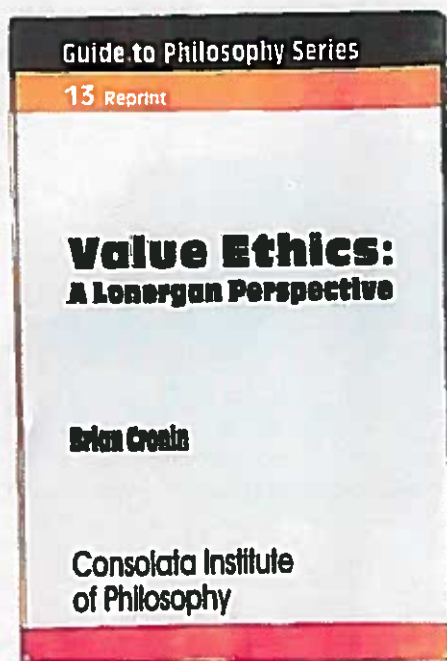


Short Course Description

Foundations of Moral Philosophy Phil 542.01 (cross-listed Phil 442W-01 & HCE 542) TR 10:50-12:05 324 CH

Associate Professor Brian Cronin, C.S.Sp.



There are many different ways of theorizing about moral philosophy and each has its advantages and disadvantages. What do we do in the face of such a variety of approaches from ancient, modern and contemporary sources? My approach is, firstly, to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems of moral philosophy. It is not simply a question of totally rejecting or accepting each approach but rather of recovering the genuine contributions that each approach offers. We are then in a position to formulate the foundations of moral philosophy which I articulate in terms of a value ethics.

Everyone talks about values these days but nobody seems to know what a value is and how we might be expected to make true and good value judgments. My approach would be to examine how in practice we make moral judgments even before learning moral philosophy and to identify the components of the judgment of value: the intellectual, the affective, the volitional and the developmental and then carry them out in moral actions. These would be the foundations of any moral philosophy.

The foundations of moral philosophy are to be found in the fact that to be an authentic human being is to be attentive, to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible and to be in love with the good. It is the nature of being human to act in such a manner. To do less than that is to be less than human. We learn the specific content of our morals from our parents and teachers. But the dynamism of being reasonable and responsible and in love is part of human nature..

Fortunately, we have an excellent required textbook covering most of these topics: *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective*, written by yours truly. We do not have to go into the Lonergan part too deeply but we can use the text as a mirror to read ourselves: to read our moral being and the decisions, the desires, the insights, the hopes and dreams, involved in the drama of becoming fully human. We will study it chapter by chapter. The course will proceed by way of presentations by a student, a discussion and an input. It will be general rather than specific; it will not be giving particular answers to specific questions in business ethics, or medical ethics, or sexual ethics. It will be giving you the tools to work out for yourself the codes appropriate to each specific area.