

This class introduces the history, methods and most absorbing questions of theology, literally "reasoned speech about God." While surveying what two thousand years of prayerful and intelligent reflection have revealed about God, our lives and our church, we will address a number of questions that are central to the discipline traditionally called "fundamental theology" and more recently titled "method in theology."

This class is divided into six parts. In Part I, "What Is Theology," we look broadly at the history and contemporary concerns facing theologians, while also addressing such questions as, Who does theology and what are we doing when we "do" theology?

Part II focuses on "The Human Facing God." Beginning with our restless longing for God we also probe some of the most vexing problems posed to believers by the modern world.

Part III turns to the crucial themes of "Faith and Revelation." Here we ask what is faith? How is faith expressed? How is faith related to reason? What is revelation? What does the event of revelation tell us about God and ourselves?

Part IV takes up another crucial theme, "Revelation and Scripture." What is scripture? How do we interpret scripture? How does Scripture express revelation?

Part V turns to "Tradition, Doctrine and Theology." We probe the meaning and development of doctrine as well as the status of doctrinal claims. Doctrine and tradition are likewise related to the church and magisterium. This leads us to ask, how are experience, faith, revelation, scripture, doctrine and theology related to one another?

Finally, in Part VI, we turn some of the key questions facing theology today, including debates surrounding theology and science, the relationship of Christianity to the other world religions, and religion and the problem of innocent suffering.

Throughout this class we focus on the underlying question about theology and the status of theological language. You will explore key theological subjects, concepts and terms, and the biographies of some major theologians throughout history. Investigate the range of theological styles from different historical periods that have contributed to the larger discipline of Catholic theology. Finally, we link the study of theology to Christian spirituality and the mission of the Church.

Topic 1: An Ancient Tradition Facing a Post-Modern World  
Topic 2: How Can We Talk about God if God Is Absolute Mystery?  
Topic 3: The Soil Where Theology Grows: Christian Prayer, Hope, and Life  
Topic 4: Classic Paradigms and Contemporary Approaches to Theology  
Topic 5: Doing Theology Today  
Topic 6: The Creature Who "Does Theology"  
Topic 7: God as "Absolute and Self-Revealing Mystery"  
Topic 8: Images of Faith and Faith's Images of the World  
Topic 9: Faith as a Dimension of the Human  
Topic 10: Faith and the Expressions of Faith  
Topic 11: Revelation in Theology  
Topic 12: Toward a Theology of Revelation  
Topic 13: The Problem of Interpretation  
Topic 14: Human Words and the Word of God  
Topic 15: Scripture as the "Revelatory Text"  
Topic 16: Beyond Fundamentalism: Interpreting the Revelatory Text  
Topic 17: The Relationship between Scripture and Tradition  
Topic 18: The Use of Scripture in Theology  
Topic 19: The Role of Symbols in Religious Knowledge  
Topic 20: The Role of Symbols in the Encounter with the Risen Jesus  
Topic 21: Religious Authority and the Dynamics of Theology  
Topic 22: The Point of Fundamental Theology: The Quest for Salvation  
Topic 23: Theology and the Turn to Historical Reality  
Topic 24: Theology and Spirituality: Theology as Love Seeking Understanding"