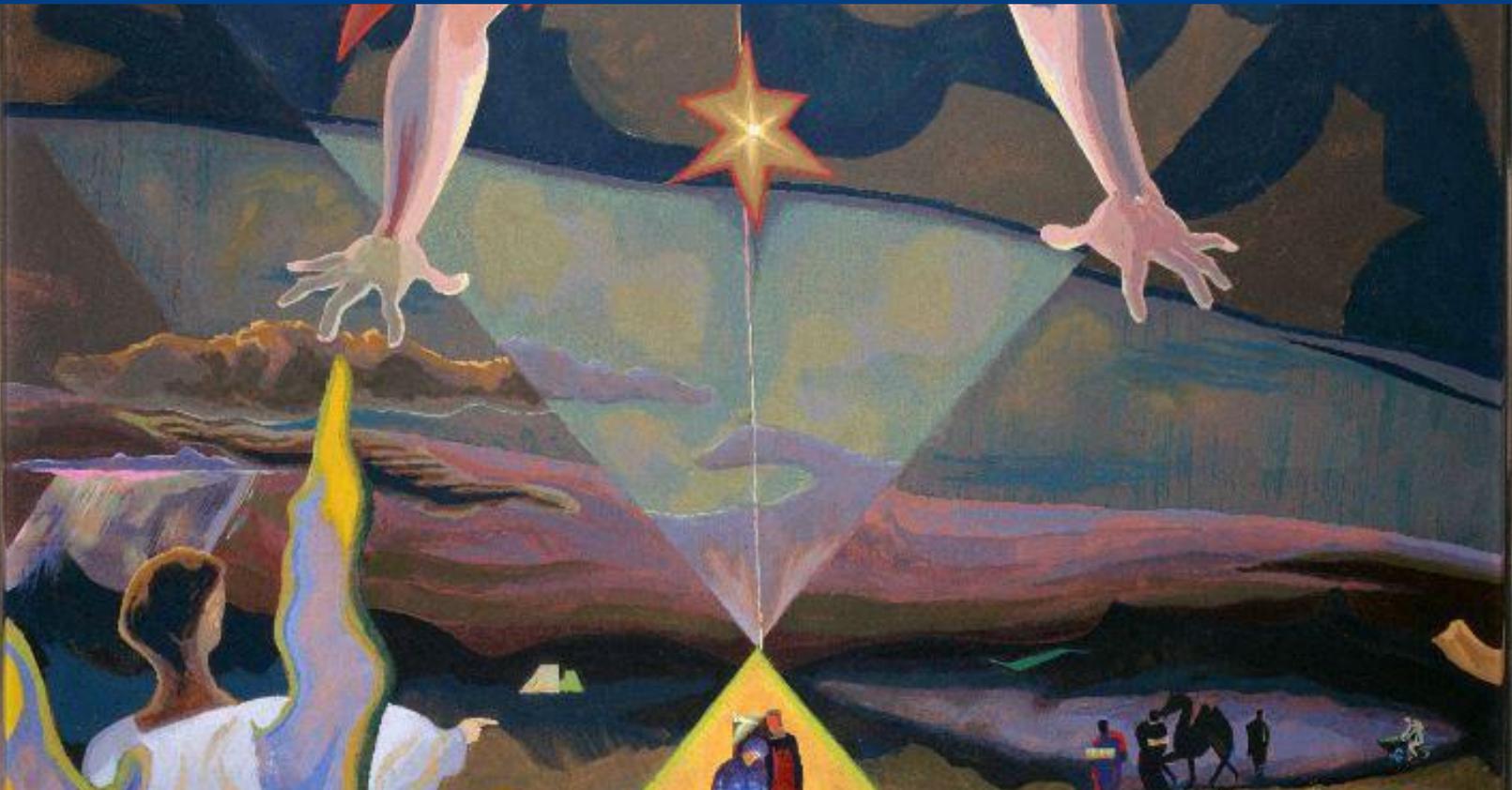




Diploma in Philosophy

Level 7 (NFQ)



THE PRIORY INSTITUTE
A Dominican Centre for Theological Studies

This course is aimed at those who wish to study their Christian faith at an academic level with the intention of deepening their understanding of the central themes in Christian theology following the 800-year old Dominican tradition.

Stage 1

INTRODUCTORY MODULE

1. Learning to Learn: Critical Skills (5 Credits)

This short, introductory module demonstrates how distance learning fits in with the human experience of lifelong learning. It shows how learning styles are quite personal, and involve a great deal of reflection and self-appraisal. Reading is important, as is the discipline of writing assignments. The module also touches on study skills, time management and examination techniques. There is no fee for this module.

SPRING SEMESTER

2. Philosophy (15 credits)

This module examines the need for theologians to study the great philosophers, not least because these philosophers have exercised an indelible influence on the development of theology. But it also outlines the questions being asked by philosophers independently of theologians. The module looks back to the philosophy of ancient Greece, and to the great figures of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. It then explores the era of greatest integration between philosophy and theology "the Middle Ages" when theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas successfully integrated the Scriptures with philosophy.

3. Themes in Modern Philosophy (15 credits)

Epistemology (the theory of knowledge) was transformed by Descartes into the basis of all modern philosophical thinking, and Kant proposed the concept of duty as the fundamental moral source. The claims of knowledge, scepticism and relativism are all addressed here. The twentieth century is represented by Wittgenstein and Heidegger, two giants who typify modern philosophy, the analytical and the continental traditions. The module concludes with five detailed philosophical responses to what is arguably the greatest challenge of all: "What is the meaning of life?"

AUTUMN SEMESTER

4. Philosophical Theology (15 credits)

In this module, the great theological themes such as God, the meaning of life, salvation, etc. are studied from a purely rational, philosophical perspective, away from the influence of faith and revelation. So the question is posed: Can we reason to the existence of God and to the nature and attributes of God? Classical arguments for the existence of God are presented and analysed, as is the relationship of faith to reason, and a philosophical approach to knowing God by way of 'the divine attributes' is undertaken. Finally, the module addresses the vexed question of religious language and of how words can be used for what is, by definition, beyond words?

5. Integrative Project (15 credits)

Students are expected to produce a dissertation which is conclusive, strongly supported by independent thought and initiative, and of a standard that contributes to academic theology or a related discipline. A research topic will be proposed by students in consultation with their project supervisor. Primary and secondary sources must be used, the validity of each being assessed using proper scientific tools and techniques. The Final Report will be assessed on style and layout, logical sequence, quality of English and the arrival at appropriate conclusions and recommendations, all adequately defended. The project will require proper referencing and a focused bibliography laid out in a consistent fashion.

Course Overview

This Diploma in Philosophy by blended learning is particularly suitable for those who cannot attend classes regularly. The modules are delivered by suitably qualified and experienced scholars who are specialists in their disciplines. The Diploma provides an excellent foundation for further studies, teaching, pastoral and retreat work.

An option exists to exit the course with the academic credits/qualification earned at each stage.

Assessment

Students submit a written assignment for each module during the semester and, at the end sit a written examination. For some modules a journal of exercises is also required.

Course Duration

Each module is studied during a fifteen-week semester. The Diploma in Philosophy is achievable in one year if you study two modules per semester. You may, if it suits you, work at a different pace, e.g. one module per semester.

Course Delivery

Delivery is through blended learning, with a mixture of onsite and online study.

Attendance in person at semester launch days is required. In addition, each module has two study days and two tutorial days, which students must attend either in person at St Mary's Dominican Priory, Tallaght, Dublin 24, or later online. Ongoing support is available from a coordinator and in-depth help from specialist academic tutors.

Admission Requirements

Mature students (aged 23 or over) do not need formal qualifications to undertake one of our courses.

Applicants submit a 500-word account of why they would like to study theology.

Applicants should have basic computer skills

Fees

Fees are payable at the beginning of each semester and vary depending on the number of modules taken. Consult prioryinstitute.com for our current fees

Accreditation

The Diploma in Philosophy is validated by Technological University Dublin and is aligned with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

When to Apply

By mid January for the spring semester. You can find the cut-off dates on prioryinstitute.com



The Priory Institute is a centre for theological, biblical and philosophical studies, established by the Irish Province of the Dominican Order and is Catholic and ecumenical in its approach. It seeks to engage with the best thinking of our times and brings the insights of different philosophical and religious thinkers to bear on the study of theology and religious studies.

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