

# PHILOSOPHY

- **Philosophy defined**

1. Literally “love of wisdom”
2. Ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life (Merriam-Webster)

- **Quest to discover ultimate reality**

1. Reality—What is real? What exists? (Ontology)
2. Knowledge—What is true? How do we know? (Epistemology)
3. Ethics—What is good or ethical? What is beautiful/aesthetically pleasing? (Axiology)

- **Idealism**

1. Reality—Ideas, not physical things, constitute reality
2. Knowledge—Don't trust senses; be introspective to contact Ultimate Mind in universe which is source of all ideas to find truth
3. Ethics—Good is imitating the Ultimate Mind

- **Realism**

1. Reality—Physical things, not ideas, constitute reality
2. Knowledge—Senses, not insight, perceive nature and understand truth
3. Ethics—Good emulates laws of nature

- **Theistic realism (Neo-Thomism/Scholasticism)**

1. Reality—Spiritual and physical worlds
2. Knowledge—Logical reasoning and divine revelation to know truth
3. Ethics—Good is rational act, not impulsive act

- **Pragmatism**

1. Reality—Everyday experience
2. Knowledge—Based on available evidence; truth is what works (no absolutes)
3. Ethics—Good is determined by beneficial outcomes

- **Existentialism**

1. Reality—Natural realm (no God)
2. Knowledge—Based on experience—emphasis on freedom/choice; no absolute truth
3. Ethics—Good is determined by individual

- **Christian philosophy**

1. Reality—God created the heavens and earth
2. Knowledge—God reveals Himself through the Bible, the only absolutely reliable and infallible source of knowledge; knowledge also derived from reason and observation
3. Ethics—God reveals in the Bible what is in accordance with His will and what is not

- **Worldview**

1. Formal—truth claims that explain world & reality (like map to look at world)
  - *Christianity, Islam, Humanism, etc.*
2. Personal—application of this view to life (consciously or unconsciously)
  - *Formal & personal worldviews seldom match*

- **Understanding worldviews (AREA—assumption, reality, ethics, answers)**

1. All begin with religious or philosophical assumptions—even if they claim not to
  - *Atheism—closed system or universe, without supernatural*
  - *Christianity—God exists & reveals Himself through His creation & Word*
2. All have beliefs about reality—source of everything
  - *Naturalism—universe is all there ever was, is, or will be*
  - *Christianity—God is source of all absolute truth*
3. All have beliefs about ethics—how to live
  - *Behaviorism—evolved creatures living by stimulus/response*
  - *Christianity—created beings meant to follow God’s will by Spirit*
4. All have to answer fundamental questions
  - *Where did we come from?*
  - *Why are we here?*
  - *What can we do about evil & suffering?*
  - *What happens when we die?*

- **Implications of evolution & naturalistic philosophy (nature is all that is)<sup>1</sup>**

1. No gods
2. No life after death
3. No ultimate foundation for ethics
4. No ultimate meaning in life
5. No free will

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<sup>1</sup> “Life’s so fragile, a successful virus clinging to a speck of mud suspended in endless nothing...The horror is this: in the end, it is simply a picture of empty, meaningless, blackness. We are alone. There is nothing else.” (Alan Moore, *Watchmen, Volume 6* (New York: DC Comics, 1987), p. 28.)