

Mondays 10.50-12.25, second semester 2017-18

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<http://www.romestudy.org/trinity.html>

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will introduce the student to the understanding of the Most Holy Trinity in the Christian tradition, particularly as understood by Roman Catholics. Students will be able to

- Present a clear description of the Christian dogma of the Trinity
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issues involved in exploring the nature of God in the Trinity and its historical development
- Show a detailed knowledge of current Catholic teaching on the Trinity and the connection between the dogma of the Trinity and the Church's understanding of grace, Christology, Ecclesiology, the sacraments, and Christian living
- Discuss similarities and differences in Christian approaches to the Trinity (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, various Protestant approaches, etc.).

## SPECIFIC SKILLS: STUDENTS WILL ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO

- contribute in an intelligent and informed manner to discussion on the development of doctrine
- engage skillfully and fairly with contentious issues that may arise around the Trinity
- locate such debate within a broad historical context
- accept and present cogent arguments on the issues of the Trinity
- engage with broader questions surrounding the nature of the Trinity
- identify traditions of thought on the Trinity that are distinct from those of the Catholic tradition, and at the same time to be able to engage in constructive debate
- engage in further independent study.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### MEETINGS

1. February 26: Trinity in Bible and Worship

2. March 5: The official dogma

3. March 12: Early explorations

Texts to be studied

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, book 3. English translation available on-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book3.html>.

Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*, chapters 2 & 3. English translation available on-line at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/tertullian17.html>.

4. March 19: The Council of Nicea I

Texts to be studied: Texts collected in William Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), chapters 1-10

5. March 26: The Council of Constantinople I

Texts to be studied: Gregory of Nazianzus's *Theological Orations*; Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*; Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter to Ablabius, Concerning We Should Think of Saying that There are Not Three Gods* (can be found in Rusch, chapter 12).

6. April 9: Augustine  
Text to be studied: Augustine, *De Trinitate*
7. April 16: Anselm and the *filioque*  
Text to be studied: Anselm, *Monologion*
8. April 23: Richard of St. Victor  
Text to be studied: Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*
9. May 7: Thomas Aquinas  
Text to be studied: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, aa. 27-43
10. May 14: Modern Developments  
Text to be studied: Karl Rahner, *On the Trinity*
11. May 21: Contemporary issues

Exam: Wednesday, May 30

## ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following texts from the tradition are essential for a thorough grasp of the issues

- Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, book 3
- Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*
- Athanasius of Alexandria, *Orations against the Arians*
- Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*
- Gregory of Nyssa, *On Why Not Three Gods*
- Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Orations*
- Augustine, *De Trinitate*
- Anselm of Canterbury, *Monologion* and *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*
- Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, qq. 1-43
- Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel, New York: Herder and Herder, 1970

## HELPFUL SUMMARY TEXTS

The following are helpful overviews. An extensive bibliography can be found as a separate file ([romestudy.org/trinity/bibliography.pdf](http://romestudy.org/trinity/bibliography.pdf)).

- Farrelly, John, *The Trinity: Rediscovering the Central Christian Mystery* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).
- Fortman, Edmund, *The Triune God* (Michigan: Baker, 1982).
- Hill, Edmund, *The Mystery of the Trinity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986).
- Hill, William, *The Three-Personed God* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984).
- Holmes, Stephen R., *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012).
- Hunt, Anne, *Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of the Christian Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005).
- Kasper, Walter, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (London: SCM Press, 1983).