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.