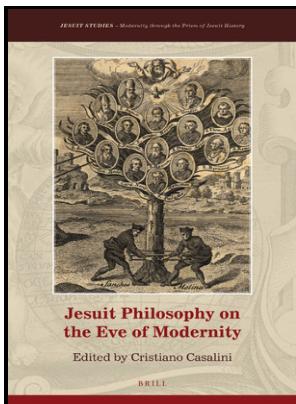


# Theology, philosophy, and history as integrating disciplines in the Catholic college of liberal arts - proceedings

Catholic University of America Press - Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers

Description: -



Radiation-Protective Agents -- therapeutic use -- congresses.  
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Notes: Bibliographical references included in footnotes  
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## Philosophy of a Catholic, Liberal Arts Education

Had we not been bombarded in the last twenty years with so many convincing critiques of modernist epistemology--in both its rationalist and empiricist manifestations and in both its more optimistic early versions and its more chastened later versions--we might by force of habit still be worried about the propriety of allowing cognitive claims involving affective commitments to function as starting points and first principles in philosophical inquiry. Perhaps Catholic philosophers before the council were to some extent responsible for their own isolation from the secular intellectual mainstream--though it is worth remembering that at that time professional philosophy in England and the United States was dominated by logical positivism, pragmatism, and ordinary language philosophy, three of the most harshly anti-metaphysical movements in the history of philosophy. They may be treated in different ways and from differing perspectives in several disciplines.

## Catholic Studies Graduate Program

Blessed John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, showed how faith and reason each strengthen the other. So let me restate the claim as carefully as I can: If we take the classical view that the ultimate aim of philosophical inquiry is wisdom, where wisdom includes, in the first place, a comprehensive and intellectually rigorous understanding of the First Cause of all being and, derivatively, a similarly comprehensive and intellectually rigorous understanding of all dependent beings insofar as they originate from the First Cause as their source and are ordered to the First Cause as their end, then systematic theology lies at the pinnacle of philosophical inquiry for Catholics.

## Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers

The division of labor Before that, though, I want to make two points about the division of labor appropriate to this second task of the Catholic philosopher. For more detail on the selection criteria for this course, please see the and websites.

## Philosophy and Theology

And because they have lost, or despaired of, or grown skeptical of the ideal of the unity of truth, university administrators find themselves unable to articulate a coherent vision of the whole that is capable of uniting their disparate constituencies under the flag of a common project.

## **Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers**

First, it is important for the Catholic philosophical community as a whole to be engaged both in exegetical research projects aimed at deepening our understanding of historically important philosophical traditions--especially, but not only, the medieval and early modern Catholic sub-traditions-- and in systematic research projects aimed at pushing forward discussions currently at the forefront of philosophical interest among both believers and non-believers. We must, of course, keep in mind St. Such an education implies a curriculum that integrates the traditional ends and means of liberal education with majors and minors that help prepare students for particular professions.

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## **The Liberal Arts Advantage**

I have kept this goal in view, not only in discussing the questions but also in choosing my views or opinions, inclining toward those which seem to comport better with piety and revealed doctrine. Notice, however, that even within the Catholic philosophical tradition there has been significant disagreement about the material content of this normative ideal; that is to say, Catholic philosophical inquirers have differed over just how extensive in principle the range of the preambles of the faith is and over just how evident in principle those preambles can be rendered. Catholic philosophical inquiry is, once again, a communal project that admits of and in fact demands a prudent division of labor.

## **Catholic Studies Graduate Program**

See his Regensburg Address, September 12, 2006. Community living is designed to moderate the extremes of individualism and competitiveness and to promote the common good. Illustrations, Index, if any, are included in black and white.

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