

## **DO502DE- The Trinity**

### **Course Description**

“The Trinity” surveys the development of trinitarian doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church from the 1<sup>st</sup> century to the present, beginning with doctrinal precursors found in holy Scripture, early liturgical practices, and early writings of the Church Fathers, and ending with mature Roman Catholic trinitarian doctrine. The course has two distinct foci, first, the development and defense of basic trinitarian doctrine in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the writings of the early Christian apologists through St. Augustine’s *De Trinitatis*, and second, the detailed explication of Trinitarian doctrine in the middle ages, as exemplified in Part I of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas.

“The Trinity” also touches upon doctrinal differences between the eastern (Orthodox) and western (Roman Catholic) Church (as these differences developed and how they now stand), the thinking of 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant reformers about the Holy Trinity and the diversification of Protestant thought thereafter, and current directions in Trinitarian theology.

The design of the course assumes that students *believe in the Triune God and seek greater understanding of the central mystery of the Christian faith*. Students who take this course are expected to have, at minimum, a firm grounding in the study of holy Scripture and a cursory knowledge of Christian history from apostolic times to the present.

#### *Learning Objectives*

The goal of “The Trinity” course is to enable the student to teach and to preach the doctrine of the Trinity intelligibly and cogently from a Roman Catholic perspective.

Learning Objective #1: The student will be able to describe the history of the doctrine of the Trinity in broad outline, including a) key periods in the development of Trinitarian doctrine, b) key historical figures, disputes, and resolutions, and c) key traditions in Trinitarian theology, their determinants, foci, and consequences.

Learning Objective #2: From a Roman Catholic perspective, the student will be able to describe orthodox Trinitarian doctrine and several major schools of heterodox thinking, explaining differences between the former and the latter. Similarly, the student will be able to categorize various descriptions of God as orthodox, heterodox, or ambiguous from the standpoint of Roman Catholicism, and to defend such categorizations.

Learning Objective #3: The student will be able to teach and to preach Roman Catholic Trinitarian dogma intelligibly and cogently to the laity, using Trinitarian vocabulary and concepts correctly, and clearly differentiating specific Trinitarian vocabulary and concepts from standard usages.