

Faith & Reason in the Modern University

This first St. Anselm Institute minicourse provides an introduction to the origins and history of the Catholic intellectual tradition. It is no secret that many within secular universities believe that faith and reason are opposed or that authentic faith commitments require a deep partitioning and privatization of these commitments from one's intellectual and professional pursuits. Before sheepishly free-ranging on the authority of these conventional narratives, join us to ponder for yourself, as St. Pope John Paul II did, that "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."

Seminar 1: Beyond Pizza, Frisbees, and Grade-School Catholicism: A Short Introduction to the Long Catholic Tradition of Integrating Faith and Reason

Seminar 2: Why am I Here? The Distractions of Life and the Distortions of the Modern University

Seminar 3: Our Choices, Our Habits and Our Vocations as Students

Seminar 4: On Faith Seeking Understanding and Reason's Endless Pursuit of the Wisdom of Faith

Student Testimonials

"In modern culture we seem to have divorced faith from reason, which is unfortunate because the inseparable nature of faith and reason is a central part of our Catholic heritage. The St Anselm Institute gives UVA students a rare opportunity to explore Catholic intellectual thought within a modern secular university in order to understand how 'reasonable' our faith is, and how reason is nothing without faithfulness."

UVA Third Year, Class 2022

"As a first-year, Drs. Moore and Kromkowski, and the other faculty and students made me feel very welcome to share my thoughts on the readings or topic. St. Anselm events give me an opportunity to participate in rich, intellectual discussions about the Catholic faith with like-minded students."

UVA First Year, Class 2024

Faith & Reason and a Meaningful Life

We all seek "meaningful work" and a "successful career," but will work and career satisfy our deepest desires for the meaning of our existence? This second minicourse offers students and faculty a shared opportunity to consider how faith and reason work together to reveal great truths and wondrous mysteries about God, the world, others, and even ourselves. These four seminar discussions are not aimed at changing your major or professional career, but they just might change how you understand your life.

Seminar 1: Our Openness to Truth: God, the Human Person, Society and Nature

Seminar 2: Knowledge and Understanding as Revelation in the Arts and in the Sciences"

Seminar 3: Our Imperfect Freedom: The Natural Pursuit of Happiness and the Problem of Justice

Seminar 4: Who am I and Who are We?: Our "thirst for a free and full life"

Student Testimonials

"I'm a rising fourth-year from Edina, Minnesota, studying Government and Foreign Affairs in the Politics Honors program. I participated in both "Faith, Reason and a Meaningful Life" and "Beauty and the Catholic Imagination" this semester and loved them both. As someone who recently became Catholic, these courses reinforced my fascination with the depth and richness of the Catholic faith. I especially loved "The Hidden Life and Epiphany" by St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross because it touches on so many important topics in such a beautiful way."

UVA Third Year, Class 2022

"The St. Anselm Institute faculty-student seminars provided me the opportunity to engage my Catholic faith with my intellect in a way that emphasized the complementary nature of faith and reason. The seminars were a place where I enjoyed good food, company, and discussion, and took a break from my busy semester schedule to contemplate the deeper questions in life that our society so spectacularly fails to address. I am grateful for the chance to run alongside my brothers and sisters of different ages, occupations, and states in life in the pursuit of understanding more fully the One in Whom we already have faith. The St. Anselm Institute's faculty-student seminars are concrete initiatives that meet the need for Catholics at the University of Virginia to utilize their reason in the pursuit of all that is true, good, and beautiful."

UVA Fourth Year, Class 2021

Faith & Science: Catholic Engagement with the Harder Questions

This third minicourse invites you to engage with us in thinking more deeply about the Catholic intellectual tradition and the contemporary sciences. University courses rarely are equipped to consider harder questions on the topic of faith and science, so this minicourse creates a little pop-up space to raise and discuss this topic in an authentic, serious and accessible way. Prior experience is not expected; only an openness to considering the possibility that this course might deepen how you think about God, yourself, others and the great sciences of the Universe!

Seminar I: Clearing the Ground: Debunking the Conflict Narrative and Other Lingering Caricatures of Catholicism and Science

Seminar II: Why Something and Not Nothing? The Science of Physics and the Metaphysics of Creation *ex Nihilo*

Seminar III: Truth is One! The Sciences of Evolution and Neuroscience, and the Doctrine of Original Sin

Seminar IV: *Parrhesia* and Christian Truth-telling--Who is Responsible for the Misuses of Science at UVA?

Seminar V: Caring Not Discarding--Human Personhood Without Exception or Equivocation

Student Testimonials

"I'm an aerospace engineering undergraduate and the Faith and Science course gave me an opportunity to have thought-provoking discussions about philosophy that wouldn't be accessible to me through UVA classes because of my demanding engineering workload. This course gave me an opportunity to read excerpts from Thomistic Evolution by Fr. Austriaco, and then discuss it with Fr. Austriaco himself. It was an incredible experience to summarize a section of the reading with the author present and then discuss that section in-depth."

UVA Third Year, Class of 2022

"My experience with the St. Anselm Institute these past two years has been incredible. I did not come to college with a strong theological background, and in taking part in St. Anselm seminars and discussions I have found so many ways to integrate my faith and academic life. There is such a wide variety of topics and forums that everyone can find something that relates to their interests."

UVA Second Year, Class of 2023

Beauty and the Catholic Imagination

This fourth, fun, and fast-paced minicourse is designed for all interested UVA students regardless of their areas of study. Our discussions aim to initiate a reexamination of our experiences and understanding of Beauty in relation to the great resources of the Catholic intellectual tradition. These resources are rarely introduced or appreciated within secular university curricula, which is a missed opportunity because a Catholic vocabulary and language discloses a way to appreciate and understand significantly more about our encounters with Beauty. In fact, we can refer to this openness to "seeing more" as the "Catholic Imagination" and we will dedicate our short time together to lifting the veil on what and who is revealed from an orientation to Beauty that is not cordoned off from the riches of Catholic resources.

Seminar 1: Understanding our Encounters with Beauty: Why Does it Seem We Are Lost and Without Words?

Seminar 2: When I Paint My Masterpiece: Creation and the Artist's Vocation

Seminar 3: Can a Crucifixion be Beautiful? Christian Beauty in Liturgy and Eucharist

Seminar 4: Rediscovering Christian Beauty in Sacred Art

Seminar 5: Rediscovering Christian Beauty in the Ordinary

Student Testimonials

"I am a first year from Richmond, VA double majoring in Computer Science and Music. Entering into this seminar, I didn't know what to expect. However, after 4 weeks of deep discussion and cultivating conversation, I experienced a text unlike any I had ever read before. This seminar really opened my eyes to what it means to be a Catholic. I was able to learn from other passionate individuals and was truly compelled by their comments. I personally loved learning about how to engage in the Mass. It is very simple for us to passively observe, thinking we are only observers rather than "actors" in the service. I was able to find ways in which I can be an active participant in the Mass, and help those around me experience the Body and Blood of Christ."

UVA First Year, Class 2024