

Philosophy

We all come with different assumptions and presuppositions about “philosophy”:

- Different perspectives about life, how to interpret it...
 - Theories about life
 - Worldview
 - Meaning of life
- Questioning... self-reflection... how we perceive things, what and how and why we believe things
- Studying ethics, values, Laws, morality, social goods, political foundations
- Learning about important and influential historical figures
- Religion and philosophy... how do they relate?
- Expanding consciousness, awareness, beliefs
- Models for evaluating or representing things... systems, guidelines, theoretical frameworks

Three main ways to treat Philosophy as a discipline:

- **Historical** approach...
 - People, periods, movements, schools of thought
 - Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Descartes, Aquinas, Kierkegaard, etc.
 - Ancient Philosophy, Medieval, Modern Philosophy, Existentialism, etc.
- **Subject** approach (problem-based)
 - Epistemology (study of knowledge), Metaphysics (reality/being), Ethics, Philosophy of Religion
 - Political Philosophy, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science, etc.
- **Methodological** Approach
 - Critical Thinking
 - Asking questions!
 - Why?
 - What do you mean?
 - Defining terms, clarifying concepts
 - Tracing out implications (if I believed this, or if this were true, it would mean this other thing is true, or I'd be committed to this...)
 - Analysis

- Logic and Argumentation
 - Line of reasoning
 - Argument
 - A set of reasons given to support a claim
 - Reasons = Premises
 - Claim = Conclusion

We will look at four main areas of philosophy in this course: Epistemology (studying knowledge, belief, justification), Metaphysics (studying the nature of reality, being, and existence), Ethics (studying concepts of right and wrong, virtue, and theories about what makes something moral), and Philosophy of Religion (studying basic issues in religious belief, how we might argue for God's existence, how faith and reason relate)