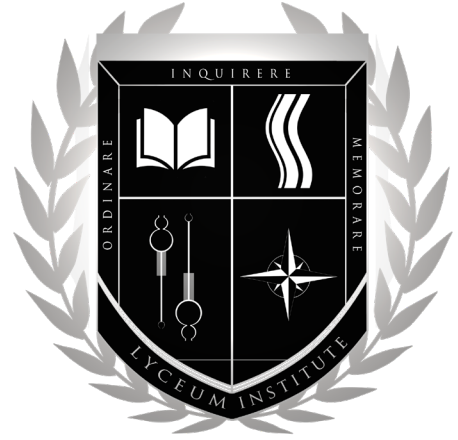


MARITAIN'S HOPE FOR AN "EXISTENTIAL EPISTEMOLOGY"

SEMINAR SYLLABUS

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DESCRIPTION

In his later writings, the French Thomist Jacques Maritain proposed the plan of articulating an “existential epistemology” which would presuppose the noetics—the cognitive operations through which human beings exercise their humanity—which are discussed in a work such as his own *Degrees of Knowledge*. This seminar will be dedicated to reading this great work, the *Degrees*, as well as Maritain's essays concerning the “existential epistemology”, in the hopes of outlining a general program of understanding in line with Maritain's own late-life aspirations.

METHOD

The seminar is 8 weeks long, with one recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. The lectures will directly look at the text of Maritain and highlight the main points of interest for our discussion. It is highly recommended that students have editions of these texts in hand during the lectures videos. 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

READINGS

This text must be purchased:

Maritain, Jacques. *The Degrees of Knowledge*. Translated by Gerald Phelan et al. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

Maritain, Jacques. *Untrammelled Approaches*. Translated by Bernard E. Doering. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

LECTURE

Each week there will also be a 30-60 minute video 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). However, the primary point of these lectures will be to orient the seminar members so that they can adequately process Maritain's text in preparation for our discussions. See “Method” above as well.

DISCUSSION

The *heart* of the seminar is the discussion session (**Saturdays at 10:00-11:00am 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. *For this seminar more than any of the others that I have offered at the Lyceum, the discussion session is VERY important.*

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

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 2000–5000 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.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Week I 09/22–09/28	<p>Introductory Lecture: Introducing the Degrees of Knowledge and the Question of “Critical Realism”</p> <p>Situating the work in its metaphysical context and considering the place that Maritain has in the discussions over “Critical Realism”</p> <p>Readings: Degrees, chs. 1 and 3; Appendix I (The Concept)</p>
Week II 09/29–10/05	<p>The 1st and 2nd degrees of Abstraction: Philosophy of Nature, Mathematics, and Sciences</p> <p>Discussion of Maritain’s treatment of modern science in the context of Aristotelian philosophy of nature.</p> <p>Readings: Degrees, chs. 2 and 4</p>
Week III 10/06–10/12	<p>Metaphysical Knowledge.+ Some Addenda</p> <p>Treatment of Metaphysical “abstraction” and related topics in analogy and divine-naming. Also, anticipation of relevant points regarding “the speculative and the practical” of interest for upcoming chapters</p> <p>Readings: Degrees, ch. 5, Appendices 2,3, and 7 (On Analogy, What God Is, and “Speculative” and “Practical”</p>
Week IV 10/13–10/19	<p>A Crash-Course in Theological Epistemology</p> <p>A treatment of the various noetic “textures” of the supernatural order: faith, faith perfected by the gifts, and theological science</p> <p>Readings: Degrees, chs. 6 and 7</p>
10/20–10/26	BREAK

<p>Week V</p> <p>10/27–11/02</p>	<p>The Noetics of Infused Contemplation</p> <p>Following in the (broadly) Carmelite line, a Thomist treatment of the noetics of infused mystical contemplation</p> <p>Readings: Degrees, chs. 8 and 9</p>
<p>Week VI</p> <p>11/03–11/09</p>	<p>Toward an Existential Epistemology—Theological considerations, pt. 1</p> <p>Introduction to the expansion of Thomist Epistemology Proposed by Maritain in Late life. Beginning of engagement with theological-cognitive essays</p> <p>Readings: Untrammelled Approaches, chs. 3 and 11</p>
<p>Week VII</p> <p>11/10–11/16</p>	<p>Toward an Existential Epistemology—Theological considerations, pt. 2</p> <p>Continued work on the theological underpinnings of an existential epistemology—particular note concerning the extended attention to the various states of supernatural-theological knowledge in believers</p> <p>Readings: Untrammelled Approaches, chs. 12–13</p>
<p>Week VIII</p> <p>11/17–11/23</p>	<p>Toward an Existential Epistemology—Intuition and the Intellect</p> <p>Consideration of Maritain’s most mature treatment of the native intuitivity of the intellect. Some background will be provided during the lecture.</p> <p>Readings: Untrammelled Approaches, ch. 14</p>