

***Fourth Discussion Paper (Due Tuesday, May 8):***

Write a five-page essay on either one of the following two topics.

1. At the start of the new millennium, the Vatican plans to host a major conference of scientists, engineers, political leaders, theologians, and, philosophers, the theme of which will be “Science, Technology, and Religion: A New Beginning.” In preparation for this conference, the Vatican seeks to hire a small group of researchers for the purpose of drafting a working paper on the conference theme. Thanks to your training here at Notre Dame, you have been invited to apply for one of these positions, and, as part of your application, you are to write a short essay sketching your own, preliminary thoughts on the subject. Write that essay.

2. So the Vatican hired somebody else. That’s okay. Your other application was successful, and now you’re working in the office of the White House Science Advisor. The spirit of the millennium is very much alive there as well. You’ve been asked to prepare a first draft of a new Presidential Statement on “Science, Technology, and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century.” The point is to establish a new “philosophical” framework for science and technology policy, a framework that will guide decision making within the government when it comes to such things as federal funding of scientific research and government regulation of emerging technologies. In other words, this Statement will address the big questions about the place of science and technology in human affairs and the way in which federal government policy can and should (or should not) influence how our lives are changed, in the future, by science and technology. Write that first draft.