

**READING SYLLABUS**  
**PRAXIS PROGRAM OF ADVANCED SEMINAR ON MISSION**  
**SPRING 2016**

**Foundational Readings:**

Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology*, Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 2001.

Richard Liddy, *Contextual Briefs*

**1. January 15: Mission and Method  
(Cronin, Chapters 1 and 2)**

- a. Objective: To understand the relation between the mission of Seton Hall University, Bernard Lonergan's "Generalized Empirical Method" (GEM) and the process of "self-appropriation"
- b. Main Topics
  - i. The religious, moral and intellectual mission of Seton Hall University, and its implications (NB Applications to the mission of Seton Hall University will be made throughout all the sessions)
  - ii. Who was Bernard Lonergan?
  - iii. Stages of Meaning as 1) Common Sense 2) Theory 3) Interiority
  - iv. What is "Generalized Empirical Method" and equivalent terminology?
  - v. Insight into Direct Insight
  - vi. Heuristic Structure
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. What ideas struck you in the readings for today?
  - ii. What insights have you had during this time? Give some examples.
  - iii. Were you able to "get" some of the puzzles? What happened to you as you were "getting" them?
  - iv. How do you understand the mission of the University? How is it related to GEM?

**2. January 29: From Description to Explanation: Inverse Insight (Cronin, Chapters 3 and Chapter 4, pp. 123-129)**

- a. Objective: To understand the main idea of self-appropriation as one moves from common sense understanding to theoretical understanding
- b. Main topics
  - i. Descriptive and Explanatory Insights
  - ii. Inverse Insight and Higher Viewpoints
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. What ideas struck you in the readings for today?

- ii. Among all the puzzles was there one in particular you focused on? Were you able to solve it? Can you describe the process of solving it – including your feelings?
- iii. Can you distinguish descriptive from explanatory understanding?
- iv. Give an example of an inverse insight you have had.
- v. Give an example of your experience of a higher viewpoint.

### **3. February 12: Developing Understanding and Judgment**

**(Cronin, Chapter 5, pp. 165-176; 180-184 and Chapter 6)**

- a. Objective: To deepen our understanding of understanding, developing understanding and judgment
- b. Main Topics:
  - i. Abstraction
  - ii. Intellectualism vs Conceptualism
  - iii. Higher Viewpoints
  - iv. Judgment as answering the “Is it so?” question and completing the process of knowing
  - v. Context and Belief
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. Do you understand the notion of abstraction as “enriching?”
  - ii. Can you give examples of higher viewpoints?
  - iii. Do you understand the notion of judgment as a limited commitment?
  - iv. Can you give examples of these notions from your own discipline?
  - v. Can you distinguish questions for understanding from questions for judgment?

### **4. February 26: Reflective Understanding and Cognitive Structure**

**(Cronin, Chapters 7 and 8)**

- a. Objectives:
  - i. To understand the dynamic movement from reflective understanding to judgment
  - ii. To begin to understand the self-affirmation of the knower as a normative movement from consciousness to self-knowledge
- b. Main Topics
  - i. Immanent Norms of Intelligence and Judgment
  - ii. Cognitive Structure and Self-affirmation
  - iii. Self-affirmation not open to basic revision
  - iv. From Consciousness to Self-knowledge
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. Can you give examples of reflective understanding?
  - ii. Can you “catch yourself” trying to understand and trying to understand whether you understand correctly?

- iii. Have you been testing other hypotheses? Searching for contradictory hypotheses and evidence? Do you find yourself trying to refute all this? How do you get around all this?

## 5. March 11: Authenticity, Objectivity and Intellectual Conversion

(Cronin, Chapters 9 and 10)

- a. Objective: To grasp the essence of objectivity and what is meant by “self-transcendence”
- b. Main Topics:
  - i. Moving from “looking” to knowing and from “the already out there now real” to objective knowledge of being
  - ii. Intellectual Conversion
  - iii. Authenticity as involving self-transcendence and the movement from authentic subjectivity to genuine objectivity
  - iv. Self-Transcendence
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. Have you caught yourself making a mistake? What happened? Were you understanding and judging incorrectly? Did your imagination run away with you?
  - ii. What does it mean to try to be “objective?” The various levels of objectivity?
  - iii. Does self-transcendence lead us to “our best selves?”
  - iv. What is the “practical” significance of adequate self-understanding in my own discipline, my own area?
  - v. How do you understand authenticity?

## 6. April 1: Values in Living and The Question of God

(“Conversion in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan;” Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Chapter 4, pp. 101-107; Miller, Chapters 3 and 4)

- a. Objective: To understand the generalized empirical method as opening to the question of God and religious experience. To understand the process of conversion and the relation between self-appropriation and communal living.
- b. Main Topics:
  - i. Generalized Empirical Method as the basis of all the other methods
  - ii. Openness to the Question of God
  - iii. The Human Good, Values and Meaning
  - iv. The religious, moral and intellectual conversions and their relation to the mission of Seton Hall University
- c. Discussion Questions:
  - i. Do you see the relation between personal self-appropriation and the method(s) of your own discipline?
  - ii. What about the question of God?
  - iii. Do you see the relationship between self-appropriation and communal living?

- iv. Reflect on the relationship among the human good, values and meaning.
- v. Reflect on intellectual conversion and its relationship to the meaning of SHU's mission. How is it related to GEM?

**Friday, April 15 – make-up date for snow if needed**

**Assignments:**

1. Due March 11 – 1 page Abstract of the ATM
2. Due April 8 – 3 to 5 page ATM

**Notes:**

One of the important benefits of this program is incorporating the time and opportunity for reflection into the busy lives of the participants, and those they reach.

The tools for reflection in this program include the discussion questions in the syllabus, the guiding questions on the schedule, and journaling. Since reflection is an essential part of self-appropriation, please take every opportunity to do so. It may be helpful to you in formulating your ATM.

Class time may not be adequate for a full discussion of the important questions in each part of the session. Please use them as a guide for reflection in your journaling.

## BACKGROUND BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Bernard Lonergan**

*Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (CWL), vol. 3, University of Toronto Press (1992); especially the Preface.

"Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," CWL, vol. 6, 214-43

"Authenticity, the Spirit and the Word," from *A Second Collection*, "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," pp. 165-175.

**Brian Cronin,**

*Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology*, Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 2001.

"The Purpose of Metaphysics," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*,

**Tad Dunne:**

"Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

**Richard Liddy:**

*Contextual Briefs for Praxis Sessions* (2015)

*Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (1993)

*Startling Strangeness: Reading Lonergan's Insight* (2007)

"Augustine's Intellectual Conversion"

[http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=richard\\_liddy](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=richard_liddy)

"'Conversion' in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan"

**Mark T. Miller, *The Quest for God and the Good Life: Lonergan's Theological Anthropology***

Sessions: January 15, GEM, Lonergan IEP

January 29, Chapter 1 and 2

February 12, Chapter 3, pp. 45-58

February 26, Chapter 3, pp. 45-62

March 11, Chapter 3, pp. 62-72

April 1, Chapters 3, 4 and 9, pp. 171-174; 169-171; 150-154