



AQUINAS HOUSE OF STUDIES

An Exploration into Catholic Thought I *An Exploration into Catholic Thought II*

2022-2023, Two Independent Semesters

INSTRUCTOR: Mrs. Kirsten Fortier
EMAIL: kfortier.scholeacademy@gmail.com
CLASS TIME: Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday afternoons, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This will be an exploratory experience reading and discussing Catholic documents covering engaging and relevant topics each semester. Find out what the pontificates of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have had to say on topics affecting all of us from the not-too-distant past, today, and into the future. This is a Catholic course intended for The Aquinas House of Studies of Scholé Academy. These are semester courses, independent of each other; therefore, students may enroll in one or both semesters. Recommended as a Humanities or Theology elective, ½ credit per semester for high school.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS: Grades 11-12. No previous course is required, though it may be helpful to have some knowledge of modern history.

CLASS SESSION DATES:

16 WEEKS, 32 CLASSES per semester*

Semester 1

September 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29
October 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27
November 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, [Thanksgiving Break], 29
December 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, [Christmas Break]
January 10, 12, 17, 19, [End S1]

Semester 2

January 24, 26, 31
February 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, [Winter Break], 28
March 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30
April [Easter Break], 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27
May 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, [End S2]

*Please note that the dates and times are anticipated class sessions for the course. The instructor will do her best to reschedule any missed days due to illness or family emergencies.

CURRICULUM MAP:

An Exploration into Church Thought I

Quarter 1 Pope Paul VI - The Church in the Modern World

Quarter 2 Pope John Paul II - The Value of Human Life

An Exploration into Church Thought II

Quarter 3 Pope Benedict XVI – Globalization and the Common Good
Pope John Paul II – Faith and Science

Quarter 4 Pope Francis - Environmental Stewardship

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Semester 1 Course Texts

[Print the free online versions](#) or [purchase the hardcopy versions](#) linked below.

Gaudium Et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on The Church in The Modern World)

Free: [Gaudium et spes \(vatican.va\)](http://vatican.va)

Hardcopy: [Past Const of Church In the Modern World Gaudium Et Spes | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

Evangelium Vitae (On the Gospel of Life)

Free: [Evangelium Vitae \(25 March 1995\) | John Paul II \(vatican.va\)](http://vatican.va)

Hardcopy: [Gospel of Life Evangelium Vitae | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2nd ed., 2019 (blue cover)

Free: [Catechism of the Catholic Church \(usccb.org\)](http://usccb.org)

Hardcopy: [Catechism Of The Catholic Church | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

Semester 2 Course Texts

[Print the free online versions](#) or [purchase the hardcopy versions](#) linked below.

Caritas in Veritates (On Charity in Truth)

Free: [Caritas in veritate \(June 29, 2009\) | BENEDICT XVI \(vatican.va\)](http://vatican.va)

Hardcopy: [Charity In Truth \(Caritas In Veritate\) | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

Fides et Ratio (On the Relationship between Faith and Reason)

Free: [Fides et Ratio \(14 September 1998\) | John Paul II \(vatican.va\)](http://vatican.va)

Hardcopy: [Relationship Between Faith & Reason Fides Et Ratio | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home)

Free: [Laudato si' \(24 May 2015\) | Francis \(vatican.va\)](http://vatican.va)

Hardcopy: [On Care of Our Common Home \(Laudato Si\) | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

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Free: [Catechism of the Catholic Church \(usccb.org\)](http://usccb.org)

Hardcopy: [Catechism Of The Catholic Church | Pauline Books and Media \(paulinestore.com\)](http://paulinestore.com)

WHAT THE STUDENT CAN EXPECT:

Students will interact with the class and with the selected texts in several ways to gain the fullest understanding of the documents and their importance. These will include:

- **Prayer:** Class will include regularly praying Pope Francis' monthly prayer intentions and/or other Catholic prayers for special intentions. Students will begin to see the overlap between these intentions and the teachings of the popes in the selected documents. It will also unite students with the worldwide church in its hope of addressing social inequities.
- **Reading Strategies:** Students will read independently. To assist them in deciphering what they read, students will be asked to use various strategies such as notetaking, outlining, summarizing, reflections, quizzes, etc. These strategies will also help the student prepare for class discussions.
- **Socratic discussions:** A large portion of class time will be used for exploring what the students discover in their reading and/or subsequent investigations. They will be asked questions that lead them to think about not only the content and influence of the documents, but also about how the written piece is organized, how it is addressed, how it is begun and ended. There will be some comparison of documents, possibly some oral reading. Students will be asked to share their thoughts on selections they find intriguing, difficult, controversial, inspiring, etc.
- **Writing:** Throughout the course, students will be asked to make personal reflections after discussions. They might do partner journals in which they must interact in writing with another student on a topic. Sometimes they will be directed to write a more formal essay, for example, one that explains their perspective or makes a call to action. Assessments will include essay writing.
- **Investigation:** Students will be asked to complete informal reports. These may include reporting on an assigned family discussion, or a survey of their friends, a question directed to their priest. They may be asked to complete some online research of a social teaching, current event, or social injustice. Students may be asked to share a pope's biography or a critical review of a church teaching. The distinction between church dogma and church doctrine will be investigated.
- **Quizzes:** Students will be expected to know key information by the end of the document analysis. This is the *who, what, when, where, why* of our studies.

WHAT THE TEACHER EXPECTS:

The following expectations will apply to all students:

- **Attendance:** The student should arrive to class on time, following the Scholé Academy standard. *Nota bene:* If you are aware that your child may miss more than three classes per semester, it may not be advisable to enroll in this course! For more information, please see the Student-Parent Handbook.

- **Participation.** The student will join the virtual classroom via Zoom.* He or she should arrive with all necessary materials prepared, having already submitted the relevant homework, and do their best to contribute to the class in positive ways. A student who is disruptive, unprepared, or who refuses to participate will lose daily credit and, if necessary, be removed from class until a parent-teacher consultation is completed. When necessary, students should be able to comment on and collaborate with classmates through Schoology.*
- **Homework Submissions:** Attention to detail, neatness of assignments, adherence to deadlines and submission requirements will all add or detract from the assessment of the student's work. All due assignments must be uploaded to the appropriate Schoology* assignment *prior* to the start of class each day or by the due date. Students must submit their work by first, saving the document to their personal computer, then uploading it into the appropriate Schoology assignment window in the format of either a Word document or a PDF (sometimes scanning their homework if necessary). Please avoid photographs of completed assignments, as they are incredibly difficult to read.
- **Academic Honesty:** Students will take some assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in [The Scholé Academy Student-Parent Handbook](#).

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. Students should consult the instructor or the [Purdue Owl website](#) for specific direction on obtaining, quoting, and paraphrasing sources.

Class time allows all of us to practice humility and love as we delight in seeking to cultivate "affection and taste" for truth, goodness, and beauty. Grace may sometimes be needed; however, in general, tardiness, speaking over others, forgetting assignments, submitting assignments completed in a rush, poor penmanship, and ultimately encountering the task of learning with a passive attitude do not typify restful learning. As members of Scholé Academy we are responsible for how our attitudes and affections influence the learning community.

MATURITY/READINESS

Controversial Topics: The topics addressed by the popes in this course will stand out to students. Society is emerged in tackling so many social injustices: world-wide poverty, Right to Life, Right to Work, war, and climate change, just to name a few. As explained in the Scholé Academy Student-Parent Handbook:

From time to time, in our Upper School, students are encouraged to participate in healthy and robust debates on a wide range of topics. We are committed to providing a Christ-centered education to all of our students, but we also encourage our students to wrangle with theological, social, political, and moral issues and questions. Our courses are designed for student engagement and discussion. We expect our instructors to navigate these waters wisely and well; we expect our students to step into the arena of these class discussions with maturity and respect for their cohort and instructors. We will always encourage our students to share their class conversations with their parents and pastors.

Virtual Environment: The student should be developmentally ready to engage in the virtual classroom environment. This means the student can navigate the Zoom environment, Schoology LMS, uploading assignments, and communicating with instructors and other students online. If the student struggles with these, it is the parents' responsibility to assist the student.

A student may also want to extend friendships beyond the classroom setting. Parents will want to monitor their student as they feel is necessary. According to [The Scholé Academy Student-Parent Handbook](#):

Please note that while Scholé Academy uses Zoom Video Conferencing to host classes and instructors supervise the interactions with students during live class sessions, Scholé Academy and its instructors do not take responsibility for nor do they monitor the use of student's individual Zoom rooms or chats that take place outside of live classes.

Scholé Academy is not responsible for the conversations, meetings, or interactions of individual students who use their social engagement platforms to connect with other Scholé Academy students or those outside of our community. Social engagement platforms include Google Docs, Google Hangouts, Zoom, Schoology, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

GRADING:

While pursuing An Exploration into Catholic Thought I and II through Scholé Academy will be "restful," we also recognize the need to provide grades for students. It's a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery, which is its own reward. As the teacher, I will assign the following grades to your student's level of achievement:

magna cum laude (with great praise)
cum laude (with praise)
satis (sufficient, satisfactory)
non satis (not sufficient)

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work will be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

CATEGORY WEIGHTS:

Participation, Assignments (including quizzes), and Essays (including tests) will be assessed on a point system and then weighted as follows:

Daily Participation	25%
Weekly Assignments	50%
Essays	25%

MASTERY will be assessed based on the criteria above. It is the hope of this instructor that true mastery will be the student's personal decision to take up his or her role in the Church, continuing to self-study using the knowledge gained during this course, and fulfilling the call of Christ for his or her life in the modern world.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:



Kirsten Fortier holds a BA in Education from Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. The bulk of her experience comes from 18+ years of classically homeschooling four sons K-12 who have now transitioned successfully through college, into careers, and enjoying life. She has taught in various settings including at home, in co-ops, in brick-and-mortar schools, and online. Most recently she enjoyed the role as the Director of Curriculum at a small classical Christian school. She now looks forward to a part-time career teaching restfully at Scholé Academy. Her passion for classical education is especially apparent when she is developing in others a love for the humanities and all that is good, true, and beautiful. In her free time, she enjoys visiting her children and grandchildren, hiking, camping, and researching family genealogy. She and her husband live in Michigan with their two dogs, one cat, a handful of chickens, and two hives of honeybees.

Catholic Background

Born and raised Roman Catholic in the same diocese in which her father, grandparents, and great-grandparents worshipped, Kirsten and her husband Matthew continued this beautiful tradition with their children. The continuity across generations in the same place has provided opportunities for her to see that although each generation has its own story, God is ever-present and unchanging. Kirsten's students in the Aquinas House of Studies will enjoy a liturgical approach to learning that allows them to discover God's plan for their chapter in the one, holy, and apostolic Church.

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