

# Course Description

## Overview

This course explores Mary, the mother of Jesus, primarily in terms of Christian theology but also in terms of history, culture and literature. The course aims to do this through two lenses – one from afar and one up close. We will begin with the first lens and look at the phenomena of Mary as she has appeared in religion and culture through time. This will be more cultural and historical than theological. It will focus on studying how Mary is understood in the literature, art, and devotional lives of people through time. Our guide here will be Miri Rubin.

After five weeks of studying Mary through this lens we will move up close. Here we will explore Marian Dogma through systematic and mystical theology. Of particular importance will be three Marian Dogma that have been highly significant and controversial in Christian thought (i) Mary as *theotokos* or God bearer, (ii) the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and (iii) the Doctrine of the Assumption. Our guides here are Aiden Nicholls and Thomas Aquinas, for Systematic Theology, and Mattias Scheeben, for Mystical Theology.

The distinctive lenses will hopefully allow everyone, irrespective of their level of devotion, to explore this complex and fruitful topic. The lenses map a journey from distance, to close up intimate relationship, and each student will probably find a point at which their journey stops. For example, the kind of theology we will see in Scheeben will be too much for Aquinas, whose catholic faith means his perspectives are very different from the Jewish historian, Rubin. The hope is that each student can understand the range of perspectives, practices, and theologies surrounding Mary, and can better plot their own stance in relation to the spectrum explored.

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Each student will be develop an graduate level understanding of how Mary has been understood in Western Culture.
2. Each student will acquire a detailed understanding of what Marian dogmas claim and what they do not claim.
3. Each student will, through nuanced reflection on Mariology, develop an informed position on where they stand in relation to the theological principles of Mariology.
4. Mariology has been a particularly potent source of division within Christianity. While debates around human nature, sin and grace, or transubstantiation, were hotly debated by theologians, on the ground understandings and misunderstandings about how Christians understood and related to Mary drove significant division and animosity. It is hoped that by learning about Mary from the different lenses, reflecting on our inherited assumptions about Mary, and discussing Mariology in an ecumenical setting, students will emerge from this course with a more sororal relationship to those whose Mariological positions differ from their own.

## Class Format

Each class will have three sections. First, there will be a lecture on the topic at hand. Second, there will be discussion, in small groups, on the material. Finally, we will gather as a class to share the insights of each dyad.

## Zoom

If you’re taking the course via distance, each week at class time you’ll be clicking this link to access the class. <https://zoom.us/j/686040908>

you can get a primer on how to use zoom at <https://www.daviddeane.org/blank-page-1> (just scroll down).

## Online Resources

You can find the textbooks for the course here <https://www.daviddeane.org/blank-page-1>

## Evaluation

You will be evaluated on a Mid term paper (worth 35% or your grade and a final paper (worth 65%)

**Mid term essay (2000 - 3000 words) (35%)** - This essay will be on some aspect of the material covered before October 22nd (at which time the essay is due). The goal is for you yourself to decide the title based upon an aspect of the course that has proved interesting to you by that stage. Essay titles should be cleared with me before submission

**Final essay (3000-5000 words including footnotes but not including bibliography) (65%)** - The final essay, is to be submitted by Monday December 9th. It can be on any aspect completed in the course. The title, again, can be worked out in dialogue with me.

I’d like all essays to be in 12 pt font in whichever font you’re comfortable with (not choosing one of the regular ones, Times New Roman, Cambria, Helvetica and so on, is not advised). Your paper should have footnotes and a bibliography. It should be double or 1.5 spaced.

## Class Schedule

September 13th - Introduction of key themes and course overview

September 20th – Mary in the Roman Empire (The reading is Rubin p.3-121)

September 27th –Mary in medieval European culture (The reading is Rubin 121-282)

October 4th – Mary in the modern West (The reading is Rubin p.258-413)

October 11th – The sources for theological reflection on the blessed Mother (The readings are Nichols, p1-23 and Scheeben p.9-60)

October 18th – The Mother of God (The readings are Nichol p.23-45, and Scheeben, 132-183)

Reading Week

November 1st - The Immaculate Conception I (The readings are *Ineffabilis Deus* <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm> by Pope Pius IX and Thomas Aquinas ST 3, Q27)

November 8th – The Immaculate Conception II (The readings areNichols p45-67 and Scheeben 187 – 218)

November 15th – The Assumption I (*Munificentissimus Deus* - <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html> by Pope Pius XI, and, again Aquinas ST 3, Q27)

November 22nd – The Assumption II (The readings are Nichols p.89-111, and Scheeben 219-240)

November 29th – Student papers I

December 6th – Student paper II

## Grading

***A+ (93-100) ‘Outstanding’***

All the attributes of an A quality paper coupled with the kind of analysis that distinguishes a truly special theological talent.

***A (87-93) ‘Superb’***

A comprehensive grasp of the subject matter, outstanding evidence of original thought; sound critical evaluation of the material; an excellent ability to organize, analyse, synthesize and to express thoughts; mastery of an extensive knowledge base.

A- (80-86) ‘Excellent’

All the qualities of a B-level performance and an excellent capacity for original, creative, and/or logical thinking; excellent ability to organize, analyse, synthesize, and integrate ideas; broad knowledge base in the subject matter.

B+ (77-79) ‘Good’

A good performance with substantial knowledge of the subject matter; a very

good understanding of the relevant issues; familiarity with relevant literature and techniques; good ability to organize, analyse, and examine the material in a constructive and critical manner.

B (73-76) ‘Acceptable’

A generally adequate performance with a good knowledge of the subject matter; a fair understanding of relevant issues; some ability to work with relevant literature and techniques; some ability to develop solutions to difficult problems related to the subject material

B- (70-72) ‘Marginally Acceptable’

Some familiarity with the subject material; some understanding. Satisfactory understanding of relevant issues; attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material in a critical and analytical manner are only partially successful.

C (60-69) ‘Unsatisfactory’

A C grade indicates unsatisfactory academic performance. At the discretion of the instructor, supplemental work may be negotiated to upgrade the mark to a B range. A student who receives a C in this course, as a Foundation course, must repeat the course to achieve a B- or better, and cannot use the C grade to meet prerequisite requirements for advanced courses. If the student repeats one of these courses and receives a B- or better, the previous C grade remains on the transcript but is not counted towards the total of C grades that may lead to academic dismissal. Credit will be given only once for any course.

F (0-59) ‘Failure’

Student has not grasped subject matter; does not understand issues involved; cannot work with relevant literature

## Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is a serious breach of integrity both for the individual and the institution, and it requires serious sanctions. The School has a policy on plagiarism which is also understood to include unacknowledged collaboration among students on assignments. Various sanctions may be invoked, ranging from reduction in mark to failure on the assignment or course to suspension from studies. There is provision for appeal. In cases of sanctions involving more than failure of the assignment in question the student will meet with his / her Faculty Advisor and the Dean before any penalties are assessed. Copies of this policy may be obtained through the Academic Office or accessed in the Student Handbook.

## Late Submission of assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class. I must be informed in advance if work is going to be submitted late. For assignments submitted late, graduated penalties could be levied. Instructors may make exceptions to the above for compassionate reasons, but these do not include claims of excessive workload. Instructors are not obliged to accept work submitted late.