

THE LIFE OF THE MIND

A Lecture and Seminar Series for the University of Michigan
Academic Year 2022-2023

Fall 2022: *Transcendentals*

Truth. Beauty. Goodness. Throughout the centuries, thinkers have called these cosmic values *transcendentals* because they were believed to exist universally beyond space, time, matter, and history, and because all human beings longed to know them. In the classical world, the transcendentals were understood to harmonize the soul with a well-ordered universe, a prerequisite to human flourishing. Medieval thinkers associated the transcendentals with the triune God of Christianity and believed that human beings, as *imago Dei*, possessed an innate ability to know truth, love beauty, and desire goodness. How do these values look to us now? How might they speak to our intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical lives as students, teachers, and citizens of the world? This series will examine the transcendentals as a category of thought that is just as important now as it ever was. Indeed, they make life worth living.

October Seminar: "Truth"

D.C. Schindler, Catholic University of America

Friday, October 21, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Pond Room, Michigan Union

Includes dinner. This free seminar is by application only. Apply at www.kateriinstitute.org.

November Seminar: "Beauty"

James Matthew Wilson, University of St. Thomas

Friday, November 18, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Wolverine Room, Michigan Union

Includes dinner. This free seminar is by application only. Apply at www.kateriinstitute.org.

December Seminar: "Goodness"

Doug Trevor, University of Michigan

Friday, December 9, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Kuenzel Room, Michigan Union

Includes dinner. This free seminar is by application only. Apply at www.kateriinstitute.org.

Winter 2023: *Ways of Thinking*

Intellectus means to "read from within," to focus so deeply on some subject that one eventually comes to know it from the inside. Human beings naturally long to read from within, but this has never been a simple matter, least of all in our postmodern, mass-mediated "information age." So this semester is devoted to thinking about thinking: its possibilities, preconditions, promises,

and problems. Presenters will consider the prospects of thinking from a variety of perspectives and contexts including religious belief, political struggle, scientific advancement, and cultural devastation. This series not only assumes that thinking is done in different ways, and in different traditions, but that it can – and must – be taught and learned as part of the life of the mind.

Keynote Lecture: “Heaven as a Way of Thinking: Dante’s *Paradiso*”

Alison Cornish, New York University

Thursday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.

Angell Hall Auditorium D

This lecture is free and open to the public.

February Seminar: “Destructive Thinking: Its History and How to Avoid It”

Helen Tomko, Villanova University

Friday, February 17, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Wolverine Room, Michigan Union

Includes dinner. This free seminar is by application only. Apply at www.kateriinstitute.org.

April Seminar: “Thinking after the Sudden Collapse of Your Culture”

Scott Lyons and Ellie Ettawageshik, University of Michigan

Friday, April 14, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

2210 ABC, Michigan Union (Second Floor)

Includes dinner. This free seminar is by application only. Apply at www.kateriinstitute.org.

Speakers

D.C. Schindler is a philosopher and translator specializing in metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of religion, and moral and political philosophy. His work falls in the Neoplatonic tradition, though he is also associated with Thomism, German Idealism, and the Communio/Ressourcement school of theology. A professor of Metaphysics and Anthropology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C., he is the author of *Plato’s Critique of Impure Reason: On Goodness and Truth in the Republic* (2008), *The Catholicity of Reason* (2013), and *Freedom from Reality: The Diabolical Character of Modern Liberty* (2017) among other books and essays.

James Matthew Wilson is Professor of Humanities and the Founding Director of the Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing, at the University of Saint Thomas, Houston. An award-winning scholar of philosophical-theology and literature, Wilson has authored dozens of essays, articles, and reviews on all manner of subjects secular and divine. His poetry appears regularly in such journals as *First Things*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Hudson Review*, *Modern Age*, *The New Criterion*, *Dappled Things*, *Measure*, *Front Porch Republic*, *The Raintown Review*, *National Review*, and elsewhere. He has published ten books, including six books of poetry.

Douglas Trevor is an author and academic. He received the Iowa Short Fiction Award and was a finalist for the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for his short story collection, *The Thin Tear in the Fabric of Space* (2005). His other books include *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (2004), the novel *Girls I Know* (2013), which won the 2013 Balcones Fiction Prize, and most recently the short story collection *The Book of Wonders*. Trevor teaches in the English Department and Creative Writing Program at the University of Michigan, and is a former Director of the Helen Zell Writers' Program.

Alison Cornish is professor and chair of Italian studies at New York University, current president of the Dante Society of America, and author of several monographs and numerous essays on the three crowns of Italian literature -- Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio – and the culture of translation in which they lived and flourished. She is the author of *Reading Dante's Stars* (2000), *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (2011), and many essays and commentaries. Cornish is the curator of the podcast, *Canto per Canto: Conversations with Dante in Our Time*, a series of one hundred conversations – one for each Canto of the Divine Comedy – conducted by members of the Dante Society of America during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown in anticipation of the seventh centennial commemoration of Dante's death in the year 2021.

Helen Tomko is an Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at Villanova University. Author of *Sacramental Realism: Gertrud von le Fort and German Catholic Literature in the Weimar Republic and Third Reich (1924–46)*, Tomko regularly teaches courses on “The Human Person,” “Catholic Novel,” and “Epiphanies of Beauty,” as well as the Augustine and Culture Seminar. Her research focuses on twentieth-century German Catholic thought, in particular Theodor Haecker and others who were associated with the “inner exile” during the Third Reich. She also writes about sacramental realism in the writing of Gertrud von le Fort, Evelyn Waugh, Muriel Spark, Flannery O'Connor, and others.

Scott Lyons is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Michigan where he specializes in Native American literature, Catholic studies, and the mimetic theory of René Girard. His publications include *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (2010), *The World, the Text, and the Indian: Global Dimensions of Native American Literature* (2017), and a diverse array of essays. He was once a regular columnist for *Indian Country Today*, the nation's leading Native newspaper. Lyons is the series editor of SUNY Press's Native Traces series and a founding member of the Indigenous Catholic Research Fellowship. **Ellie Ettawageshik** is a first-year student at the University of Michigan.

For more information: www.kateriinstitute.org