
The Renewal of the Core Curriculum

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1 Core Curriculum Map

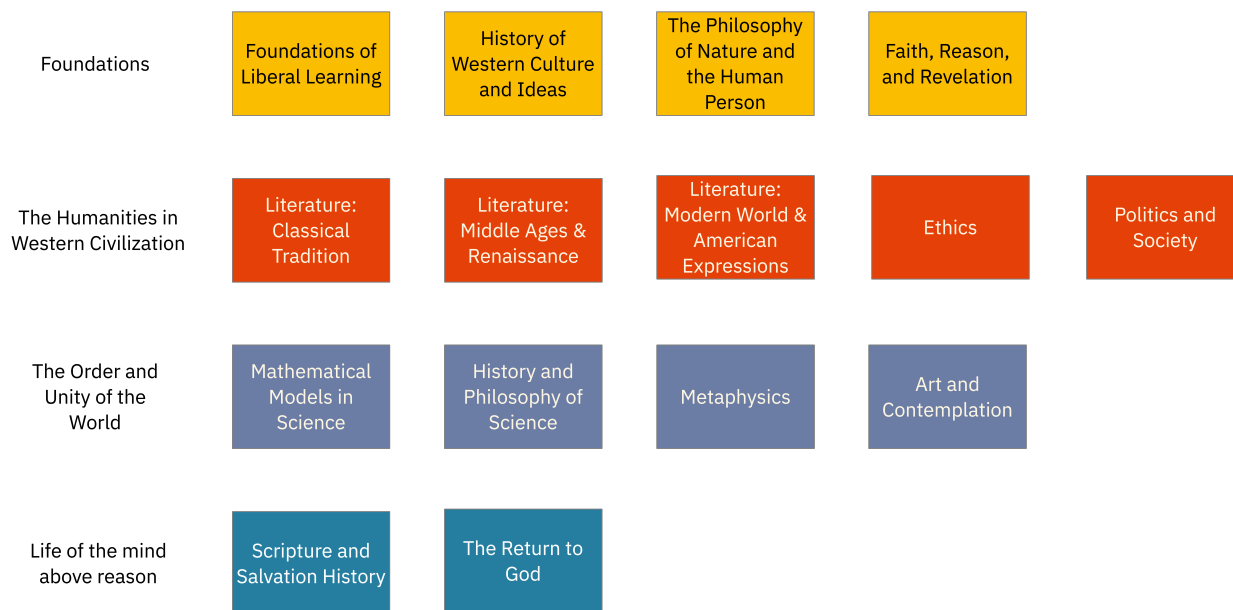


Figure 1: The Proposed Structure of the Core

2 The Core Curriculum

The very life of beings with intelligence is *to think*, to exercise this intelligence actively, on *what is*. A knowing being lives most acutely, most vividly, when it thinks about *what is*.

— James Schall, S.J. *The Life of the Mind*

The Core Curriculum is the vital heart of a UST education. Over the course of 45 credit hours (or smaller focused pathways in the case of high credit transfer) the student cultivates the foundations of the life of the mind, according to the best the classical liberal arts tradition has to offer. In their journey through the core, students will come to understand themselves as free and intellectual beings, hone their intellectual skills in reasoning, persuasion, and more, and cultivate the beginnings of wisdom via a holistic perspective on the individual disciplines they study.

The core consists of four interconnected sequences, each of which emphasizes a particular one of the three core goals: self-knowledge, intellectual skills, and wisdom. Goals emphasized in one sequence are reinforced in the others. (For a more detailed account of the goals of the renewed core, see **section 5**.) These sequences, for the most part, are arranged in a recommended, rather

than a required, order, but they are expected to have been completed by a particular phase of the student's education: the first sequence by the end of the first year at UST, the second two sequences by the end of the third year, and the final sequence by the end of the fourth year. Students will not begin a sequence until they have started the prior sequence. Most students can comfortably complete the whole core by taking about 2 core courses per semester. Depending on degree plan and transfer credits, students may complete these sequences earlier in their course of study at UST.

What follows are brief descriptions of the individual course sequences. Each of the courses receives a more detailed description in its own section later in this document (see **section 6**).

Students experience symmetries along multiple axes of inquiry and connections arcing across more than one sequence. The two intermediate sequences of the core culminate in courses that reflect respectively on the active and contemplative lives. All core courses are taught under specific disciplinary prefixes by core fellows properly credentialed in the relevant discipline.

3 The Foundational Sequence (Required of all students)

3.1 Foundations of Liberal Learning

The student begins with **Foundations of Liberal Learning**: an introduction to liberal education via the liberal arts of language—grammar, logic and rhetoric. Presuming no prior knowledge of these topics, it imparts to students the skills of logical thinking and persuasion they will need to thrive in their further studies and to develop as persons. Brief selections from authors such as Josef Pieper serve to introduce the classical intellectual tradition—both pre-Christian and Christian.

3.2 Philosophy of Nature and the Human Person

In close concert with the course on liberal learning, students undertake **Philosophy of Nature and the Human Person**: an exploration of the nature of the human person as a sensate, intelligent, and free being, in order that knowledge of the self and of its capacity for transcendence may provide a foundation for their pursuit of wisdom in the core. At the same time, they are introduced to the insights of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, so foundational for the Catholic intellectual tradition. Readings focus on selections from Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on Man*.

3.3 History of Western Culture and Ideas

Integral to students' formation is a sense of their own and other's histories, and the development of clear-sighted judgment in the light historical evidence can provide. For the Catholic tradition, the person flourishes in community, and awareness of this truth serves as a source of historical consciousness extending from the present to reflection on the past. Readings of primary sources vary according to the judgment of the professor. Christopher Dawson's work provides a fundamental inspiration.

3.4 Faith, Reason, and Revelation

Recommended at the end of the foundational sequence of the core, **Faith, Reason, and Revelation** introduces students to the possibility and reasonableness of theological reflection, the historical veracity of revelation, and the openness of the human person to transcendent reality, in whose light the deepest questions and desires of the human heart begin to find meaningful answers. Readings include *Dei Verbum* and other seminal works of the modern Magisterium.

4 Subsequent Sequences

Following upon the foundational sequence taken by all students (including transfers), students embark upon a sequence in the humanities in order to form their imagination, broaden their moral experience, and hone their skills in reading, interpretation, persuasion, and practical reasoning. They undertake a slightly shorter sequence (generally reduced for transfer students) on the order and unity in the world, enabling them to develop their skills in mathematical and empirical reasoning and to pursue and wonder at knowledge for its own sake. The final sequence aims for the coherence of the whole in the light of a holistic vision of the order of things and students' own purpose, as disclosed by divine revelation.

5 Core Goals

1. To form in students an understanding of themselves as human persons endowed with intellectual and imaginative capacities and free will, so that they are empowered to pursue wisdom and to cultivate virtues, in which their humanity is fulfilled.

2. To cultivate intellectual skills that shape the life of the mind across multiple disciplines and enable a person to grow intellectually into the best version of himself or herself. Such skills take many forms. They could, for example, include, without being limited to, the ability to read and interpret, to draw conclusions from principles or data, to formulate accurate definitions, or to persuade others without manipulation or deceit.
3. To develop in students a reflective, philosophical habit of mind from the perspective of which the truths of all disciplines, of faith and of reason, can begin to be grasped as an ordered whole unified by underlying principles. This manifests itself in a healthy curiosity and a reverent wonder for truth in all its forms and in a keen interest in the underlying causes of things.

5.1 Commentary on the Goals

The goal of *self-knowledge*: that is, forming in students an understanding of themselves as endowed with intellectual, imaginative, and volitive capacities, appears first on the list because students need first to be aware that they have a life of the mind to live in order to be able to live it. One needs a sense of one's own interiority and selfhood in order to set straight at the outset certain misconceptions about everything else one does in cultivating the life of the mind. One such misconception in particular is that we are in the end no different from the animals. More positively, such knowledge lays the foundation for understanding that there are certain distinctive intellectual skills whose cultivation perfects the soul. This is a goal about introducing students to their own human interiority. Coming to understand oneself in the way just described occurs in several disciplines, notably Philosophy, Literature, and History, as well as the *Foundations of Liberal Learning* course.

The goal of *cultivating intellectual skills* that transcend disciplinary boundaries is at the heart of the core curriculum. The list given here illustrates the kinds of things that could appear in specific student learning outcomes, but does not mandate any particular one of these skills individually or collectively.

- The skill of reading and interpreting the meaning of a text, an argument, or a discourse across a variety of media
- The skill of analyzing a regular structure as a bearer of meaning and significance in a given medium whether of nature or of art
- The skill of constructing a reasonable argument, whether from data or from principles
- The skill of defining and distinguishing
- The skill of contextualizing and comparing data and texts

- The skill of persuading and leading other minds without manipulation or deceit
- The skill of harmonizing presentation and expression with the dignity or worth of the subject or occasion
- The skill of identifying and applying the procedure by which a problem may be generalized and solved

The third goal, *cultivating the beginning of wisdom*, is something meant to influence students beyond their experience in core classes, extending to their majors, as well as to their professional vocations and personal lives after graduation. We will look for evidence of it in their work particularly as they relate one discipline to another or show that they can reflect on fundamental principles underlying their intellectual seeking.

Taken as a whole, these three goals are inclusive of all disciplines to the extent that such disciplines are studied and taught for their own sake. Moreover, even though each goal might appear more prominently in particular courses within the core, none of them is strictly limited to a particular discipline or course. As *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* describes it “Without in any way neglecting the acquisition of useful knowledge, a Catholic University is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God. The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of proclaiming the whole meaning of truth” (§ 4). Faithful to this spirit, the core curriculum seeks to foster a broad range of disciplines principally for the sake of truth itself rather than for the sake of their particular usefulness. It is precisely this common inspiration and awareness of one another that permits the “dialogue . . . for mutual enhancement” described by *Ex Corde* § 15.

5.2 Serving the UST Mission through Core Goals

The core curriculum serves the goals and fosters the values identified in the Mission Statement of the University of St. Thomas. The Mission Statement expresses our commitment to the following elements:

the Catholic intellectual tradition, a tradition that (i) understands human persons as rational, imaginative, free creatures capable of fulfillment through wisdom and virtue (Goal 1), (ii) prizes the intellectual skills formed by the liberal arts that have always been foundational in Catholic universities (Goal 2), and (iii) understands all of created reality as intelligible through principles and causes (Goal 3);

the dialogue between faith and reason, which depends upon the reflective, philosophical habit of mind our curriculum fosters (Goal 3);

the Basilian core values of goodness, discipline, and knowledge, virtues through which our students' humanity is fulfilled (Goal 1);

engagement in a diverse, collaborative community, insofar as the intellectual skills that our core develops (Goal 2) facilitate engagement and conversation among people of diverse backgrounds, and the unifying perspective it affords enables students to understand the relationship between the different parts of human knowledge (Goal 3), making possible constructive collaboration across different disciplines; and

the unity of all knowledge, insofar as the truths of all disciplines can be grasped as an ordered whole unified by underlying principles (Goal 3) forming our graduates to think critically, communicate effectively (Goal 2), succeed professionally, and lead ethically (Goal 1).

6 Detailed Descriptions of the Proposed Courses

For each course, the reader will find two rationales: one for academics and university leaders, the other for students. The reason for adopting this twofold structure is that various readers of the proposal will bring to it differing primary interests regarding the place and purpose of courses in the core curriculum. Thus the proposal offers, as a courtesy to its readers, a way to identify which parts of the proposal are most likely to answer readers' particular questions about a course.

6.1 Foundations of Liberal Learning

Then that book altered my state of mind . . . and made my wishes and desires into something else entirely: suddenly every empty hope became worthless to me, and instead I began to long for the immortality of wisdom, with unbelievable fervor of heart.

—St. Augustine, *Confessions* 3.4.

6.1.1 Description

An introduction to the liberal arts of language: grammar, logic, and rhetoric, accompanied by an explanation of liberal learning itself, its nature and importance. The course is interdisciplinary and may be taught from different disciplinary perspectives, depending on the professor.

6.1.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

A liberal education embodies a particular vision of the world, of objective truth, and of the self. It is, in the words of Fr. James Schall, “another sort of learning.” Yet because this “other sort of learning” is a paradigm unfamiliar to many students, we set them up for success by presenting how it differs from what they may have experienced up to this point, how to put it into practice via logical reasoning, and above all, why it matters. This course demonstrates what the life of the mind is all about and gives students the opportunity to develop it by cultivating traditional intellectual skills. These skills go beyond mere memorization, formulaic writing techniques, or test-taking strategies. They are in fact the traditional skills known in the Middle Ages as the *trivium*: interpretation of language, careful reasoning, and persuasive argumentation.

In the course of developing these skills, students may read such classics as Josef Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture* and selections from Ss. Boethius or John Henry Newman.

The focus on specific intellectual skills regards the second goal of the core. The focus on the vocation of the student as a recipient of liberal education concerns the first goal of the core.

6.1.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will develop facility in reasoning and communicating, with a focus on honing these skills for success in their subsequent studies. Students will be introduced to what a liberal arts education means, how it differs from other educational experiences, and why it is important.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand the nature of a liberal education as the Catholic intellectual tradition understands it.
2. Students will reflect on the intellectual virtues and their place in the life of the mind, including the practices that help cultivate such virtues.
3. Students will be able to apply specific intellectual skills as they begin themselves to live the intellectual life:
 - close analytical reading
 - logical thinking
 - persuasive writing and / or speaking.

Readings and Topics The proposed textbooks for the course are Houser’s *Logic as a Liberal Art* or Sister Miriam Joseph’s *The Trivium* and Crider’s *The Office of Assertion*. Students might also expect to read texts like the following:

1. Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*
2. Newman, *Idea of a University* (selections)
3. Basil, “Address to Young Men on Reading Greek Literature”
4. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* Bk. 3, chapter 112

Students can expect such topics as the following:

1. liberal learning as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake
2. logic, rhetoric, and grammar (primarily in exercise form)

The initial syllabus was developed by Christopher Wolfe, PhD. The course is planned for asynchronous and in-person instruction modes. The asynchronous shell and subsequent development have been the work of Andrew Hayes, PhD.

6.2 History of Western Culture and Ideas

Human history obviously unfolds in a horizontal dimension within space and time. Yet it also has a vertical dimension. It is not only we who write our history: God writes it with us.

—St. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 153.

6.2.1 Description

A historical perspective on European culture, society, and politics. This course aims to foster both historical consciousness and the stability and circumspection that results from an awareness of the richness and diversity of the past.

6.2.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

It is important for students not only to know themselves as free and rational persons, capable of intellectual and moral excellence. The human person is intrinsically communal. Thus, they must also come to understand themselves by developing the ability to judge well and humanely regarding their own and other communities and the traditions that characterize them. History entails a turn to the selfhood of the community in all its concreteness for an understanding of the possibilities for and challenges to human excellence. This kind of capacity for judgment yields what Newman describes as an enlargement of mind and an awareness of shared humanity. It also enables them to develop the skill of recognizing false interpretations of the past.

6.2.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will develop a sense of historical awareness via the study of European history and culture, brought into conversation with other cultural traditions. In so doing they will better understand themselves and come to grasp the importance of historical consciousness as an essential endowment of a free person.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of their interiority in the context of the history of the conception of human selfhood.
2. Students will discuss their own self-development in relation to their community over time.

3. Students will discuss the interplay of human free will, imagination and human agency and structural causation in key historical events.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate conflicting historical narratives, using professional standards of historical inquiry.

Readings and Topics Readings include select primary sources from classical antiquity through the middle ages up to late modernity, compiled as a reader. Christopher Dawson’s vision provides a fundamental inspiration.

6.3 Philosophy of Nature and the Human Person

[We speak of] each man in all the unrepeatable reality of what he is and what he does, of his intellect and will, of his conscience and heart. Man who in his reality has, because he is a “person”, a history of his life that is his own and, most important, a history of his soul that is his own.

—St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* §14

6.3.1 Description

A course in philosophical anthropology, studying many aspects of human nature: sensation, emotion, thought, will, habits, soul, and body.

6.3.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

The first step to embarking on the formation of the person is to have some sense of the nature and purpose of the human person, because a liberal education ultimately aims at the formation of the whole person. Similarly, in order to embrace the life of the mind, students need to be made aware that a life of the mind is possible, and that they have a soul for which they have the right and duty to care. And finally, no authentic education could be possible apart from an awareness of what *Gaudium et Spes* calls simply, “the transcendence of the person” (§13). This transcendence of the person connects immediately with our desire to know and study the world and the order of things. As St. John Paul II puts it,

the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves in their uniqueness, with the question of the meaning of things and of their very existence becoming ever more pressing. (*Fides et Ratio* §1)

This course, therefore, opens students up a principled consideration of themselves as human persons, and in so doing, anticipates in miniature the rest of their liberal education. If the human being is, as it were, a microcosm, this course is a microcosm of the core.

6.3.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will be introduced to what makes them distinctive in comparison to irrational animals, and the reasons why this distinctiveness is important. Thus, they will come to understand themselves as persons endowed with innate dignity, freedom of choice, and the capacity for rational reflection. Self-knowledge thus serves as the foundation of the philosophical habit of mind and heart that animates their journey through their liberal education.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will learn or review the basics of deductive reasoning.
2. Students will learn the doctrines of hylomorphism and nature in the Aristotelian tradition.
3. Students will learn the essence of the human person and the incorruptibility of the human soul in the Aristotelian tradition, as well as contrast the Aristotelian view of the human person with competing views, especially materialism and dualism.
4. Students will learn the powers of the human person, including the exterior and interior senses, the intellectual powers, and the appetitive powers, with an eye to the freedom of the will in the perfection of the human person.
5. Students will lay the ontological groundwork for the further study of ethics by investigating happiness and its relationship to virtue as understood in the Aristotelian tradition.

Readings and Topics Selections are taken from Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on Man*. The course's principal developer is David Squires, PhD.

6.4 Faith, Reason, and Revelation

Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.

—St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, §1

6.4.1 Description

An introductory course in fundamental Catholic theology, presenting the basic openness of the human person to divine revelation, the historical veracity of that revelation, and selected major theological themes in the Catholic worldview, with an eye to their coherence with one another and with the human person.

6.4.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

A certain conception of the human being is fundamental to the Catholic vision of goodness and knowledge. If, in general, the first sequence of the core promotes the understanding of the self as a free and rational being, endowed with an intrinsic dignity and interior life meant to be lived in relation to the truth and to God, this course in particular shows how the human person individually and collectively is capable of serious reflection on the highest things, as illuminated by divine revelation. This reflection answers humanity’s deepest questions about itself, the world, and its desire for God. As Augustine famously put it, “Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in You.”

Assessment data have consistently shown that one of the greatest hurdles to student understanding and success in theology courses is grasping correctly the relationship between faith and reason, and as a corollary, why it makes sense to engage in theological reflection at all. This course addresses that student need directly. Inasmuch as it treats of the most basic foundations of theology itself, it remains true to the ideal of Newman (and Pieper) that in a liberal education, the disciplines be taught philosophically—that is, with reference to and acknowledgement of first principles.

6.4.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will be introduced to what Catholic theology is, what its distinctive features and principles are, and why Catholic belief is reasonable. In so doing they will deepen their understanding

of themselves as rational, free, beings, capable of affirming what is true and of freely embracing the purpose of their existence.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will explain the reasonableness of the Christian worldview in terms of human rationality and freedom.
2. Students will be able to define central Christian principles of faith, nature, grace, creation, and sin.
3. Students will explain the historical veracity of the Gospel accounts through a thorough analysis of issues of dating, genre, authorship, and external and internal witnesses.
4. Students will articulate the notion of Christian revelation, as well as modern objections.

Readings and Topics

- *The Case for Jesus* by Brant Pitre
- *Where There is Love There is God* by Mother Teresa
- “Miracles in Science and Theology” by Terence L. Nichols in *Zygon*, vol 37, no. 3 (2002)

6.5 The Classical Tradition

Since rhetoric is used to give conviction to both truth and falsehood, who could dare maintain that truth, which depends on us for its defense, should stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood . . . Christ is the truth, and yet the truth can be proclaimed even by untruth, in the sense that things which are right and true may be proclaimed by a wicked and deceitful heart . . . [The rhetorician] should seek to live in such a way that he not only gains a reward for himself but also gives an example to others, so that his way of life becomes, in a sense, an abundant source of eloquence.

—St. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*

6.5.1 Description

The *Classical Tradition* lays the foundation for the rest of the core curriculum in English through a writing-intensive introduction to some of the most beautiful and life-altering poems and philosophical works of the Classical world. Students will engage primary texts in a manner that

hones their capacity to ask good questions, to interpret carefully, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness, realizing the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity. Concluding with St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, the course immerses students in the ties and tension that exist between Christian revelation and classical culture.

6.5.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret with care, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. By reading philosophical texts on the nature of rhetoric, students will learn to appreciate clarity of definition, to love logic, to grasp the place of persuasion in human life, to know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences, behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth.”

St. John Paul II held that “Christian Revelation is the true lodestar of men and women as they strive to make their way amid the . . . constrictions” of our times. While great books can never rival revelation or Sacred Tradition as a source of truth, this course treats the great works of the past as sources of insight and wisdom for the common human experience. However, we will not merely revere these texts. Rather, we will remain open to respectfully questioning their philosophical foundations. As Martin Heidegger contends, “questioning is the piety of thought.” By reading literary texts we will grasp the importance of narrative and drama for human life, and encounter the transcendent sway of the beautiful. Genuinely beautiful things shock us out of ourselves and spur us to answer some of the most burning questions human beings have ever asked. Stories help one to do this dramatically, in a manner that fully engages our senses and our intellects, our passions and our judgment.

As Flannery O’Connor says, “I write to discover what I know.” Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to students’ growth in wisdom and their capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. Student work in this course develops writing skills through which they will convey clearly, persuasively, and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

The course makes a point of dedicating specific time to the major genres: epic, dramatic, and lyric

poetry. Attention to literary forms and the distinctions between them is an important element of instruction in core English courses.

6.5.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. By reading philosophical texts on the nature of rhetoric, we will learn to: appreciate clarity of definition; love logic; grasp the place of persuasion in human life; know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences; behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth.”

Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to your growth in wisdom and your capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. We will work together to develop writing skills that will help you convey clearly and persuasively and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand and articulate the distinctive goods of poetry in both epic and dramatic forms.
2. Students will understand the nature of rhetoric, and become cognizant of its critics, its corruptions, and its capacity for good. (This outcome is aligned with and dependent on *Foundations of Liberal Learning*)
3. Students will become conversant in the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy, as well as the ties and tensions that exist between Christian Revelation and Classical culture.

Readings and Topics

- Homer, either *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, read in full; whichever is selected will be taught in conversation with the other.

- Aeschylus, *The Oresteia* or Sophocles' *Oedipus Cycle*; whichever is selected will be taught in conversation with the other. Brief selections from Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* accompany these texts.
- Modern or contemporary lyric selections on classical themes
- Augustine, *Confessions*—at least the first three books, with complementary selections from *The Aeneid*.
- Josef Pieper, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power*

The following fundamental questions express major topics and themes explored in the course, and are intended as a guide for professors and for students as they integrate this course into their educational experience:

- Does suffering bring wisdom? Does wisdom bring pain?
- Is it possible to find home, to return home?
- Is it possible to know ourselves, and is it always good to seek self-knowledge?
- What is the difference between immoral lies and pleasant fictions?
- What are the ends of comedy? Why do we laugh, and are there limits to laughter: are there things we should never laugh about, and why?
- What is the “tragic sense of life”? Is tragedy “compatible” with Christianity? Is human life fundamentally tragic, or comic—or does neither genre completely capture its deepest frequencies, foundations, and forms?
- Is the art of rhetoric amoral or immoral? What is the difference between persuasion and violent coercion? What makes an argument persuasive? What are the most effective rhetorical appeals and why?
- What is the “self”? “Who am I,” and of what am I comprised?
- Why could it be good to revisit the wrongs we have done—why not forget them instead? Why do we confess our wrongs—what good can come from it? Is shame always bad?
- What does it mean to “praise God”? What is the difference between speaking to God and speaking about God? Where is God relative to the self?
- What makes a friendship “good,” and can apparently good friendships actually undermine our search for happiness?
- What ties and tensions exist between faith and reason? Are human beings driven mainly by their intellects or by their passions or by their wills? Are human beings able to remain stable, or are they always becoming either better or worse (i.e., What is the place of “corruption” and “conversion” in human life?)
- Why do we tell stories, and what makes a story “good”?

6.6 Middle Ages and Renaissance

Be it known that the sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous, that is to say, “of more senses than one”; for it is one sense which we get through the letter, and another which we get through the thing the letter signifies; and the first is called literal, but the second allegorical or mystic. And this mode of treatment, for its better manifestation, may be considered in this verse: “When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech, Judaea became his sanctification, Israel his power.” For if we inspect the letter alone the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is presented to us; if the allegory, our redemption wrought by Christ; if the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace is presented to us; if the anagogical, the departure of the holy soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory is presented to us.

—Dante, “Letter to Cangrande”

6.6.1 Description

The Middle Ages and Renaissance develops the Core Curriculum in English through a writing-intensive introduction to beautiful, life-altering literary and philosophical works of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Students will engage primary texts in a manner that hones our capacity to ask good questions, to interpret carefully, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness, realizing the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity.

6.6.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret with care, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. Students will behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth.” The university wholeheartedly affirms St. John Paul II’s declaration that “Christian Revelation is the true lodestar of men and women as they strive to make their way amid the . . . constrictions” of our times. While great books can never rival Revelation or Sacred Tradition as a source of truth, this course treats the great works of the past as sources of insight and wisdom for the common

human experience. However, we will not merely revere these texts. Rather, we will remain open to respectfully questioning their philosophical foundations. As Martin Heidegger contends, “questioning is the piety of thought.” By reading literary texts we will grasp the importance of narrative for human life, and will encounter the transcendent sway of the beautiful; as both Plato and Benedict XVI argue, genuinely beautiful things shock us out of ourselves and spurs us to answer some of the most burning questions human beings have ever asked. Stories help us to do this dramatically, in a manner that fully engages our senses and our intellects, our passions and our judgment.

As Flannery O’Connor says, “I write to discover what I know.” Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to your growth in wisdom and your capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. We will work together to develop writing skills that will help you convey clearly and persuasively and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

6.6.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. By reading philosophical texts on the nature of rhetoric, we will learn to appreciate clarity of definition; love logic; grasp the place of persuasion in human life; know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences; behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth.”

Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to your growth in wisdom and your capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. We will work together to develop writing skills that will help you convey clearly and persuasively and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand the distinctive goods of poetry and the multiple senses or levels through which we can interpret a literary text.
2. Students will continue to become versant in the ties and tensions that exist between Christian Revelation and Classical culture. Students will be able to explain the very different ways in which St. Augustine and Dante, Beowulf and Saint Thomas More engaged with Classical culture, and will be able to give an account of the why behind these diverse engagements.
3. Students will continue to become versant in the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy, in particular through a careful reading of select passages from St. Thomas Aquinas on the virtues, and the relationship between these philosophical expositions and Dante's dramatizations of them.
4. Students will learn to appreciate clarity of definition; love logic; grasp the place of persuasion in human life; know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences; behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity

Readings and Topics

- Either *Beowulf* or *The Song of Roland*
- *The Divine Comedy*, Dante
- *A Brief Reader on the Virtues of the Human Heart*, Josef Pieper
- Selections from St. Thomas Aquinas on the virtues.
- *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, Christopher Dawson
- Selections from *The Discarded Image*, by C.S. Lewis
- A work of the professor's choice by Saint Thomas More
- A play of the professor's choice by William Shakespeare

The following fundamental questions supply examples of major topics and themes explored in this course:

- Does suffering bring wisdom?; does wisdom bring pain?;
- is it possible to find home, to return home?;
- what is a hero?; what is honor?;
- is it possible to know ourselves, and is it always good to seek self-knowledge?;
- what is the place of conversion and corruption in human life?;
- what is the relationship between nature and grace?; what is the relationship between

faith and reason?; what goods can we obtain through reason alone, and what goods are obtainable solely through faith?;

- what are the various species of human love?;
- what role did Christianity play in the rise of Western culture?;
- what is a virtue, and what is a vice?; what is the relationship between the theological and philosophical virtues?; how does encountering the definition and explanation of virtue and vice in St. Thomas Aquinas help us to have a richer, more complete experience of reading Dante's *Divine Comedy*? How does reading Dante's *Divine Comedy* help us to have a richer, more complete grasp of the virtues and the vices and their place in human life?
- What is hell, and how could a loving God create a place of eternal punishment?;
- What is purgatory, how does it differ from hell, and what is its relationship to the virtue of hope?;
- What does C.S. Lewis mean by the "discarded image"? Be able to explain the medieval conception of the cosmos? What is paradise, and why does Dante posit a hierarchy in heaven? What is the beatific vision?

6.7 Modern World and American Expressions

Literary experience heals the wound, without undermining the privilege, of individuality. There are mass emotions which heal the wound; but they destroy the privilege. In them, our separate selves are pooled and we sink back into sub-individuality. But in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see. Here, as in worship, in love, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.

—C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism*

It is part of the business of the critic to preserve tradition—where a good tradition exists. It is part of his business to see literature steadily and to see it whole; and this is eminently to see it *not* as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time; to see the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes.

—T.S. Eliot, Introduction to *The Sacred Wood*

6.7.1 Description

The Modern World and American Expressions crowns the Core Curriculum in English through a writing-intensive introduction to beautiful, life-altering literary and philosophical works of modern literature. Students will engage primary texts in a manner that hones their capacity to ask good questions, to interpret carefully, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness, realizing the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity.

6.7.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

As in prior core courses in English, students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret with care, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. Having beheld the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth,” students find themselves prepared to cultivate their own moral imagination while consciously differentiating it from the sophistries of contemporary literary discourse and theory. In so doing, they solidify their own understanding of what it means to live an interior life as a free rational agent, capable of truth, goodness, and beauty (cf. the first goal of the core).

As both Plato and Benedict XVI argue, genuinely beautiful things shock us out of ourselves and spur us to answer some of the most burning questions human beings have ever asked. Stories help us to do this dramatically, in a manner that fully engages our senses and our intellects, our passions and our judgment.

As Flannery O’Connor says, “I write to discover what I know.” Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to your growth in wisdom and your capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. We will work together to develop writing skills that will help you convey clearly and persuasively and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

6.7.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will improve their writing by approaching reading and writing as two halves of the same endeavor. Reading, then, will be undertaken as a means of honing our capacity to inquire, to interpret, to develop the interior life, and to experience reality in all of its multi-layered richness. By reading philosophical texts on the nature of rhetoric, we will learn to: appreciate clarity of definition; love logic; grasp the place of persuasion in human life; know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences; behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity—what St. John Paul II called the “splendor of truth.”

Writing, the other half of the equation, is indispensable to your growth in wisdom and your capacity for beauty: it is not enough to say, “I know the answer but I just don’t know how to say it.” It is also not enough to possess substantive knowledge, though grasp of profound truths is a real boon. We have to be able to communicate what we know to others, and to do so through a compelling, artful style that conjoins winsomeness and wit with logic and design. We will work together to develop writing skills that will help you convey clearly and persuasively and—of utmost importance—in a manner committed to the truth.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will grow ever more versant in the divergent views of the human person between antiquity and modernity as reflected in modern literature, and will be able to give an account of the why behind these divergences.
2. Students will be able to distinguish between the moral, idyllic, and diabolical expressions of imagination (Eliot) as found in modern literature, and will reflect on the purpose of imaginative formation in that light.
3. Students will learn to appreciate clarity of definition; love logic; grasp the place of persuasion in human life; know the various ways and means we should use to persuade distinct audiences; behold the piercing power of human reason, the relationship of beauty and ugliness to truth and falsity.

Readings and Topics Students might expect to read works like the following. Selections are chosen with an eye to the first goal of the core:

- Austen, *Mansfield Park*
- Dostoyevsky, either *Crime and Punishment* or *Brothers Karamazov*

- Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
- one representative text from the Catholic Literary revival of the twentieth century, e.g., Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*
- Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* or James, *The Portrait of a Lady*
- Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*
- Selections from Flannery O'Connor and Melville
- Selections from T.S. Eliot, including *The Waste Land*
- Pieper, *The Concept of Sin*

The following fundamental questions supply examples of major topics and themes explored in this course:

- Is it possible to know ourselves, and is it always good to seek self-knowledge?
- What is the place of conversion and corruption in human life?
- What are the various species of human love?

6.8 Ethics

Which way of life would make living most worthwhile for each of us?

—Plato, *Republic* 344e.

6.8.1 Description

This course is for students who are studying moral philosophy for the first time. As long as there have been human beings, morality has been a question—its foundations, its nature, its forms, and its very possibility. By studying classic works of philosophy, especially Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, students will engage with the most fundamental questions that motivate ethical reflection: What does it mean to be human? What makes for a good life? How shall we live? What is the relationship between morality and happiness? The course will focus particular attention on the riches of the Catholic intellectual tradition and its emphasis on practical reasoning, the dignity of the person, virtue ethics, and the natural law.

6.8.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

One of the central purposes for the study of moral philosophy at Catholic universities is to cultivate in students a deepened understanding of and appreciation for the Western philosophical tradition

and Catholic intellectual heritage. In addition, the course aims to nurture in each student a philosophical habit of mind, a spirit of intellectual inquiry, a lifelong desire for wisdom, and crucial virtues such as integrity, humility, and empathy. In addition, a general ethics course at a Catholic university should include serious consideration of the distinctive contributions of Catholic intellectual thought, specifically consideration of virtue ethics, the natural law tradition, practical wisdom, authentic freedom, the dignity of the person, and the relationship between morality and happiness.

The elements included here are intended to aid others in developing courses that meet the needs of the UST core curriculum while maintaining a focus on the crucial contributions of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

6.8.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will develop a foundational knowledge of several of the most important texts in the history of ethical theory as well as the major contributions made by the Catholic intellectual tradition to the western philosophical tradition. They will be taught to become careful readers, being patient with their own processes of understanding and trying to develop accurate interpretations and thoughtful questions.

In addition, there are several goods for your life:

1. that you might make progress in the moral life and begin to acquire key moral virtues;
2. that you might find intellectual reasons to strengthen your commitment to leading a moral life;
3. that in your life (in the personal, professional and civic spheres) you might apply what you learn in this course for the sake of the common good and society as a whole, and
4. you will develop a robust sense of wonder and a love of learning for its own sake.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will recognize and cogently discuss significant questions in moral philosophy.
2. Students will identify and critically assess multiple dimensions of an ethical issue in an attempt to reach a conclusion.
3. Students will examine the role of reason in guiding human life and conduct.
4. Students will acquire foundational knowledge of several of the main theories in the history of philosophy, including virtue ethics, natural law, practical reasoning, human dignity, utilitarianism, and deontology.

5. Students will discuss and evaluate what constitutes the human good and the ultimate destiny of the person.
6. Students will study and be able to articulate the Catholic understanding of the proper relationship between ethics and religious belief.

Readings and Topics Selections from:

- Plato, *Republic*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*
- Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for a Metaphysics of Morals*
- John Stuart Mill, *On Utilitarianism*
- Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* 3rd edition

6.9 Politics and Society

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

6.9.1 Description

An introductory course on the political and social order with an emphasis on the American context, presenting theories and their real-life application. Themes include natural law, civil rights and civil liberties, and forms of social and economic organization.

6.9.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Courses in the second sequence of the core build on the classical vision of the human person by deepening theoretical understanding and sharpening the intellectual skills that contribute to personal flourishing. Key to this growth is the social nature of the human being.

Yet students are often unaware of the presuppositions on which their notions of political and social order are based. Accordingly, this course forms students in political theory, taking as its inspiration Martin Luther King, Jr.'s course in social philosophy, and teaches them the skills to apply such a principled understanding to particular American social and political questions that

possess universal and global importance. Readings from King are selected in order to model contemporary discussion on the deep lessons that he taught this country about social justice.

The course addresses such fundamental questions as what forms of political and social organization best contribute to human flourishing, what fundamental rights belong to individuals vis-à-vis the common good and political institutions, and what role the family plays with respect to the political regime and the human good. King as a model for rhetoric on social and political issues aligns with the course *Foundations of Liberal Learning*.

6.9.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will develop a deeper and richer view of politics, law, and human society. In so doing, they will hone their ability to frame, interpret, and answer social and legal questions from a Catholic perspective, and to form competent judgments on the wisdom of public policy.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to articulate how forms of social organization contribute to human flourishing.
2. Students will be able to apply their principled understanding of social science to issues by reading and interpreting statistics (e.g., in connection to questions about social organization)
3. Students will be able to articulate arguments for civil rights and civil liberties, as inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Readings and Topics Readings include select primary sources from classical antiquity as drawn from King's syllabus for his social philosophy course. They may come from

- Aristotle's *Politics*
- St. Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on Law*
- Machiavelli's *The Prince*
- Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*
- John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*
- *The Federalist Papers*
- Abraham Lincoln's speeches and writings
- Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*
- John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*

- Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*
- John Paul II’s *Centesimus Annus*
- Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speeches and writings

6.10 Art and Contemplation

Only in the contemplation of Beauty is life worth living.

—Plato

The ultimate value of life depends upon awareness and the power of contemplation rather than upon mere survival.

—Aristotle

Contemplation reveals, clarifies, and makes manifest the reality which has been sighted.

—Josef Pieper

6.10.1 Description

Art and Contemplation focuses on how works of art—music, painting, sculpture, dance, photography, and film—reveal aspects of reality that surprise, startle, and provoke us to think. The poet, Dante Alighieri, considered art as the grandchildren of God inasmuch as men and women are His creations, and they in turn fashion earthly materials in forms that reflect the beauty of God. Such creation turns our gaze to beauty, and thereby to our Creator God. Students will come to embrace as their own Fyodor Dostoevsky’s famous words, “Beauty will save the world.”

6.10.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Many students have the experience of making art. They may have taken music lessons, painted, or written poetry or fiction. This course moves students to think about the craft of making art to the realm of its contemplation. What does it mean to create? Typically, we think of creativity solely in the realm of the fine arts. Most students will not have careers as professional musicians, visual artists, or writers. Nevertheless they will apply themselves to some professional work or craftsmanship, which involves making something anew—creating. Having taken this course students will be more aware of the meaning of their act of making, they will think about it in

relation to what they learned about the act and responsibility of creation. As St. John Paul II wrote in his 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens (On Human Labor)*, In an increasingly technological and mechanical age, “technology can cease to be man’s ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work ‘supplants’ him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility... [T]hrough exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave.”

6.10.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

In keeping with the aims of liberal arts education, art and contemplation is central to liberating students from the often slavish rhythms of work, production, and consuming. To be sure, work is necessary and should be the source of great human satisfaction, but it can be destructive of the human spirit when it totalizes our existence. With its emphasis on contemplating great works of art, students taking Art and Contemplation will come to appreciate and relish the joy of being over having. They will also learn how to discern great works of arts from inferior ones, and, in the process, to begin their own collection of great music, painting, poetry, fiction, dances, photographs, and films.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes At the completion of this course, student will

1. Demonstrate a vocabulary for discussing the essential elements of architecture, music, painting, sculpture, poetry, drama, dance, poetry, photography, and film.
2. Develop and demonstrate principles and standards to identify excellence and beauty in the arts.
3. Develop and discuss a foundational repertory of great art works that will continuously enrich their lives.

Readings and Topics Students in Art and Contemplation consider the following big questions:

- What is Art? How does it embody or reflect beauty?
- What does it mean to say that an artwork expresses emotion?
- What role does the formal structures of artworks play in their appreciation, and analysis?
- How do we explain and perhaps reconcile persons’ differing experiences of art?
- Are there objective standards for declaring a work of art worthy or unworthy of serious contemplation?

6.11 Mathematical Models in Science

Models employed in the sciences are a kind of metaphor in which a familiar structure or mechanism is used as an analogy to interpret natural phenomena. . . . To have achieved a scientific explanation is to have rendered intelligible something that was not self-intelligible.

—Jude Dougherty, *The Nature of Scientific Explanation*

6.11.1 Description

A course introducing and exploring the widespread practice of devising and applying models in mathematical and scientific domains. The course emphasizes the useful applications of models, tests their limitations as a means of knowledge, and situates them in the context of both scientific and philosophical education for the non-specialist.

6.11.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

This course is intended to complement the history and philosophy of science while also explicitly developing in students the cross-disciplinary intellectual skill of thinking and problem solving by modeling in science. Modeling is a useful skill widely applicable in mathematical and scientific domains, and in this way, it deserves to be considered among the liberal arts which are the universal skills that sharpen the mind for the intellectual virtues. Modeling also serves to introduce students to questions of how inductive empirical methods of knowledge and degrees of abstraction relate to the order of things as understood in classical metaphysics. Hence, it is ideally suited to blending both practical utility and application with the big-picture questions proper to a liberal education. **Problem domains and examples can be chosen to suit the disciplinary competences of the professor offering the course.**

The practicality of modeling as a useful skill serves the second goal of the core: to cultivate intellectual skills that serve the life of the mind across various areas of inquiry.

6.11.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will be introduced to the importance of models as a basic tool of scientific and mathematical thinking, and learn to apply useful models to particular high-value problems, in such a way as to sharpen their powers of analysis.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes These outcomes are meant to be given further specificity, depending on the specific scientific or mathematical questions selected for consideration, which may vary with the instructor or from semester to semester.

1. Students will acquire a college-level understanding of the scientific method, especially insofar as it makes use of the basic tools of human reason to make inferences from evidence. (In the context of the specific field they are studying, students should come to understand how scientists reach conclusions from empirical evidence, and how they formulate and test hypotheses experimentally.)
2. Students will practice applying multiple models to practical problem domains and learn to evaluate their explanatory value.
3. Students will distinguish between mathematical description and scientific explanation.

Readings and Topics Readings and topics will depend on the instructor’s expertise, but the course idea takes its inspiration from Scott Page’s *The Model Thinker*, which might serve as a useful companion volume. Dougherty’s *The Nature of Scientific Explanation* may prove a useful philosophical companion for the instructor, which can also provide a more accurate account of wisdom than Page was able to do in his book.

6.12 History and Philosophy of Science

The peculiar problem of the age lying ahead of us will be to reconcile science and wisdom in a vital and spiritual harmony. The very sciences themselves seem to invite the intelligence to take up such a task. Today they are ridding themselves of the remains of a materialist metaphysic which disguised their true features, they are calling out for a philosophy of nature.

—Jacques Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*

6.12.1 Description

A study of the history, methods, and nature of science from classical cosmology through the Newtonian and Darwinian revolutions, into the twentieth century.

6.12.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Students will reflect on the history, nature, and methods of science with an eye to being able to think clearly and carefully about science and scientific claims. For instance, they need to be able to distinguish between claims that are philosophical and claims that are scientific. Moreover, in the light of such reflection, they will be well positioned to address the prevalent and persistent misunderstandings of science in contemporary discourse, particularly as to its scope and methods.

This course is intended to complement the study of science in the core, not to replace it. It aligns particularly with the third goal of the core, in that it seeks to give students the foundations for wisdom in connection with one of the most important and influential areas of knowledge ever conceived.

6.12.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students will learn to reflect on the nature and purpose of science. By looking at how it has worked throughout history they will come to know more concretely the method of science and gain insight into science as a search for truth.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will become familiar with the historical development and context of key scientific discoveries.
2. Students will learn to think clearly and knowledgeably about the distinctive methods of science, both descriptively and prescriptively, in light of the history of science.
3. Students will learn to think in a careful and systematic way about broader epistemic questions, both within and without the scientific disciplines, in light of an understanding of the history and methods of science.
4. Students will understand the difference between natural science and the philosophy of nature and be able to reflect upon the relationship between them.

Readings and Topics Readings will include one or two overviews of the history and/or philosophy of science as well as primary texts such as the following:

- Aristotle's *Physics* and cosmological writings
- Selections from Ptolemy's astronomy

- *Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, Newton
- Letters of Galileo and the transcripts of his trial.
- Selections from the writings of Tycho Brahe
- *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, David Hume
- *De Motu Cordis et Sanguinis*, William Harvey
- *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin
- *Conjectures and Refutations*, Karl Popper
- *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn
- “Inference to the Best Explanation,” Peter Lipton

6.13 Metaphysics

Set within the Christian metaphysical tradition, the philosophy of being is a dynamic philosophy which views reality in its ontological, causal and communicative structures. It is strong and enduring because it is based upon the very act of being itself, which allows a full and comprehensive openness to reality as a whole, surpassing every limit in order to reach the One who brings all things to fulfilment.

—Pope St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* §97

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.

—Pope St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* §16

6.13.1 Description

An introduction to metaphysics, the philosophical discipline concerned with questions about the nature of reality, about what there is, and about the principles, causes, and properties of what exists. Because metaphysics asks fundamental questions about all of being, one of its central tasks is to account for the unity of human knowledge and for the relationship among all the various parts of human knowledge. Because it seeks after the causes of being, metaphysics culminates in philosophical theology, a consideration of what can be known about God through human reason.

6.13.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

One of the central goals of education in a Catholic university according to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is the integration of knowledge, that students should attain not only to specialized knowledge within their particular disciplines, but also to an understanding of the unity of human knowledge and of the relationships of the different parts of human knowledge to one another. In the Catholic intellectual tradition, an indispensable role in the integration of knowledge is played by metaphysics, the philosophy of being that seeks an understanding of reality as a whole and of whatever exists, insofar as it is a being. If one understands how the different “parts” of being relate to one another, then one can make sense of how the different parts of human knowledge are related to one another as well.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae also emphasizes that the integration of knowledge occurs in a special way in the dialogue between faith and reason. The philosophy of being and its goal of a united vision of reality culminates in philosophical theology, a consideration of what human reason can know about the existence and attributes of God.

6.13.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

The study of metaphysics will help students to think about how the different subjects that they have studied at the University, including their major discipline, are related to one another and how they are related to a fulfilling human life. The course will also address big questions about the nature of reality and the existence and attributes of God.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to articulate the relationship between their major and the rest of what they study at the university.
2. Students will correctly employ the distinction between speculative, practical, and productive knowledge.
3. Students will be able to explain key metaphysical notions, including substance, accident, form, matter, potency, act, unity, truth, goodness, essence, and existence.
4. Students will be able to articulate arguments for God’s existence and attributes.

Readings and Topics The topics covered will include:

- Categories

- Form and matter
- Nature and art
- Motion
- Act and potency
- Division of the sciences
- Univocity and analogy
- Principle of contradiction
- Analogy of being
- Essence and existence
- Transcendentals
- Metaphysical arguments for God's existence
- Divine attributes

Selections are taken from some of the great texts of the classical metaphysical tradition:

- Aristotle, *Categories* cc. 1-5
- Aristotle, *Physics* I-III (selections)
- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-II, IV-VI, IX (selections)
- St. Thomas, *Commentary on the De Trinitate* q. 5 (selections)
- St. Thomas, *De ente et essentia* c. 4 (selections)
- St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae* 1a qq. 2-26 (selections)
- Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas*

Recommended readings include:

- Plato, *Republic* (selections)
- Plato, *Sophist* (selections)
- Fragment of Aristotle's Cave Allegory from Cicero's *De natura deorum*
- Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (selections)

The initial syllabus has been developed by Brian Carl, PhD.

6.14 Scripture and Salvation History

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

— Hebrews 1:1

6.14.1 Description

An introductory course in Christian Scripture and theology presenting a thorough and coherent outline of Salvation History from the creation narrative through the coming of Christ and the birth and development of the Church. Students will also be exposed to the basic Trinitarian and Christological dogmas which are derived from Scripture.

6.14.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

Sacred Scripture is fundamental to the mission of the Catholic university, and a unified presentation of Salvation History is a constant guide for curriculum design and instruction, and especially the core. The Church insists that Christ be at the heart of all teaching and learning, and Salvation History presents a reading of Scripture in which God's Word to the prophets and apostles and his formation of a people for himself is all oriented toward the coming of a savior.

6.14.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Students can expect a thorough overview of the primary figures and events of the Bible in addition to a presentation of the Church's core doctrines and beliefs concerning Christ, Trinity, and the Sacraments. Students will understand that the notions of revelation and inspiration do not oppose science and rationality, but indeed support them.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will explain the basic outline of Salvation History, including the figures and events leading up to and including Christ and birth of the Church.
2. Students will interpret the scriptures literally and spiritually.
3. Students will describe the creedal and doctrinal implications and developments that emerged from the scriptures.

Readings and Topics

- The Bible (RSV, 2nd Ed., Ignatius Press)
- Pitre, *The Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*

6.15 The Return to God

The glory of God is man fully alive, but the life of man is the vision of God.

—St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV

You have made us for yourself O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

—St. Augustine, *Confessions*, I

6.15.1 Description

A synthesis of readings and themes introduced in prior core instruction, this course draws together fundamental questions considered throughout the curriculum dealing with such topics as revelation, history, transcendence, suffering, death, and salvation. This course orients life in the context of a Christian sacramental vision to the final end of the human person: the contemplation of the vision of God.

6.15.2 Why this course is in the core (explanation for educators)

The core curriculum serves as a foundation and orientation for the life of the mind. Key to that orientation is not simply knowing the powers and capacities of the human person, but of knowing their fulfillment, individually and collectively, in the Body of Christ, and how such fulfillment is relevant for their lives in the world. Accordingly, this course seeks to draw together the threads and fundamental questions introduced and explored in previous core classes, with an eye to facilitating the student's own interior synthesis of his or her education within the horizon of a Christian sacramental worldview. It shows them how one lives out the sacramental worldview via the liturgy in the midst of activity in the world. The intended result is that students will understand what the unity of a human life in Christ is, but also what the unity of the disciplines is, since the core is composed of disciplines that relate to reality and to the human person. The courses of the core, therefore, express both the anthropological unity and the unity of creation in its final end.

The course addresses such fundamental questions as what is the purpose of human existence, what makes a human life (and human history) unified and meaningful, and what is the value of prayer, worship, and contemplation. In so doing it both addresses the dominant technocratic assumptions and presuppositions of contemporary life and culture and seeks to present the

unity of the disciplines in the light of the Gospel. It also reveals the value of a liberal education for forming in students a holistic conception of themselves in relation to the world.

In emphasizing the unity of the disciplines, this course explicitly coordinates with and complements the *Foundations of Liberal Learning* course. The first books of Augustine's *Confessions* offer a model for reflection on education in the light of the human end and on the inadequacies of purely technical learning.

6.15.3 What students can expect to get out of this course (explanation for students)

Guided by the riches of the Catholic intellectual and moral tradition, students will be acquire the knowledge and skills needed to confront, formulate, and answer the question of what makes their lives, at bottom, unified and meaningful, and to see a Christian answer to that question as a serious and persuasive one. They will also learn how in the concrete sacramental and spiritual theology of the Church, such a meaningful life might realistically be pursued.

Formal Description of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to give an account of the contemplative end of man as fulfilled in the Body of Christ.
2. Students will show that they can accurately compare and contrast, in the light of divine revelation, the conception of the human person as contemplative with one in which the purely technical predominates.
3. Students will be able to give an account of the progression of the spiritual life as flowing from the sacraments and expressed in the liturgy of the Church.
4. Students will be able accurately to articulate the sacramental world-view of Christian theology and apply its consequences to their lives and the contemporary context.

Readings and Topics

- Augustine, *Confessions*
- Schmemmann, *The Eucharist or For the Life of the World*
- Pieper, *In Tune with the World*
- Ratzinger, *Selections* (we will compile a core reader from such texts as *The Spirit of the Liturgy* and *Spe Salvi*)
- Aquinas, Q. 1 of the *Summa Theologiae*