Theological Inquiry

I. Description of Purpose and Content
As a university committed to the Catholic intellectual tradition, LMU values the critical understanding of faith, encourages rigorous inquiry, and seeks the intellectual, moral, and spiritual transformation of its students. LMU therefore believes that we should reflect critically and creatively on ourselves and on our relationship to others, the world, and the divine. Toward that end, courses in Theological Inquiry raise fundamental questions of existence as these questions are embedded in religious traditions. Such questions include: Is there a divine and what does that mean? What does it mean to be human? What is the purpose of life? Students will grapple with questions of ultimate concern, examine the ways in which religious communities take up these questions, and come to appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action.

Theological Inquiry involves the history and development of religious traditions as well as the interpretation and analysis of religious texts. In particular, therefore, the course must illustrate how foundational Christian sources (such as scripture and other significant religious texts) wrestle with fundamental questions in the context of Christian faith and practice. The course must also include attention to how questions of ultimate meaning are approached in diverse religious contexts, either within Christianity or within Christianity in dialogue with other religious traditions.

II. Learning Outcomes
Students will:
• Identify and analyze foundational theological questions.
• Interpret religious sources critically and creatively.
• Connect ultimate questions to Christian faith and practice.
• Assess diverse religious approaches and contexts.
• Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action.

III. Defining Characteristics
• Theological inquiry is distinctive from other kinds of inquiry in that it probes questions of faith, the divine, and ultimate meaning in the context of religious thought and practice. Therefore, courses in Theological Inquiry must examine these questions in relation to how they are taken up by religious traditions and how they affect religious communities of belief and practice.
• The course must emphasize written and oral analysis of primary sources.
• The course must address how ultimate questions are approached in diverse religious contexts.
• While the course must engage Christianity, it may also engage other religious traditions.
Philosophical Inquiry

I. Description of Purpose and Content
The purpose of the Philosophical Inquiry core requirement, as stated in the New University Core Curriculum (pp. 7-8), is to “introduce students to the various modes of philosophical inquiry and to the great philosophical questions that are central to a humanistic education in the Catholic intellectual tradition.” More specifically, the aim of this requirement is to help students to acquire an understanding of fundamental metaphysical and epistemological questions that are central to a humanistic education in the Catholic intellectual tradition, to assist them in acquiring the interpretive and evaluative skills necessary for assessing various answers to these questions, and to encourage them to develop a lifelong habit of philosophical self-reflection. Course activities, experiences, and pedagogies should be selected to promote each of these aims, and therefore should include careful interpretation and close analysis of philosophical texts and questions, critical discussion with the instructor and with other students of these texts and their questions, and out-of-class assignments that extend and deepen students’ capacity for philosophical self-reflection.

II. Learning Outcomes
Successful course proposals for Philosophical Inquiry must include the following learning outcomes:

- Students should demonstrate an understanding of fundamental metaphysical and epistemological issues, particularly those that concern the human person and are central to a humanistic education in the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Students should demonstrate an ability to interpret and analyze these questions and various proposed answers to them carefully and critically, by considering both historical context and logical cogency.
- Students should show evidence of engagement in philosophical self-reflection.

III. Defining Characteristics
Successful course proposals for Philosophical Inquiry must:

- Introduce students to traditional themes in metaphysics (the study of the nature of what is) and epistemology (the study of the nature and scope of human knowledge), especially those that are related to the human person and central to a humanistic education in the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Assist students in understanding the historical development of philosophical problems and the different modes of philosophical inquiry.
- Require that students read primary philosophical texts addressing these issues.
- Provide assignments designed to teach students how to analyze philosophical texts critically and to articulate significant questions, ideas, and arguments clearly in discussion and writing.
- Include activities (e.g., reading, formal writing assignments, essay exams, discussion, journaling) that encourage students to develop an appreciation for philosophical self-reflection.
Studies in American Diversity

I. Description of Purpose and Content
As an embodiment of LMU’s mission and the university’s commitment to diversity, courses in this area will provide students a foundation of critical knowledge and understanding for reflective contemplation that informs, forms, and transforms them as women and men for others. Courses in this area primarily focus on 1) investigating the complex historical, political, economic and social context and connections contributing to society’s understanding and valuing of diversity; 2) comparing and contrasting the voices and perspectives of different underrepresented groups; 3) analyzing the ways that systems of power and privilege can marginalize and oppress communities and groups in the U.S. and around the world; 4) challenging students to engage in reflective and responsible action in a diverse and interconnected world; and 5) recognizing diversity as a strength and valuing differing perspectives.

II. Learning Outcomes
Students who complete this course will:
• Identify and distinguish how systems of power and privilege affect marginalized and oppressed communities
• Become familiar with theories, narratives, and methodologies covered in the course materials and implement them to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the complexities in our diverse contemporary society
• Compare the experiences of people from varied racial and ethnic groups within the U.S. and the world and the experiences of people from at least two of the following categories of difference: gender, sexuality, class, faith and religion, and differing abilities
• Critically assess difference and similarity in and among racial and ethnic minority groups and at least two of the following categories of difference: gender, sexuality, class, faith and religion, and differing abilities
• Understand, respect, and value the histories and contributions of marginalized groups

III. Defining Characteristics
Courses in this area must:
• Address the complexity of race and ethnicity in the U.S. context.
  o A combination of racial and ethnic diversity is required
  o The course must take a comparative approach to racial and ethnic groups’ experiences, with attention to similarities, differences, and intersections among groups
  o Global comparative approaches are welcome, but the U.S. experience has to be foregrounded in the course
• Integrate at least two additional markers of diversity from the following: gender, sexuality, class, faith and religion, and differing abilities
  o Integration of each marker must include assigned reading and class discussion and be reflected in at least one graded, substantive assignment
Quantitative Reasoning

We provide criteria for two categories of Quantitative Reasoning courses. Most students will satisfy this requirement with a Quantitative Reasoning course. For students who arrive at LMU with a higher level of quantitative literacy, as determined by a placement exam, this requirement may be satisfied by a Mathematical Reasoning course emphasizing more abstract mathematical and computational reasoning, or more advanced methods of quantitative and statistical reasoning.

Criteria for Quantitative Reasoning courses

I. Description of Purpose and Content
The ability to understand and apply quantitative, mathematical and computational reasoning is an important component in the development of independent and logical thinking. Quantitative literacy is also essential for students to become informed citizens. These courses will introduce students to fundamental mathematical knowledge, including an understanding of the nature of mathematics and quantitative and statistical argumentation. Instructors may choose to structure these courses in various ways: the course may develop the quantitative skills as tools to explore a central theme or problem in the instructor’s discipline, or it may teach the skills as independent units of the course. However the course is structured, the final goal is for students to have the quantitative reasoning skills they require to make informed decisions, to understand when these skills should be used (and how they can be misused), and to be able to create and critique arguments using quantitative evidence.

II. Learning Outcomes
To be prepared for later courses using quantitative reasoning, and specifically the courses “flagged” for quantitative reasoning, students completing these courses will:

- Be able to interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
- Be able to represent mathematical information in various ways, such as symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally.
- Be able to solve problems with a variety of mathematical methods, such as arithmetical, algebraic, geometric or statistical methods.
- Be able to estimate and check answers to mathematical problems in order to, for example, determine reasonableness, identify alternatives, or select optimal results.
- Be able to create and critique arguments using quantitative evidence.
- Recognize the limitations of mathematical and statistical methods.

III. Defining Characteristics
Courses satisfying this requirement must provide explicit instruction in quantitative methods and quantitative reasoning. At least 75% of the grade must be based on evaluated quantitative exercises, such as statistical or graphical analysis of numerical data, or problem solving using mathematical methods.
Criteria for Mathematical Reasoning courses (requires placement via placement exam)

I. Description of Purpose and Content
The ability to understand and apply quantitative, mathematical and computational reasoning is an important component in the development of independent and logical thinking. Quantitative literacy is also essential for students to become informed citizens. These courses will introduce students to fundamental mathematical knowledge, such as an understanding of the nature of mathematics or statistical argumentation. These more advanced courses will either explore more advanced methods in quantitative and statistical analysis, or explore other aspects of logical, mathematical or computational reasoning.

II. Learning Outcomes
In these courses, students will:
- Be able to apply more advanced methods of quantitative, mathematical, statistical or computational reasoning to solve problems.
- Be able to use symbolic languages and systems.
- Be able to create and critique arguments using quantitative, mathematical, statistical or computational reasoning.
- Be able to recognize patterns and use them to formulate conjectures.
- Value analytical, quantitative, and numerical approaches to understanding and solving problems.

Additional outcomes will vary, but may include:
- Understanding techniques of proof and counterexample
- Understanding and constructing algorithms
- Understanding more advanced statistical methods
- Applying mathematical concepts to other disciplines
- Knowing the philosophy and history of mathematics

III. Defining Characteristics
At least 50% of the grade must be based on assignments requiring the use of mathematical, statistical or computational methods.