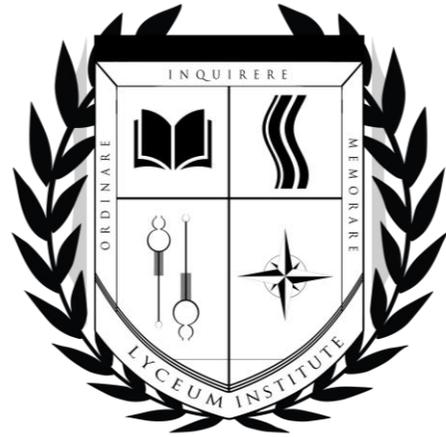


# SEVEN INTERFACES OF PHILOSOPHY

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## DESCRIPTION

Traditional philosophical disciplines crystallized over time into a list that goes something like this: logic, cosmology, phil. anthropology, metaphysics, ethics, political philosophy and aesthetics—and, in the modern age, the hybrid and rather imperialistic enquiry known as epistemology. Still, additional attention was demanded by issues lying both between or beyond these well-defined areas. Thus was generated a long list of “philosophies of...” (for instance: science, religion, history, art, mind, language, education, culture, law, social science, technology, etc.). Until quite recently, philosophy claimed a purview that had, at the very least, *something* to say about literally everything. However, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave way to the 20<sup>th</sup> and then the 21<sup>st</sup>, some suspected Lady Philosophy may have stretched herself so thin as to no longer be about anything at all.

Many analytic philosophers maintained that there was no terrain left for philosophy as such, and that she had better learn to just arbitrate among the *real* sciences as technical specialists in conceptual and argumentative clarification. Others still tried to show how one domain of old philosophy (logic, ethics, or

philosophy of language, for instance) could gain purchase on the whole of the enterprise, turning over all else to the new specialists.

Ever since Hegel, “philosophy” and “science” had seemed to agree on an amicable separation, only later to devolve into a sometimes ugly divorce. The troubled vocation of the “love of wisdom” found itself in a world that tended to grant unchallenged cognitive supremacy to the new sciences. This was a change, with its landmark falling in 1831 and the founding of the British *Science* Association (BSA), giving the first public cachet to the new, restrictive construal of the word. Until then, science and philosophy had enjoyed roughly equivalent, and often interchangeable meanings; they referred to virtually any carefully organized body of knowledge. But after the split, and the new focus of science, the christening of the qualified practitioner would soon follow. Thus, to the two already-laureled heroes of the brave new world—namely: the “inspired artist” and the “political savior”—would be added the third trusted messiah of modernity: the “scientist.”

Before this metamorphosis, even someone we honor today as Mr. Science himself, Sir Isaac Newton, had famously christened his 17<sup>th</sup> century opus magnum on classical mechanics—hardly a part of anyone’s love of wisdom today—as a work of natural *philosophy*. But the latter term’s affinity with metaphysics (which seems to follow philosophy wherever it goes), and a long collaborative romance with theology in the Middle Ages, spelled doom for any abiding parity with the New Science. Sparks from the rising “state-of-the-art” form of knowledge seemed to have broken free of any pursuit of wisdom. They ignited instead a secular explosion of new empirical specializations, wary not only of theological intrusions but also of metaphysical generalities.

Those who still upheld the viability of classical philosophy had to negotiate its seemingly Davidic stature in the face of the Goliath of modern science. If philosophy was to defend its traditional role of being “synoptic” (Plato’s term)—that is, having *something* to say (in both principle and context) about *everything*—it would have to address the challenges of these aggressive newcomers. The freshly empowered specialists, after all, did not shy at all from trying, within their own well-defined spheres, to say *everything* about *something*.

But even though the new scientists often dispute philosophy’s relevance, still, when they try to interpret the *meaning*, *value* and *purpose* of their discoveries, all too often they trespass onto philosophical turf (usually quite awkwardly). Only a trained philosopher will be able to call their bluff. And only a display of the philosophical act in its full maturity will allow *all* things—including conclusions from these alien specializations—to gradually occupy their appointed place in the Big Picture.

But there are a few challenges to philosophy’s role beyond those presented by the new natural and social sciences. They all must be faced and pondered by philosophy, even if they do *not* fall fully under its aegis. Hence, the already-mentioned and somewhat unruly “philosophies *of*.”

Philosophers, for instance, have always had something to say about “the world,” but needed to mark off their cognitive claims as not, on the one hand, replacing (or overlooking) what poetry and the arts, and even mythology, might have to say, as well as, on the other, what today’s physicists, astronomers, chemists and geologists teach from their university chairs. *And* they have a brand new task. They must show themselves adroit at identifying what happened when the world turned modern, and be able to point out the causes and consequences of this unprecedented shift. Only religion seemed more threatened by the new world than traditional philosophy itself. But, whether more traditional or modern, philosophy will always need to prove that its contribution has something unique to offer, and something not available from the aforementioned disciplines, and yet—and this is important—clearly relevant to the interpretation of their findings.

As we survey the horizons of these human activities and questions which the philosopher inevitably faces, but cannot by rights command, we can roughly enumerate seven such domains: 1) the so-called humanities (especially history, human geography, language and literature), 2) the world of “production” (not only the fine arts, but also the servile and liberal arts), 3) the physical sciences, 4) the life sciences, 5) the new and still disputed social sciences, 6) the world of religion and theology, and 7) the very “problem of modernity.”

A person who has nothing “synoptic” and coherent to say about such matters—but without necessarily claiming expertise in any of them—is still only half a philosopher. The wise, Aquinas reminds us, are the ones who judge *all* things. They do this, however, not necessarily as specialists, but as those whose cognitive patience and contemplative leisure favor a posture of open enquiry, allowing the mind to slowly spot principles, which, in turn give birth to insights. Within the light of this gradually embracing intellectual gaze, all the multiple and oft recalcitrant things in the world—both around us and within us—finally begin to share in an epiphany that slowly discloses how they all “hang together.”

The present seminar will begin with a metaphilosophical discussion of how philosophy has defined itself historically, and then how it can and should define itself today. This will be followed by discussion of its obligatory interface with each of the seven problematics mentioned above. Peirce’s, and especially Deely’s, understanding of philosophy as “cenoscopic science” will serve as a useful key in bringing clarity to these relations, as will their new understanding of semiosis. After all, one way we can sum up the synoptic scope of philosophical insight would be simply to acknowledge: *everything is significant*.

## METHOD

The seminar is 8 weeks long, with one recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. Each discussion session is structured around a reading from authors who, in some way, address the interface problem. Participants are expected to have read the assigned reading and listened to the lecture prior to the session, so that they may engage in a semi-structured discussion directed and moderated by the instructor. As this is an advanced seminar, one *cannot* participate well without a *deep engagement* with the assigned reading. Moreover, *continual discussion* will foster that participation and engagement throughout the week. Participants will be expected to partake in these discussions on a regular basis, and will be challenged to do so directly.

## READING

The primary and supplemental texts for the seminar will all be available online in the TEAMS platform. The ones indicated here are almost certainly to be used, but there may be some changes as the professor further prepares the seminar in the weeks to come.

## LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 20-40+ minute audio lecture, posted to Teams at the beginning of the week. This lecture will be based upon the assigned reading, but will also stray into related topics, or may use the reading as a launching point for addressing some related issue (perhaps one more general, or perhaps one more specific). The primary (but not sole) purpose of these lectures is to help clarify some of the

more difficult concepts and arguments contained within the reading, as well as to raise specific questions that should help structure and guide our discussion sessions.

There *may* be accompanying visual aids (not necessarily) in order to provide some clarity as to textual points, but one *should* be able, in most cases, to simply listen to the lecture (and perhaps consult the visual aids later). This should allow more flexibility: making the lectures suitable accompaniment for a commute, while doing chores, going for a run, etc.

## DISCUSSION

The heart of the seminar is the discussion session (**Saturdays at 10am ET**): where all the thoughts emergent and encountered throughout the week—via the reading, lecture, and on-going conversations in the Teams channel—are brought into explicit conversation. This allows us to attempt a concerted effort at bringing resolution to our difficulties, and—failing such a resolution—to direct our inquiry further.

Each discussion session will begin with a brief synopsis of the week’s material and a focusing on whichever aspects of that material seem most pressing. Beyond the direction provided by the instructor, participants are encouraged to bring their own concerns explicitly into view and to engage with the instructor and one another in civil debate and collective inquiry.

## AUDITS OR COMPLETES

Beginning in 2022, all Lyceum Institute seminar participants will be able to either **audit** the seminar or **complete** the seminar. To **complete** the seminar, the participant **must** submit an essay of 2000+ words pertaining to the subject. This essay may be evaluated for publication in *Reality* and will be included in each Lyceum Institute member’s profile, along with the mark of auditing or completing. Due date for a submission is **27 August 2022**.

## SESSION SCHEDULE

<p>June 4</p>	<p>Lecture 1: <b><i>A Metaphilosophical Meditation</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Primary]</b> Josef Pieper, “The Philosophical Act” from <i>Leisure the Basis of Culture</i>, New York, 1952, pp. 69-125 (a bit long, but an easy read); S.R. Paine, “What Philosophy Isn’t and What Philosophy Is” (just two pages).</li> <li>• <b>[Secondary]</b> Thomas Gilby, “Introduction” to <i>St. Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts</i>, xiii-xxii; and “Science and Wisdom”, pp. 1-35; Louis de Raeymaeker, “Determination of the Proper Object of Philosophy,” from <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i>, 1948, pp. 3-32. Brian Kemple, <i>An Introduction to Philosophical Principles</i>, 2021.</li> </ul>
<p>June 11</p>	<p>Lecture 2: <b><i>Philosophy and the Humanities</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>[Primary]</b> Mark Van Doren, “Liberal Education,” from <i>Liberal Education</i>, 1943, pp. 43-71; “The Humanities,” from <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i>, 2021.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Secondary] John Senior, "A Final Solution to Liberal Education," in <i>The Restoration of Christian Culture</i>, 1983, pp. 179-208. Michael D. Aeschliman, "Scientism vs. <i>Sapientia</i>", from <i>The Restitution of Man</i>, Eerdmans, 1983, pp. 18-45.</li> </ul>
June 18	<p>Lecture 3: <b><i>Philosophy and Production: Servile Arts, Fine Arts, Liberal Arts</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Primary] Thomas Gilby, <i>Poetic Experience</i>, 1932; selections from Jacques Ellul, <i>The Technological Society</i>, New York, 1964.</li> <li>[Secondary] Jacques Maritain, "Art as a Virtue of the Practical Intellect," from <i>Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry</i>, 1953, pp. 44-65; Ananda Coomaraswamy, "Art, Man and Manufacture," from <i>Sources of Wisdom</i>, Sri Lanka, pp. 193-224.</li> </ul>
June 25	<p>Lecture 4: <b><i>Philosophy and the Physical Sciences</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Primary] Yves Simon, "The Great Dialogue of Nature and Space," and "How We Explain Nature," from <i>The Great Dialogue of Nature and Space</i>, South Bend, 2001 (orig. transl. 1970), pp. 1-34.</li> <li>[Secondary] Vincent Edward Smith, "Science and its Divisions," from <i>The General Science of Nature</i>, Milwaukee, 1958, pp. 1-25.</li> </ul>
July 2	BREAK
July 9	<p>Lecture 5: <b><i>Philosophy and the Life Sciences</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Primary] Stratford Caldecott, "Theories of Evolution," original version from <a href="http://secondspring.co.uk">secondspring.co.uk</a>; Wynand de Beer, "The Metaphysical Concept of Evolution," and "Conclusion," <i>From Logos to Bios</i>, Angelico, 2018, pp. 1-13; 258-264.</li> <li>[Secondary] Iain McGilchrist, <i>Ways of Attending</i>, Routledge, 2018; Gerard M. Verschuuren, "A Final Word," from <i>At the Dawn of Humanity: The First Humans</i>, Angelico, 2020, pp. 189-197; John Deely, <i>The Philosophical Dimensions of The Origin of Species</i>, Ottawa, 1969.</li> </ul>
July 16	<p>Lecture 6: <b><i>Philosophy and the Social Sciences</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Primary] Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, "The Cross of Reality," from <i>Speech and Reality</i>, pp. 51-66; Norris Clarke, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1," from <i>Person and Being</i>, Aquinas Lecture, 1993, pp. 1-24.</li> <li>[Secondary] Peter Leithart, "The Cross of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy"; Nathan Lyons, <i>Signs in the Dust</i>, Oxford, 2019. "Social Science," Britannica Online: <a href="https://www.britannica.com/print/article/551385">https://www.britannica.com/print/article/551385</a>.</li> </ul>
July 23	<p>Lecture 7: <b><i>Philosophy, Religion and Theology</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[Primary] Benedict Ashley &amp; John Deely, "Truth Cannot Contradict Truth" and "The Postmodern Dilemma of Theology and Science," pp. ix-xii; 3-33, from <i>How Science Enriches Theology</i>, St. Augustine Press, 2012.</li> <li>[Secondary] Bernard Kelly, "The Metaphysical Background of Analogy," from <i>A Catholic Mind Awake: The Writings of Bernard Kelly</i>, Angelico, 2017, 56-78; R. Hooykaas, <i>Religion and the Rise of Modern Science</i>, Edinburgh, 1972.</li> </ul>

July 30	Lecture : <i>Philosophy and the “Problem of Modernity”</i> Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [Primary] C.S. Lewis; <i>The Abolition of Man</i>, Oxford, 1943. (forthcoming)</li><li>• [Secondary] (forthcoming)</li></ul>
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