

*The Training Institute & the SRV Implementation Project are pleased to present a three-day workshop on*  
**THE PHILOSOPHY OF “PERSONALISM,” & ITS MOST RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS  
TO CONTEMPORARY LIFE & HUMAN SERVICES**

This workshop was originally designed by the late professor Wolf Wolfensberger, past director of the above Training Institute. The presenters are a group of Training Institute staff & associates who have been studying the topic & the workshop over a period of years, initially under the instruction & direction, & with the collaboration, of Prof. Wolfensberger.

**Dates & times:** Tuesday, May 2 through Thursday, May 4, 2017. The first two days start at 8:15 am & go till approximately 5:00 pm; the last day starts at 8:15 am, & ends at approximately 4:30 pm

**Place:** Christ the King Retreat & Conference Center, 500 Brookford Road, Syracuse, New York 13224; telephone 315 446-2680; on the web at [ctkretreat.com](http://ctkretreat.com). This is a very quiet, secluded place within the city; it has ample grounds for walking, & an outdoor swimming pool.

**Participants are strongly urged to register early;  
if there are not enough paid registrants by *April 15, 2017*, the workshop will be cancelled.**

**Content:** This workshop presents Dr. Wolfensberger’s interpretation & synthesis of philosophical & value traditions that have been called “personalism,” focusing especially on those from France in the late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, & personalist thinking since then. Personalism, like other philosophies, has implications to a wide range of issues in life, & this workshop interprets the relevance of personalist ideas to a number of concerns of contemporary life, society, & human services.

There is a long history of personalist thinking, & many schools & formulations of personalism. They all tend to emphasize the importance of the human person, especially vis-à-vis structures & absolutisms. The personalism movement that started in the late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in France, & that is the particular focus of this event, responded to totalitarian ideologies such as communism & fascism, & to the depersonalizing oppression of industrialized economies. The insights & recommendations of personalists to these concerns of one hundred years ago are still very timely. More recently, developments such as media control of society; computer-driven objectification, depersonalization, & centralization; the invasion of people’s minds & their privacy, as via surveillance; & the tyranny of political correctness, as in academia—are once again making personalist analyses & ideals very relevant.

Some versions of personalism are more religious than others; some step into the domain of psychology & personality theory. This workshop will mention the religious roots of some ideas of personalism, but even people who do not share the religion of some personalist philosophers—even people who do not consider themselves at all religious—can still find much food for thought in personalism ideas.

However, the workshop does **not** get into heavy-duty or specialized philosophical territory, but stays on the level of ‘the intelligent layperson or non-specialist.’ No previous versions of this workshop have ever been criticized as being beyond grasp of such persons.

The history & nature of personalism will be sketched, who were some of its more prominent thinkers & writers & what they had to say, & many of the teachings of personalism. The bulk of the workshop is devoted to coverage of the following common ‘themes’ that Dr. Wolfensberger identified in personalistic thinking:

1. Seeking to grasp the nature of entities (especially human nature), taking this nature into account, & working with it in any enterprise, rather than ignoring the nature of an entity, or trying to defeat it.
2. The primacy of the spiritual over the material.
3. The intrinsic value & dignity of humans collectively, & of each & every human, including those who are very reduced or impaired.

4. The uniqueness of each individual human.
5. Human freedom.
6. The “relational” nature of human beings, & implications to sex, family, community & state.
7. The imperative for each person to assume personal moral responsibility in one’s life, & act morally within any structures to which one belongs, regardless of the sanctions this may draw—if need be, acting in contradiction or disobedience to authorities that de-dignify the human or try to destroy personal conscience. This assumption of responsibility also includes taking direct action to respond to the needs of others without waiting for actions by organizations or government, or putting hopes in those, as well as recruiting others to embrace the same kinds of actions & stances. All this also implies helping needy, rejected, or devalued people directly, with one’s own bodily & mental resources & engagements.
8. What is called ‘subsidiarity,’ i.e., trying to address problems at the lowest feasible level of complexity, technology, organization, & hierarchy.

For each theme, there will be some elaboration of action implications, & some interpretation of what personalist thinking & analysis would imply to developments that the earlier personalists did not confront or anticipate—for instance, the modernistic attacks on the value of the person, & the contesting of the very humanness of some persons.

**Format:** The workshop is conducted in lecture style, with a sequential series of presentations that use overheads & slide illustrations as teaching aids. At the conclusion of each presentation, there will be ample time for comments, questions & discussion on what has been covered so far. Also, participants will be offered a number of reflection questions for their own individual private meditation on the material that has been presented, & its implications for themselves.

**Note:** This workshop goes into depth on some topics that are briefly mentioned in two other Training Institute workshops: the 5-day workshop on ‘Crafting a Coherent Stance on the Sanctity of Human Life,’ & the 7-day workshop on ‘How to Function with Personal Moral Coherency.’ People who have been to either or both of those workshops will find this workshop a good follow-up to them, but people who have not been to either workshop have attended this one & still gotten a lot out of it.

**Tuition & fees:** \$550, which includes three nights’ overnight accommodation; refreshments on all three days; breakfast, lunch, & supper the first two workshop days, & breakfast & lunch on the last day.

**For participants who are commuting:** \$425 per person, which includes refreshments on all days; lunch & supper the first two workshop days, & lunch on the last day.

We will not turn people away for lack of funds; if you require tuition assistance, please email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org).

**Registration & payment:** For registrations outside the US, payment **must** be made by credit card. For US registrations only, payment can be made by credit card or by check. US checks should be made out to Shriver Clinical Services.

- Register online <https://srvip.wufoo.com/forms/philosophy-of-personalism-workshop/>

- Checks should be made out to *Shriver Clinical Services* (federal id # 04 317 5325), & sent to: *Workshop registrar; SRVIP; 74 Elm Street; Worcester, MA 01609*. Email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org).

Upon registration, registrants will receive further information, including about accommodations.

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