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Lesson plan

John Finnis and natural moral law

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The big picture	Finnis's emphasis is that all people have the ability to understand basic moral obligations. As with Aquinas he says that these obligations apply to everyone regardless of their nationality, beliefs or culture. He uses anthropology to establish this truth.
Learning objectives	What? Learn about Finnis's views on natural moral law. Why? To understand how his views differ from those of Aquinas. How? After studying this topic, students should be able to evaluate, analyse and compare Finnis's theory with that of Aquinas.
Starter activity	Write down a summary of Aquinas's teaching on natural moral law.
Lesson activities	Write down what Finnis means by the 'seven basic goods'. Discuss, either in groups or in pairs, how Finnis's theory differs from that of Aquinas. Prepare a group analysis of the the 'nine requirements of practical reason'.
Plenary	Explain your analysis to the rest of the class.
Homework task	Write an essay on Lon Fuller's eight requirements of 'the inner morality of law'.
Assessment opportunities	Peer-assess the essays.
Differentiation	Teachers may wish to make key points on a worksheet for dyslexic or EAL students.

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