

Philosophy 101: a very brief overview

US 275 Scientific Ethics
John R. Hoffman
Arcadia University



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West coast of Aruba,

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What is philosophy

- *philo* + *sophia* (Greek)
- “love of wisdom”
- inquisitive approach
- search for answers about knowledge, reality, and existence.



Adi Shankaracharya with His Disciples
<https://www.elippub.com/2011/04/adi-shankaracharya-with-his-disciples.html>
Adi Shankaracharya is the Founder of the Dasnami Sannyasa tradition, recognized as reincarnation of Lord Shiva

Three major divisions of philosophy?

- Metaphysics
- Value theory
- Epistemology



Metaphysics

- The study of the ultimate nature of reality.
- Questions such as:
 - Does a god exist?
 - do persons have souls?



The Prophet Mohammed in a Mosque.
Turkish, 16th Century, painting on paper.
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3 areas of Value theory

Ethics

- What is good?
- What is moral

Aesthetics

- What is beauty?

Social/Political

- What is justice?

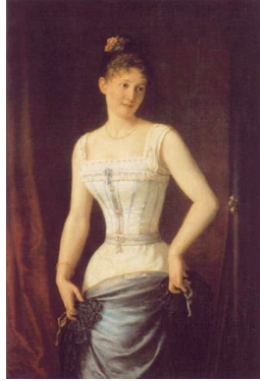


The Seven Virtues - Lady Justice,
Giotto di Bondone, 1306
Wikimedia Commons

Value Theory: Beauty in the eye of the beholder



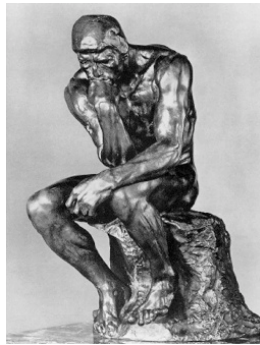
The Three Graces,
Peter Paul Rubens, 1635
Wikimedia Commons



Woman with Silk Corset
Mor Than, 11891
Wikimedia Commons

Epistemology

- Episteme (gr.): knowledge
- Theory of knowledge
 - study of the origin, nature, and extent of knowledge.
 - Does knowledge exist?
 - Is experience the only source of knowledge?



The Thinker
Auguste Rodin

Sources of knowledge: Innate

- knowledge that an individual is born with
- e.g. newborn rooting reflex
 - stroke corner of baby's mouth
 - baby turns toward source to find food and begins sucking
 - subsides at about 4 months



Let the children come to me
Lucas Cranach

Sources of knowledge: Testimony/social dependence

- Knowledge from others
- Science is a community
 - Scientists build upon the work of earlier scientists.



Consultation of old scriptures.
Ottoman miniature painting, 1581
Wikimedia Commons

Sources of Knowledge: Experience

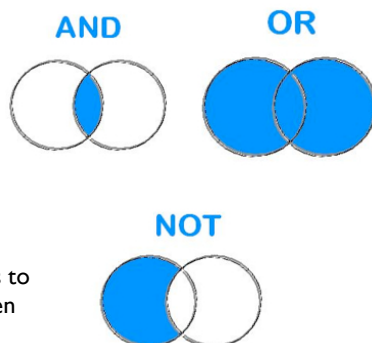
- Empiricism
 - experience and sensory perception is the source of all knowledge ~ John Locke
 - *a posteriori* = knowledge that comes from experience
- Science is based on observations made under different conditions.
 - experiments establish specific situations for scientists to study.



Galileo Galilei showing the Doge of Venice how to use the telescope
Giuseppe Bertini, 1858
Wikimedia Commons

Sources of Knowledge: logic and reasoning

- Rationalism
 - knowledge through mental reasoning (non-empirical)
 - *a priori* = knowledge that comes before experience
- Scientists use logic to combine ideas to construct hypotheses (which are then tested empirically)



Philosophy of Science

metaphysics:

- ultimate nature of reality

epistemology

- origin of knowledge



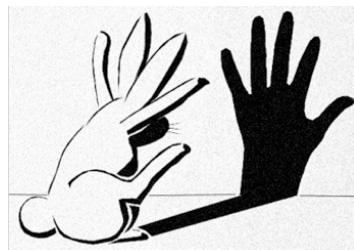
The goal of science

is to understand the ultimate nature of knowledge which reflects reality



Allegory of the Cave ~ Plato

- **prisoners in cave**
 - watch shadows on wall
 - create an understanding of the objects casting the shadows
- **when freed from cave**
 - view true objects rather than shadows
 - understand true form of reality



<http://yourealive.blogspot.com/2009/05/shadow-images.html>

Perspective

"Discovery consists in seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought."
Albert Szent-Gyorgi



Assignment

Explaining the world around you

You observe that all of the leaves on the *Ginkgo biloba* tree on campus turn yellow and fall from the tree at the same time.

In your discussion group:

Come up with explanations for why all of the Ginkgo biloba leaves fall from the tree at the same time using each of the divisions of philosophy. Indicate whether the explanation fits into the are of metaphysics, value theory, or epistemology.



Any Questions?

Email me at:
hoffmanj@arcadia.edu



<http://www.vipointbulletins.com/images/animated-question-mark.gif>