arise; and second, quality of teaching should not suffer. In some cases, faculty may struggle in introductory courses and graduate student instructors may exhibit extraordinary teaching capacities. Exceptions should, therefore, be allowed, but they should be justified and approved by the University.

- Find ways to bring premier faculty members in Theology and Philosophy who don't teach core courses into the core
- Encourage more team teaching

Given the desire for more integration of various kinds, we would like to see incentives to encourage more team teaching. If incentives are to be used for philosophers and

theologians, we think this would be the appropriate area. But team teaching in general, bringing various ways of knowing into conversation with one another, is a value in and of itself and should be encouraged.

- Foster learning communities

Besides benefitting from truly interdisciplinary faculty and from team teaching, the University might weigh some further innovations. Strong support was given for learning communities or course clusters: during the same semester, the same set of students would take two (or more) related courses in different departments, for example, evolution in biology and creation in theology.

- Consider smaller-scale innovations

We also noted the possibility of fostering smaller-scale innovations. Ideas mentioned included:

- an expansion of the integrative year-long humanities seminars for non-honors students, which would give more students the experience of exploring material from various humanities disciplines, including theology and philosophy, across the full academic year;
- some year-long linked philosophy and theology courses, which would help to ensure even greater integration;
- and experiments with smaller seminars that teach a set of core works.

The ideas were also put forward of courses in which a single faculty member teaches the course, but in which one or two guest lectures are arranged to ensure first-hand inclusion of other disciplines; and courses in the form of great lecture series (a faculty member of record for the course coordinates a lecture series, which includes individual lectures by local and international faculty members who address the same general topic from a variety of perspectives).

Accountability

Although courses in theology and philosophy will be taught by theologians and philosophers respectively, the courses fulfill University requirements, such that continuing University-level oversight and monitoring of these courses in the light of the learning goals will be appropriate.

The current committee structure for the core curriculum provides general oversight for learning goals and course approval, though in general that has not been effectively enacted. Moreover, the committees were never charged with measuring effectiveness and recommending changes, a process that should occur regularly and not once every ten years. We urge that there be more vigorous general oversight of the core curriculum, including those courses that serve the requirements explored in this report.

Although this oversight responsibility will include multiple interdisciplinary faculty committees, as is currently the case, we recognize the irreplaceable value of a strong university administrator

who has the authority and time to lead the effort of ensuring accountability. A core is likely to be ineffective unless there is strong leadership and a strong commitment to University-level oversight, a commitment that appears never to have been in place at Notre Dame, as we have deferred to the local units, whose courses, however, have not always met even their own criteria. To ensure continuing oversight and creativity, we recommend that there be a new position created in the Office of the Provost and that this person (for example, an Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies) have among his or her responsibilities in undergraduate studies: coordinating the new core; recruiting teachers and facilitators to help ensure creativity and innovation; facilitating the multiple committees; and ensuring accountability.

For the primary oversight of CAD, we envisage a smaller committee of three to five persons. A majority should come from Philosophy and Theology, but there should also be colleagues from other disciplines. This committee would be subject to oversight by an appropriate University committee, led by the associate provost.

The suggestion was made that every course in the core should be approved by the University-level committee, which would meet monthly; this process would give us the greatest accountability and would be the best way to ensure that course proposals are adjusted to fit the criteria and not simply automatically approved. Others liked the flexibility of more local control, with regular University-level review of lower-level decisions in order to ensure continuing adherence to the criteria.

With either model, the main principles would be: clear oversight according to criteria; feedback mechanisms for proposed courses; nimbleness; and strategies to ensure continuing adherence to the criteria and to foster improvement.

Double Counting

Our focus group both endorses a demanding core infused with the distinctive goals of Catholic higher education and recognizes the challenges for students associated with a high number of core courses. We thus endorse double counting of core courses as a principle, though we defer to the CCRC, which will have a wider horizon on how that might best be realized.

Process

The focus group met 15 times. We had a two-hour orientation meeting in December 2014. We then had 13 regular meetings during the spring semester of 2015, each a 90-minute meeting: one in January, three in February, three in March, three in April, and three in May. We had a final two-hour meeting in September 2015.

Early in the process we offered to schedule meetings with Theology and with Philosophy. In both cases, the departments wanted to have internal discussions first.

Theology met with the initial co-directors of the CCRC during the spring. Theology prepared a proposal regarding departmental participation in the University's core curriculum, which the

department unanimously approved and submitted to the co-chairs of the Core Curriculum Review Committee. This document was the basis for a meeting between members of the focus group and Theology during finals week in May. In Summer 2015, a working group met twice and corresponded extensively over e-mail to develop a draft of learning goals for Theology. The draft drew on the proposal from Theology but sought to make it more accessible to students as well as to colleagues in other disciplines. The group consisted of three theologians (Matt Ashley, John Cavadini, and Tim Matovina, who chaired the group) and three non-theologians (Ed Maginn, Susan Collins, and Chris Smith). The draft was subsequently revised by the focus group, which consulted thereby with the summer working group, including Matt Ashley and John Cavadini.

A meeting with Philosophy could not take place before the close of the academic year and our final spring meeting on May 18. However, we did receive their statement on the core, and Philosophy did meet with the co-directors of the CCRC. In terms of developing learning goals for Philosophy, our focus group worked closely with members of the Department of Philosophy throughout Spring 2015.

In addition to reviewing materials submitted by individual faculty members and in some cases groups of faculty members or departments, the committee prepared for its deliberations by reading various materials on Catholic higher education, on the Holy Cross tradition, and on the Catholic understanding of revelation. The committee also reviewed the results of student and alumni surveys.

Appendix: Supplementary Information on Catholicism and the Disciplines (CAD)

In order to help the Notre Dame community understand what we mean by this new initiative, we explore here in greater detail some sample courses and some examples of types of courses that would not fit the rubric.

What would be some sample courses?

Dante II

Christian Moevs

A discussion course that focuses on the two culminating canticles of the Comedy, the Purgatorio and Paradiso, where Dante pursues the deepest Catholic theological and philosophical understanding of what a human being is, and of the human relation to the world and to the divine.

Between Religion and Literature: Meaning, Vulnerability and the Human Existence Vittorio Montemaggi

This course explores the contribution that the coming together of theological and literary reflection can make to our understanding of the nature of meaning. Focusing on the work of Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, Primo Levi, Dostoevsky and Shakespeare, students will address questions such as 'What is it we are doing when speaking, reading, using language?', 'How do the intellect and the imagination work in relation to literary texts?', 'How might all this relate to our

ways of thinking about God, human nature, and the relationship between them?' Such questions will be addressed, in particular, through reflection on how the texts studied invite us to think about the nature of love, forgiveness, vulnerability and creativity.

Storming Heaven: Christianity in the Reformation Era

Brad Gregory

This is a lecture course on Western European Christianity in the Reformation era (c.1500-c.1650) that takes a multi-perspectival, international approach. We will consider not only magisterial Protestantism (i.e. forms of Protestantism introduced with the backing of political authorities), but also radical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, from Germany to Spain, from England to Italy, beginning with the late medieval Church and continuing through the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth. The character and impact of the changes wrought by the emergence of distinct Christian traditions will be discussed within a narrative framework, exploring the differences as well as similarities among them. Major underlying themes in the course include matters of religious content (the articulation of doctrinal positions and devotional sensibilities); the relationship between different Christian groups and political regimes; the impact of the religious changes across the spectrum of the population; and the implications of the definitive emergence of Christian pluralism.

Politics and Conscience

Mary Keys

Against a backdrop of large-scale society, mass movements, and technological bureaucracy, the invocation of “conscience” recalls the individual human person as a meaningful actor in the political sphere. But what is conscience, and what are its rights and responsibilities? What is it about conscience that ought to command governmental respect? Are there limits to its autonomy? What role should conscience play in questions of war and peace, law-abidingness and civil disobedience, citizenship and political leadership? How does the notion of conscience relate to concepts of natural law and natural rights, rationality and prudence, religion and toleration? This course engages these questions through readings from the Catholic intellectual tradition (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas, More, Vitoria, Erasmus, Newman, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI) and other writers of the history of ethical-political thought. We consider also various contemporary reflections on conscience expressed in films, essays, letters, plays, short stories, speeches, and declarations, including Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” and Václav Havel’s speech “Politics and Conscience.”

Introduction to Economics and Catholic Thought

Joe Kaboski

This course will discuss the relationship between economics and Catholic social teaching. We will learn about key principles in Catholic social thought, read key Papal encyclicals and other writings. We will then discuss key economic concepts and empirical facts known from the field of economics, and how these relate to Catholic social teaching. Finally, we will apply these ideas to discussions on labor, capital, finance, the environment, globalization, and development.

Corporate Governance and Catholic Social Teaching

Martijn Cremers

The objectives of this course are threefold: describe important corporate governance mechanisms; develop understanding of the three main pillars of Catholic Social Teaching (dignity of the human person; solidarity or social charity; and subsidiarity) and the idea of the ‘common good’; and compare the purpose of business and thus of the governance mechanisms in light of three views: Catholic Social Teaching; shareholder wealth maximization; and stakeholder theory. In the first half, the course covers basics of corporate governance and corporate law and covers (basic) Catholic human anthropology and Catholic Social Teachings using readings from the Catechism and papal encyclicals. The second half of the course tries to bring about in students a reflection on normative questions regarding the purpose, priorities and practice of business.

Faith, Doubt, and Reason

Mark Roche

The College Seminar on “Faith, Doubt, and Reason” explores scholarly questions of great existential interest. What various forms of faith exist? What obstacles exist to faith? What thoughts and experiences trigger doubt? In what ways do doubt and reason undermine or reinforce faith? How might we distinguish and evaluate different forms of reason? The seminar explores faith and doubt not only in relation to God and religious questions, but also in relation to one’s sense of self, trust in other persons, belief in institutions, and identification with values and ideas. Readings will be taken from classic authors and works such as Plato, the Bible, Shakespeare, Molière, Lessing, Büchner, Kierkegaard, Turgenev, Nietzsche, Freud, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. We will analyze the role of faith, doubt, and reason in identity and identity crises and will study the sociological beliefs of young Americans. We will also explore films by directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Roland Joffé, and Woody Allen, and we will visit the Snite Museum or the Basilica as well as the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center.

What courses would not fall under the rubric?

Courses that treat themes prominent in Catholicism, but without Catholic or even broadly Christian elements.

Examples:

“The Greeks and Their Gods”: Presumably the course is not engaged with Christian material.

“Confronting Homelessness”: This is an important topic for Christianity, but the course, as described, appears not to engage Christian material.

Courses that offer only critiques of Christianity without alternative views.

Example:

A course on “Marx, Nietzsche, Freud,” if it were only critical of Christianity, would not satisfy the expectation, but a course that included also responses from a Christian perspective would fit.

Courses where the Catholic dimension is merely descriptive and not related to faith perspectives or the normative realm.

Some faculty might need to stretch slightly, but that would be good for all.

One example might be the following course on “Catholics in America”: “This course explores the relationship between Catholicism and national identity in the American past and present. It asks what the presence of Catholics (since 1850, the nation's largest religious denomination) has meant for the American experience, considering, among others, the following themes: mission, migration, education, citizenship, religious life, reform, and politics. We will also examine how the American context has transformed the practice of Catholicism, with attention to ethnicity, race, class, gender and sexuality as variables that have shaped the American Catholic experience. In addition we will study the representation of Catholics in American film, material culture relating to Catholic devotional life and the sacraments.” The course, taught by Kathleen Cummings of American Studies, is of course not designed with our concept in mind. It would not, as described here, meet the criteria, but it would if it were to require students to engage faith questions or normative questions. In checking with Kathy, we learned that she would be very happy to reconfigure the course to meet the CAD specifications.

Other examples:

“Renaissance Painting”: If the focus is primarily production and reception aesthetics and not the ways in which form and ideas connect to issues of faith and normative truth.

“Catholic Film Directors”: The fact that the directors are Catholic would not suffice, but a course on faith and film could work very well.

Courses where questions of faith and questions of normative truth arise, but are not the primary focus of the course.

Example:

In a recent course on “German Narratives,” God is prominent in all four works read and analyzed by the students, but God and related religious topics are not the focus of the course, as would be the case in a course on religion and literature. Talk of God in such a course is not incidental or accidental; one cannot do justice to the literary works, if one brackets talk of God. Thus, the religious component is organic and essential. However, unlike a Theology, Philosophy, or CAD course, the primary focus is not directed toward God, faith, religion, or philosophical theology. Thus, one would not include this course, but would instead see it as part of the wider landscape of modest and indirect contributions to Catholic mission, which we also support and would like to see continue to develop.