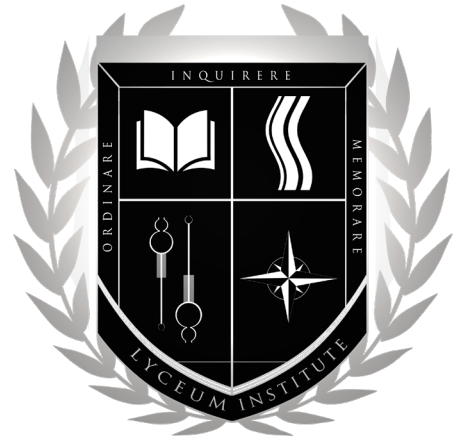


AQUINAS: *DE VERITATE* II – GOOD AND FREEDOM

SEMINAR SYLLABUS



[WINTER 2024]

DESCRIPTION

Why do we call a thing “good”? We have been calling things good since childhood, but, as with any conception so fundamental, it is challenging to unfold its meaning. Given the multifarious use of this word, “good”, is there even a unity of meaning to discover?

Thomas Aquinas proposes that, indeed, the conception of the good has a central meaning – “that which is *perfective* in the manner of a final cause” – and so approves the dictum of Aristotle, that “the good is that which all seek”. Every single thing tends toward some good, toward *that which would perfect or fulfill it*. The notion of this “ordering to an end” or final cause discloses the dimension of *real possibility* in the nature of things, and poses a challenge for reductive modern paradigms in which there are no *real* possibilities, but only “actual facts” of a mechanical kind.



In this seminar, we will follow Aquinas’s treatment of the good in questions 21–26 of his great work known as *De veritate*. Our considerations will include the metaphysics of the good, how things “tend” toward a good, human and divine will, free choice, and human sensuality and passions. We will also devote some attention to the topic of evil and some important passages in *De veritate* bearing on that theme.

(NOTE: A previous seminar, *De veritate I*, which considered the theme of the “true” in the same work, is in no way prerequisite to this one.)

METHOD

The seminar is 8 weeks long, with one recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. Each discussion session is structured around readings from Aquinas’ *De veritate*. Participants are expected to have read the assigned reading and listened to the lecture prior to the session, so that they may engage in a semi-structured discussion directed and moderated by the instructor.

READING

The primary text for this seminar, Aquinas' *De veritate* is available online (link to be provided). Supplemental or suggested readings, if any, will be provided via Teams. **The reading schedule given below is subject to change.**

LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 20-40+ minute audio lecture, posted to Teams at the beginning of the week. This lecture will be based upon the assigned reading, but will also stray into related topics, or may use the reading as a launching point for addressing some related issue (perhaps one more general, or perhaps one more specific). The primary (but not sole) purpose of these lectures is to help clarify some of the more difficult concepts and arguments contained within the reading, as well as to raise specific questions that should help structure and guide our discussion sessions.

There *may* be accompanying visual aids (not necessarily) in order to provide some clarity as to textual points, but one *should* be able, in most cases, to simply listen to the lecture (and perhaps consult the visual aids later). This should allow more flexibility: making the lectures suitable accompaniment for a commute, while doing chores, going for a run, etc.

DISCUSSION

The heart of the seminar is the discussion session (**Saturdays at 10:00am-11:00pm ET**): where all the thoughts emergent and encountered throughout the week—via the reading, lecture, and on-going conversations in the Teams channel—are brought into explicit conversation. This allows us to attempt a concerted effort at bringing resolution to our difficulties, and—failing such a resolution—to direct our inquiry further.

Each discussion session will begin with a brief synopsis of the week's material and a focusing on whichever aspects of that material seem most pressing. Beyond the direction provided by the instructor, participants are encouraged to bring their own concerns explicitly into view and to engage with the instructor and one another in civil debate and collective inquiry.

AUDITS OR COMPLETES

Beginning in 2022, all Lyceum Institute seminar participants will be able to either *audit* the seminar or *complete* the seminar. To complete the seminar, the participant **must** submit an essay of 2000+ words pertaining to the subject. This essay may be evaluated for publication in *Reality* and will be included in each Lyceum Institute member's profile, along with the mark of auditing or completing.

SESSION SCHEDULE

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| January 13 | The Good and Being Lecture 1 (audio recording) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>DV</i> q. 1, art. 1 (corpus) |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 21, art. 1 (corpus, obj/resp 1-4, contra/resp 1-2); art. 2 (corpus, obj/resp 1-2, 4, 7); art. 3 (corpus) • <i>Summa theologiae</i> I, q. 5, art. 6 (complete) |
| January 20 | <p>The Diffusion of the Good</p> <p>Lecture 2 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 21, art. 4 (corpus, obj/resp 3, 5); art. 5 (corpus), art. 6 (complete) <p>Suggested reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I, q. 6, art. 4 (complete) (parallels <i>DV</i> q. 21, art. 4) • <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I, q. 5, art. 5 (complete) (parallels <i>DV</i> q. 21, art. 6) |
| January 27 | <p>Appetite and Human Will</p> <p>Lecture 3 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 22, art. 1 (corpus, obj/resp 1-3, 6-7); art. 2 (complete); art. 3 (corpus); art. 4 (complete); art. 5 (corpus, obj/resp 2-3, contra/resp 6) |
| February 3 | <p>Human Will (cont'd)</p> <p>Lecture 4 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 22, art. 6 (corpus, obj/resp 3-4); art. 8 (complete); art. 9 (corpus, obj/resp 1,3); art.12 (corpus); art. 13 (corpus); art. 15 (corpus) |
| February 10 | BREAK |
| February 17 | <p>Divine Will</p> <p>Lecture 5 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 23, art. 1 (complete); art. 2 (complete); art. 3 (complete); art. 4 (complete); art. 5 (complete) |
| February 24 | <p>Free Choice</p> <p>Lecture 6 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 24, art. 1 (corpus, obj/resp 1-6); art. 2 (corpus); art. 3 (corpus); art. 6 (complete); art. 14 (complete); art. 15 (complete) |

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| <p>March 2</p> | <p>Sensuality and Passions</p> <p>Lecture 7 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DV</i> q. 25, art. 1 (corpus); art. 2 (corpus); art 4 (corpus) • <i>DV</i> q. 26, art. 4 (corpus); art. 5 (complete); art. 7 (corpus, obj/resp 1) |
| <p>March 9</p> | <p>The Reality of Evil, Or, Non-Being and the Good</p> <p>Lecture 8 (audio recording)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD |