

MICHAEL M. WADDELL
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Department of Philosophy
Saint Mary's College
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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION & CONCENTRATION:

Medieval Philosophy (esp. Thomas Aquinas)	Philosophy of Human Nature
Ancient Philosophy	Classical Arabic Philosophy
Philosophy of Religion	Metaphysics
Philosophy and Disabilities (esp. Autism)	Ethics

ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

Founding Director, Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies, Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, IN, Fall 2025–pres.
Senior Research Associate, deNicola Center for Ethics and Culture, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, 2022–23.
Medieval Institute Regional Fellow, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, 2018–pres.
Founding Director, Master of Autism Studies, Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, IN, Spring 2017–24.
The Edna and George McMahon Aquinas Chair in Philosophy, Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, IN, Fall 2010–pres.
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Villanova University, Fall 2005–2012 (on leave 2010–12).
Coordinator of Classics, Augustana University, Sioux Falls, SD, Fall 2002–Spring 2005.
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Augustana University, Fall 2000–Spring 2005.
Instructor, University of Notre Dame, Spring 2000.
Instructor, Cornell College, Spring 1999, Fall 1997.

EDUCATION:

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN
Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval Philosophy (joint program in Philosophy and Medieval Studies), 2000.
Dissertation: *Truth Beloved: Thomas Aquinas and the Relational Transcendentals*.
Director: Ralph McInerney.
Master of Medieval Studies, 1996.

Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, IA
Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, 1993. Majors: Religion and History.

AWARDS:

National:

Templeton Foundation sub-grant for “The Psychology of Faith: Academic Cross-Training for Christian Theologians and Philosophers Of Religion,” 2023–2025.
Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2006, 2005, 2004.
Mellon Fellowship for seminar in “Medieval Studies, Cultural Interpretation, and Contemporary Theory,” 1998–2000.
Liebmann Fellowship in the Humanities, 1995–98 (\$108,000).
Phi Beta Kappa, 1993.

From Home Institution:

Women's Voices Course Development Grant, Saint Mary's College, 2014.
Critical Thinking Seminar Course Development Grant, Saint Mary's College, 2014.
Global Studies Course Development Grant, Saint Mary's College, 2011.
Veritas Faculty Research Grant, Villanova University, 2008.
Summer Research Fellowship, Villanova University, 2006.
Summer Research Grant, Augustana College, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001.
Abrams Dissertation Fellowship, University of Notre Dame, 1999–2000.
Philip Moore, CSC, Dissertation Fellowship, University of Notre Dame, 1998–99.
University of Notre Dame Graduate Student Fellowship, 1993–95.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY:**Books:**

Autism and the Catholic Tradition, in progress.
Aquinas at 800: Commemorative Studies, 1225–2025, eds. Cory, Cory, Mattison and Waddell, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2025).
Restoring Nature: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy and Theology, ed. Waddell with an introduction by Ralph McInerny (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2023).

Articles:

"Thomas Aquinas, Social Ontology, and Autistic Identity," *forthcoming* in *Aquinas at 800: Commemorative Studies, 1225–2025*, eds. Cory, Cory, Mattison, and Waddell (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2025).
"Meaningful Work for People on the Autism Spectrum: Catholic Resources for a Contemporary Problem," *forthcoming* in *Disability and Catholic Theology*, eds. Romero and Bennett.
"Autism and Assisted Suicide," *The Journal of Disability and Religion* 24.1 (2020): 1–28.
"Thomas Aquinas and the Resurrection of the (Disabled) Body," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 12.2 (2017): 29–51.
"The Importance of Rapture in the Thought of Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 12.1 (2014): 255–85.
"Integrating Beauty: Reflections on the Psychology, Ontology and Etiology of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* 1.5.4," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 8.1 (2012): 1–18.
"Aquinas on the Light of Glory," *Tópicos: Revista de Filosofia* 40 (2011): 105–32.
"Faith and Reason in the Wake of Milbank and Pickstock," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 48.3 (September 2008): 381–96.
"Truth or Transcendentals: What Was St. Thomas's Intention at *De Veritate* 1.1?" *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 197–219.
"Natural Theology in St. Thomas's Early Doctrine of Truth," *Sapientia* 59 (2004): 5–21. Also in *Restoring Nature: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy and Theology* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2023).
"Wisdom, Fittingness, and the Relational Transcendentals," *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 26: *What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?* Acts of the Tenth International Congress for Medieval Philosophy, 1998.
"The Locked Door: An Analysis of the Problem of the Origin of the Soul in St. Augustine's Thought," *The Lyceum*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Fall 1992.

Invited Lectures:

- “Thomas Aquinas, Social Ontology, and Autistic Identity,” Aquinas at 800: Ad Multos Annos, University of Notre Dame, September 25, 2024. Semi-plenary address.
- “Toward a More Adequate Metaphysics of Autistic Identity,” Hope College, Holland, MI, February 2, 2019.
- “Autism and Assisted Suicide,” Mind, Medicine & Morals: The Ethics of Psychiatry and Mental Health Care,” Anscombe Bioethics Centre, University of Oxford, July 7, 2018. Plenary address.
- “The Metaphysics of Autistic Identity,” University of Notre Dame, March 21, 2018.
- “Thomas Aquinas and the Resurrection of the (Disabled) Body,” Saint Anselm College, Manchester, NH, June 8, 2016.
- “Personhood, Identity, and the Autism Rights Movement: A Catholic View,” St. Edmund’s College, University of Cambridge, May 12, 2016.
- “Personhood, Identity, and the Autism Rights Movement: A Catholic View,” Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford, May 10, 2016.
- “Should We Tell Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders That They Have Autism? A Question for Disputation,” SOPHIA Symposium on “Disability, Civic Responsibility, and Community Friendship,” University of Mississippi, February 26, 2011.
- “Integrating Beauty: Some Remarks on the Role of Beauty in the Thought of Aquinas,” the Institute for Saint Anselm Studies, Baltimore, MD, November 5, 2010.
- “Aquinas on Prophecy and Rapture,” Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, Omaha, NE, November 1, 2008.
- “Faith and Reason in the Wake of Milbank and Pickstock,” Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford, March 2, 2006.

Conference Papers:

- “Autism and Religiosity: a Review of the Scientific Literature,” The Psychology of Faith Summer Seminar, St. Paul, MN, June 10, 2025.
- “Can the Catholic Tradition Solve the Problem of Finding Work for People on the Autism Spectrum? An Application of Catholic Imagination to a Pressing Social Problem,” Ever Ancient, Ever New: On Catholic Imagination, Notre Dame, IN, October 31, 2024.
- “Meaningful Work for People on the Autism Spectrum: Catholic Resources for a Contemporary Problem,” Catholic Theology and Disability Symposium, Notre Dame, IN, July 13, 2024.
- “The Faith Lives of People on the Autism Spectrum,” The Psychology of Faith Summer Seminar, St. Paul, MN, August 12, 2024.
- “Thomistic Anthropology, Autistic Identity, and the Prospect of a Cure,” Person, Soul and Consciousness: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives, Berkeley, CA, July 14, 2017.
- “Autism, Labor and Leisure: Catholic Resources for Contemporary Challenges,” Labor & Leisure, Notre Dame, IN, July 10, 2017.
- “Embodiment, Ensoulment, and Cognitive Disability: Resources from the Writings of Thomas Aquinas,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 12, 2013.
- “The Jewish and Islamic Sources of Aquinas’s Teaching on Prophecy,” Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference, Villanova, PA, October 11, 2008.
- “Knowing and Willing in the Light of Glory,” Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference, Villanova, PA, October 19, 2007.

- “The Significance of Rapture in Aquinas’s *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*,” Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference, Villanova, PA, October 14, 2006.
- “Reason and Faith as Modes of Grace in Milbank, Pickstock and Aquinas,” American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 30, 2005.
- “Aquinas’s Theory of Divine Naming as a Stumbling Block for Milbank’s Deconstruction of Natural Knowledge,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 10, 2003.
- “The Natural and the Supernatural in St. Thomas’s Early Doctrine of Truth,” Thomistic Institute, Notre Dame, IN, July 16, 2001.
- “What *Was* Thomas’s Intention at *De Veritate* 1.1? And What’s the Difference Anyway?” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 3, 2001.
- “Wisdom, Fittingness, and the Relational Transcendentals,” Tenth International Congress for Medieval Philosophy, Erfurt, Germany, August 28, 1997.
- “The Hermeneutics of Beauty: Re-reading Thomas Aquinas’s *De Veritate* I.1,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 9, 1996.

Professional Presentations to Non-Academic Audiences:

- “Autism,” National Catholic Bioethics Center Workshop for Bishops, Dallas, TX, February 3, 2026.
- “Fostering Vocations: Autism and the Church’s Call to Belonging,” virtual panel sponsored by the Institute for Human Ecology at The Catholic University of America and the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, October 14, 2024.
- “Disability and Human Dignity,” Teaching Life and Human Dignity Symposium, the McGrath Institute for Church Life (University of Notre Dame), June 19, 2024.
- “Autism,” Opening Address for the National Catholic Partnership on Disability Summer Intensive on Autism, June 10, 2024.
- Panelist, “Inclusion: What it Takes to Get It Right,” Webinar for “In Communion: Advancing the Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Church,” Series for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, and the McGrath Institute for Church Life (University of Notre Dame), April 18, 2024.
- “Understanding Disability,” Webinar for “In Communion: Advancing the Full Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Church,” Series for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, and the McGrath Institute for Church Life (University of Notre Dame), March 14, 2024.
- “Disabilities and Inclusion: What Does Our Faith Require of Us?,” St. Pius X Catholic School, Granger, IN, February 1, 2024.

Varia:

- Response to Katje Krause (King’s College, University of London), “Albert and Aquinas on the Ultimate Goal of Man: Philosophy, Theology and Beatitude,” American Catholic Philosophical Association, Los Angeles, CA, November 3, 2012.
- Review of Lawrence Dewan, O.P., *St. Thomas and Form as Something Divine in Things*, *Religious Studies Review*, vol. 34, issue 3 (September 2008), pp. 211–12.
- Response to Arthur Peacocke (Oxford), “Paths from Science Towards God: The End of All Our

Exploring,” delivered at the University of South Dakota School of Medicine (Section of Ethics and Humanities), Sioux Falls, SD, October 25, 2001.
Review of Robert Barron, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master, Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, Winter 1998.

COURSES TAUGHT:

Doctoral Seminars:

“Beyond Reason: Higher Modes of Cognition in the Writings of Thomas Aquinas”
“Aquinas’s Psychology”
“Aquinas on Knowing and Naming God”
“Medieval Philosophy”

History of Philosophy:

“Thomas Aquinas”
“History of Medieval Philosophy”
“Socrates to Scholasticism”
“Our Philosophical Heritage I” (Ancient and Medieval)
“Medieval Thought: Content and Context” (European History, 800–1300)

Philosophy of Religion:

“Philosophy of Religion”
“Faith, Reason and the Search for Meaning”
“Jewish, Christian and Islamic Philosophers in Dialogue”

Philosophy and Disabilities:

“Autistic Voices”
“Autism and the Human Person”
“Philosophy and Disabilities”
“Philosophy and Cognitive Disabilities” (independent study)

Ethics:

“Autism and Ethics”
“Happiness and the Good Life”
“Natural Law and the Thought of Aquinas”
“Virtue Ethics”

Philosophy of Human Nature:

“Dimensions of the Self”

Others:

“Introductory Philosophy”
“Sophia Program in Liberal Learning Seminar”
“Core Humanities Seminar: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Thought”
“Honors Core Humanities Seminar: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Thought”

“Elementary Greek I”
“Elementary Greek II”
Graduate Reading courses in Latin

DISSERTATIONS AND THESES:

PhD Dissertation Directed:

Lee Cole, *At the Limits of Realism: St. Thomas Aquinas and the Intellectual Knowledge of Singulars*, PhD Dissertation, Villanova University, 2014.

External Dissertation Reader:

Nelson Ramirez, *From the Natural Understanding of Truth, to Aquinas’s Adaequatio Rei et Intellectus Definition of Truth, and Beyond*, PhD Dissertation, Center for Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas, 2017.

Senior Theses Directed:

Marirose Osborne: “Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Justice System,” Saint Mary’s College, 2022.

Mary Mansfield: “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: An Aesthetic Approach to the Recovery of Beauty in Morality,” 2022.

Hope Celmer: “Essences in the Avicennian Tradition and a Thomistic Solution,” Saint Mary’s College, 2018.

Kate Kulwicki, “‘If the culture doesn’t work, don’t buy it’: Reintroducing the Importance of the Common Good to an Individualistic Society,” Saint Mary’s College, 2017.

Lauren Ungar, “The Philosophical Foundations of the Catholic Church’s Teaching on Contraception,” Saint Mary’s College, 2014.

REFERENCES:

Saint Mary’s College:

Megan Zwart, Provost and Professor of Philosophy, Saint Mary’s College, (574) 284-4503.
Susan Latham, Professor of Speech Language Pathology, (547) 284-4686.

Villanova University:

Kevin Hughes, Professor of Theology/Director of the *Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies Conference*, Villanova University, (610) 519-4728.
Sally Scholz, Professor of Philosophy/Co-editor of the *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, Villanova University, (610) 519-4099.

University of Notre Dame:

Joshua Diehl, Associate Teaching Professor of Psychology, University of Notre Dame, (574) 631-6619.
John O’Callaghan, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, (574) 631-5153.
David O’Connor, Professor of Philosophy and Classics, University of Notre Dame, (574) 631-6226.