

What is philosophy.
how would you
explain this to
someone who hasn't
studied it



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What is Philosophy Philosophy is a word of Greek origin which means ‘love of wisdom’ (Sinnott-Armstrong). The humans, with their deep fascination for aesthetic matters, have developed a passion for this branch of study right from the early stages of their evolution. Due to its abstract nature, philosophy has remained a hard topic for definition, and scholars interpreted it in different ways, giving rise to controversies. Philosophy can be defined as, “the pursuit of a meaningful life. Since a meaningful life is a life lived in touch with reality, philosophers develop many strategies for breaking through the delusions and self-deceptions that keep us human beings from seeing things as they really are.” (What is Philosophy?). Thus philosophy can be regarded as an enquiry into the facts relating to human life, knowledge and values. It helps humans to analyze the meaning of various concepts about life as also to understand the relationship between theories. Philosophy provides them relevant insight to evaluate the arguments and determine their validity or expose their fallacy. Philosophy is distinct from other branches of studies in humanities both because of its subject matter and methodology. Though arts and literature also deal with the fundamental problems of human life, they are not necessarily based on critical reasoning. On the other hand, science relies heavily on observations and experiments for critical reasoning of theories. Philosophy is, therefore, more comparable to mathematics and logic; but encompasses a wider range of generic topics like religion, morality, culture, tradition and values. “The topics that philosophy addresses fall into several distinct fields. Among those fundamental concerns are:

Metaphysics (the theory of reality)

Epistemology (the theory of knowledge)

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Ethics (the theory of moral values)

Politics (the theory of legal rights and government)

Aesthetics (the theory of nature of art)

The most widespread systems of ideas that offer philosophical guidance are religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.” (Thomas).

A major difference between philosophy and other branches of learning is that philosophy leans more towards the spiritual aspects of life, as can be evidenced in the words of Socrates, “ Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet after my manner, and convincing him, saying: O my friend, why do you, who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens, care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation, and so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all?.” Obviously, great teachers like Socrates have considered philosophy as the pursuit of wisdom to enlighten human minds. They accord significance to knowledge over material possessions, and believe that wisdom elevates man to a state of spiritual bliss. Philosophy eschews selfish aspirations and focuses on common good by taking a systematic world view of all concepts and how they fit together. Thus its aim can be stated as “ combining theories about various topics into a single coherent system of thought that is justified without appeal to authority.” (Sinnott-Armstrong).

Its abstract nature and the controversies surrounding it make philosophy a hard topic to understand for those who haven't studied it. Put in a simple manner, philosophy is not just the attempt to answer a question but also <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-philosophy-how-would-you-explain-this-to-someone-who-hasnt-studied-it/>

seeking to understand how other people have answered the question. It is the study of the nature of reality, what exists in the world and how it does. Philosophy also addresses questions like what we ought to do, and how we should do it; what is right and what makes it right. Finally, it is the study of the answers provided by others and determining through the application of logic whether these are acceptable. In doing so, it also seeks to find out whether it is for the common good of the world in general. From ancient to modern times the world has witnessed great philosophers whose teachings the human kind has followed in achieving various goals which gave them success, bringing several changes in the world for the common good of all. It is through the application of philosophy that the human beings have been able to progress as the most sophisticated form of life on earth.

Works Cited

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