



Brian Kemple, PhD

Curriculum Vitae

Executive Director
Lyceum Institute

Education

Bachelor of Arts 2010

English Literature and Philosophy, Southern Catholic College,
Dawsonville GA, *Summa Cum Laude*

Master of Arts 2012

Philosophy, University of St. Thomas, Houston TX

Doctorate in Philosophy 2016

Philosophy, University of St. Thomas, Houston TX
Ens Primum Cognitum in Thomas Aquinas and the Tradition
Director: John Deely
Advisers: John Hittinger (co-director), Mirela Oliva



Languages

Reading: Latin and German
Translation: Medieval Latin

Teaching Experience

In addition to my institutional teaching experience listed below, I have spent many years as a private educator, including tutoring but since 2018 with a focus on individual philosophical education for those who seek to develop the habits of critical reflection. Additionally, I teach courses to small groups of all age groups from high school up through retirement. In all cases, my teaching is oriented towards evoking the right questions and showing how to ask them in the right way.

Lyceum Institute, 2019— | Online

Description:

The Lyceum Institute is a persistent online platform featuring several educational projects, including a medieval-style *quaestiones disputatae* format, language-learning groups, and regularly-scheduled philosophical seminars. The seminars run for 8 weeks and include a 40+

minute recorded audio lecture, week-long online chat discussions, and a 45-90-minute discussion session conducted via video chat.

Philosophy Seminars taught:

Introduction to Philosophical Thinking Introduction to Thomism Aquinas' Cosmological Vision Ethics: The Good Life Ethics: Virtue Ethics: The Sexual Act Thomistic Psychology: A Retrieval Thomistic Psychology: Action Theory Thomistic Psychology: Life of Thought Thomistic Psychology: World and Passions Thomistic Psychology: World and Habits Metaphysics: Discovery of Being Metaphysics: The Depths of Act and Potency	Metaphysics: The Existence, Nature, & Intelligibility of God Metaphysics: The Doctrine of Analogy Metaphysics: The Philosophy of Time, Part I Semiotics: An Introduction Semiotics: The Thought and Contributions of John Deely Semiotics: The <i>Tractatus de Signis</i> of John Poinset Semiotics: Cultural World of the Sign Semiotics: The Difficulties of Technology Science: The Faults of Modern Philosophy Phenomenology: An Introduction Phenomenology: Heidegger's Method I Phenomenology: Heidegger's Method II Controversies: Faith and Reason
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Language courses taught:

Art of Grammar I: Foundations Art of Grammar II: Composition Art of Logic I: Basics of Argumentation Art of Logic II: Advanced Argumentation Art of Rhetoric I: Discovery of Arguments Art of Rhetoric II: Styles of Persuasion	An Introduction to Scholastic Latin
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Adjunct Professor, 2016-17 | Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston
MA

Description:

I taught ethics at this regional technological institute. Since most students were engaged in technical programs focused upon finding economical solutions to problems in engineering, programming, or other technical disciplines, this presented a unique challenge: getting the students to think in a radically different way.

Courses taught:

4501 – Ethics: Fall 2016 | Spring 2017 | Summer 2017

Adjunct Professor, 2013-16 | University of St. Thomas, Houston TX

Description:

I taught a variety of courses at this private institution, including core courses required for every student, in addition to an upper-level course taken by majors. Classes were taught with a semi-Socratic method, incorporating small lectures with heavy discussion, focused around understanding classic and supplementary texts in the Western philosophical tradition.

Courses taught:

3313 – Metaphysics: Fall 2013 | Spring 2014 | Spring 2016

2316 – Medieval Philosophy: Summer 2014 | Spring 2015 | Fall 2015 | Spring 2016

2314 – Ethics: Fall 2014 | Fall 2015

1311 – Phil. of the Person: Summer 2015

4312 – Philosophy of Knowledge: Spring 2015

Instructor, 2011-16 | Our Lady of Walsingham, Houston TX

Description:

I taught weekly courses with regular email correspondence at this small home school co-operative program for upper-middle (7-8 grades) and high-school students (9-12 grades). These students—generally advanced—were introduced through my courses (as well as others within the program) to a rigorous investigation of critical thinking and the liberal arts, to give them the foundation needed for succeeding in college.

Courses taught:

Introduction to Logic

Introduction to Philosophy

Grammar and Composition

Ethics

Intermediate Latin

Publications

My writing falls into various categories: serious academic publications, both books and articles, intended for advanced audiences who have studied philosophy extensively; lay philosophical publications, intended for those who are familiar with or strongly interested in philosophical thinking; and more casual publications (not listed here), including blog entries and through other digital means of distribution (e.g., social media), which are intended more as an exercise of dialogue than one of pedagogy or scholarship.

Books

The Way of Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics in the Tradition of John Poinsett, Charles Sanders Peirce, and John Deely (forthcoming, under provisional contract with St. Augustine’s Press, tentatively 2026).

Description:

There are many good works in semiotics, and many introductions to semiotics—but a lack of good introductions that present its history, merits, and doctrines in an accessible manner. This text aims to satisfy that need by tracing its historical development and conveying its often complex terminology in a relatable, example-rich, and clearly explained presentation.

Linguistic Signification: A Classical and Semiotic Course in Grammar & Composition, self-published | Amazon, 2021 (second edition greatly expanded, 2025).

Description:

This book intends to serve one principal end: instructing students, of sufficiently mature mind, how to compose thoughtful and insightful essays in the English language. Accomplishing this rather specific end, however, requires a broad range of study: a study much broader than that comprised by a simple question of “how to write”. Accordingly, this book investigates all the necessary factors of intelligent composition.

Introduction to Philosophical Principles: Logic, Physics, and the Human Person, self-published | Amazon, 2019 (second edition greatly expanded, 2022—third edition under provisional contract with St. Augustine’s Press).

Description:

This short book introduces what I consider to be the most important principles for conducting any systematic philosophical inquiry. These are broken down into three sections: logic, physics, and person; or, the basic encounter with thought, with the world, and the nexus of thought and world.

The Intersection of Semiotics and Phenomenology: Peirce and Heidegger in Dialogue, in Mouton De Gruyter’s *Semiotics, Communication, and Cognition* series, 2019.

Description:

Many contemporary explanations of conscious human experience, relying either upon neuroscience or appealing to a spiritual soul, fail to provide a complete and coherent theory. These explanations, I argue, fall short because the underlying explanatory constituent for all experience are not entities, such as the brain or a spiritual soul, but rather relation and the unique way in which human beings form relations. This volume brings together insights from the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce into a new complementary synthesis that opens new doors for understanding all aspects of conscious human experience, not just those that can be quantified, and without appealing to an ineffable spiritual principle.

Ens Primum Cognitum in Thomas Aquinas and the Tradition: The Philosophy of Being as First Known, in Brill’s *Gilson Studies* series, September 2017.

Description:

Presents a reading of Thomas Aquinas’ claim that “being” is the first object of the human intellect. Blending the insights of both the early Thomistic tradition (c.1380—1637AD) and the Leonine Thomistic revival (1879—present), I examine how this claim of Aquinas has been traditionally understood, and what is lacking in that understanding. While the recent tradition has emphasized the primacy of the real (so-called *ens reale*) in human recognition of the *primum cognitum*, I argue that this misinterprets Aquinas, thereby closing off Thomistic philosophy to the broader perspective needed to face the philosophical challenges of today and propose an alternative interpretation with dramatic epistemological and metaphysical consequences.

Academic Articles

“Semiotics” in
The Encyclopedia of Catholic Theology (forthcoming 2026)

“The Doctrine of Signs in John Poinsett: The Context, Content, and Perennial Importance of Joannes a Sancto Thoma’s *Doctrina Signorum*” in
Studia Poinsettiana (2025). [\[DOI\]](#).

“The Resolution of Interpretations” in
Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia, 79.1-2 (2023). [\[DOI\]](#).

“Semiosis in the Machine” in *Filosofi(e)Semiotiche*, 10.1 (2023). [\[PDF\]](#).

“Unconscious Lostness: Misdirected Intentionality in a Culture Of Untruth—a Reflection on John Deely’s contribution to a Theory Of Culture” in *Semiotics 2022*, 27-35 (2023). [\[DOI\]](#).

“Signs and Reality: An Advocation for Semiotic Realism” in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*, 1.1, 2020. [\[PDF\]](#).

“The Consolation of a Christian” in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 58.4.232, December 2018. [\[DOI\]](#).

“Elaboration of the Intellectual Sign” in *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 34.1-2, Summer 2018. [\[DOI\]](#).

“The Preeminent Necessity of Prudence” in *Studia Gilsoniana*, 6:4, 2017 [\[PDF\]](#).

“Jacques Maritain and *Ens ut Primum Cognitum*” in *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism*, Catholic University of America Press, 2017.

“Evaluating Etienne Gilson's Metaphysical Realism” in *Studia Gilsoniana*, 4:4, 2015 [\[PDF\]](#).

“Wojtyla: Nature, Person, and Teleology” in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity* published by Cambridge Scholars, 2015.

Popular Articles

“The Constitution of Culture: Specifying Objects and Jacques Maritain on the Temporal Order” in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*, online 4 August 2021. [\[Online\]](#).

“Walking Through the Motion” in *Lapsus Lima*, 12 June 2019 [\[Online\]](#).

“Participation and the Divine” in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*, 19 May 2019 [\[Online\]](#).

“C.S. Peirce on Science and Belief” in *Epoché Monthly Magazine* (April 2019) [\[Online\]](#).

“The Continuity of Being: C.S. Peirce’s Philosophy of Synechism” in *Epoché Monthly Magazine* (January 2019) [\[Online\]](#).

“Leaving the Global Village: Our Digital Diaspora” in *Lapsus Lima*, 5 February 2019 [\[Online\]](#).

“The Acute Obtuse, or Irreplaceable Philosophy” in
Lapsus Lima, 16 October 2018 [\[Online\]](#).

“InHuman Places” in
Lapsus Lima, 18 April 2018 [\[Online\]](#).

Reviews

The Nature of the Human Person: Metaphysics and Bioethics by Jason T. Eberl (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020) in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 22.3 (Autumn 2022), 571-74 [\[Online\]](#).

Nihilism and Technology (New York: Roman & Littlefield, Ltd., 2018) and *Nihilism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019) both by Nolen Gertz, in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse* 30 June 2020 [\[Online\]](#).

What Love Is: And What It Could Be by Carrie Jenkins (New York: Basic Books, 2017) in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*, 11 November 2019 [\[Online\]](#).

Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny by Kate Manne (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*, 19 June 2019 [\[Online\]](#).

The Knowledge of First Principles in St. Thomas Aquinas by Mary Christine Ugobi-Onyemere (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2015) in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 29.1/2, 2017.

Nature and the Artificial: Aristotelian Reflections on the Operative Imperative by Edward Engelmann (New York: Lexington Books, 2017) forthcoming in *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse*.

Select Presentations

“Broken Minds: Artificial Intelligence, Digital Technology, and the Enslavement of Humankind”
Annual Aquinas Lecture
Aquinas College
29 January 2026, Grand Rapids MI [\[YouTube\]](#).

“*Institutiones Rationis*: The Life of Higher Education”
Invited Plenary Address
The Range of Reason: From Empirioschematic Science to Natural and Supernatural Mysticism
48th Annual Meeting of the American Maritain Association
4 April 2025, Ave Maria University, FL

“Thomistic Psychology and the Postmodern Person”,
Aquinas and Postmodernity
98th Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association
14-17 November 2024, Chicago, IL

“Linguistics and Philosophy: Personhood Beyond Semantics”
 International Étienne Gilson Society,
 97th Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association
 17 November 2023, Houston TX

“Disintegrating Sensation: Artificial Intelligence and Perceiving the Truth”
 Society for 21st Century Thomism
 97th Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association
 17 November 2023, Houston TX

“John Poincot and the Essence of the Sign”
 Invited Lecture, 2022 International Open Seminar on Semiotics:
 a Tribute to John Deely on the Fifth Anniversary of His Passing
 26 November 2022, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

Commentary on Anabela Gradim’s Presentation, “The Semiotics
 of John Poincot”, 2022 International Open Seminar on Semiotics:
 a Tribute to John Deely on the Fifth Anniversary of His Passing
 25 July 2022, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Signs of Meaning: The Need for Semiotics”
 Public Colloquium, Lyceum Institute
 7 July 2022, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Aquinas: The (Meta)Physics Behind Semiosis”
 Invited Lecture, 2022 International Open Seminar on Semiotics:
 a Tribute to John Deely on the Fifth Anniversary of His Passing
 16 April 2022, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Augustine: Instituting the Given Sign”
 Invited Lecture, 2022 International Open Seminar on Semiotics:
 a Tribute to John Deely on the Fifth Anniversary of His Passing
 15 January 2022, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Why You Need Semiotics: The Signs of Meaning”
 Invited Lecture, Saint Vincent College
 Latrobe, PA, 4 December 2021

Interview:
 Preface for the 2022 International Open Seminar on Semiotics
 13 October 2021, Online

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“The Tradition of Questioning”
Whose Thomism? Which Tradition?
 American Maritain Association Annual Conference
 Pittsburgh, PA, 5-7 March 2020

[\[Text online\]](#).

“Concept Formation and Artificial Intelligence”

Invited lecture, Aquinas College
Grand Rapids, MI, 19 March 2019

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Interpretation and Traditions: an intersection for semiotics, phenomenology, and Thomism”
Invited Colloquium, Center for Thomistic Studies
University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX, 27 April 2018

[\[Audio\]](#).

“Sophists and Semioticians”
Aquinas Leadership International World Congress
Huntington, NY, 15 July 2017

[\[YouTube\]](#).

“Critical Realism and the *Verbum Mentis*”
Center for Thomistic Studies Graduate Discussion Group
Houston, TX, 14 April 2016

“Maritain and Wojtyla on the Disclosure of Subjectivity”
Along Unbeaten Pathways: Jacques Maritain’s Pursuit of Wisdom in Untrammelled Approaches,
American Maritain Association Annual Conference
New York, NY, 25-27 February 2016

“Thomas Aquinas’ Fourth Way”
5th Annual Houston Baptist Philosophy Conference
Houston, TX, 18 September 2015

“Jacques Maritain and *Ens ut Primum Cognitum*”
Maritain Engage, American Maritain Association Annual Conference
San Francisco, CA, 26-28 February 2015

“Does the First Principle of Avicenna have a Quiddity?”
Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’ Annual Fall Workshop
Houston, TX, 6 September 2014

“Techne, Physis, and Technology: Aristotle and Heidegger”
4th Annual Houston Baptist Philosophy Conference
Houston, TX, 5 April 2014

“Wojtyla: Nature, Person, and Teleology”
Thomistic Personalism satellite session at the *American Catholic Philosophical Association*
Indianapolis, IN, 3 November 2013

“Thomas and Wojtyla on the Teleology of Nature and Person”
Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity – Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas
Houston, TX, 18 October 2013

Service

Aquinas College, Grand Rapids MI

<https://lyceum.institute>
kemple@lyceum.institute

Catholic Studies Board Member

Semiotic Society of America
Executive Committee

Studia Poinsonian [Link]
Advisory Board

International Open Seminar on Semiotics: a Tribute to John Deely on the Fifth Anniversary of His Passing [Link].

Member of the Organizing Committee
Member of the Scientific Council

Founder and Executive Editor of *Reality: a journal for philosophical discourse* [Link].

Referee for
The American Journal of Semiotics
Studia Gilsoniana
The Thomist

Research

The overall architecture of my philosophical project is twofold: first is to follow what Jacques Maritain called a “Living Thomism”, which he saw as dealing not only with the perennial wisdom of Thomas Aquinas but as engaging the dynamic unfolding of time and the issues contained therein. The second is to embed both semiotics, the study of the action of signs, and what Charles Peirce called “synechism”—the essential continuity of all things in the universe, of a universe without gaps—into a systematic philosophical program.

Currently, I am working on a manuscript tentatively titled *The Way of Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics in the Tradition of Poinson, Peirce, and Deely*. I have applied semiotics to a diverse range of studies, including the classical trivium, Thomistic psychology, contemporary neuroscience, communication ethics, and more. This book aims to derive from such experience an accessible introduction to semiotics for a general audience, providing the necessary scholastic background without requiring years of study from its readers.

Online Presence

- <https://lyceuminstitute.academia.edu/BrianKemple> [Academia.edu profile]
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/BrianKemple> [LinkedIn profile]
- <https://lyceum.institute/faculty/administration/> [Lyceum Institute]

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References

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