

**UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA**

**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**SCHOOL OF LAW, LLB I-  
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# PHILOSOPHY

## AND FORMAL LOGIC PRESENTATION

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# TOPIC 1. DIALECTICAL METHODS

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**Definition:** Finding deeper truths by examining contradictions and opposing ideas.

**Socratic Method:** Using guided questions to challenge assumptions and reveal hidden beliefs.

**Hegelian Dialectic:** Understanding evolves through a cycle: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

**Modern Use:** Applied in teaching, critical thinking, psychology, and philosophy today.

**Key Idea:** truth is not fixed—it develops through conflict and resolution.



# SOCRATIC METHOD

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**Socrates:** Tell me, young one — what is courage?

**Student:** Courage is fighting in battle without fear.

**Socrates:** Interesting. But what about a reckless soldier who charges blindly into danger — is that courage too?

**Student:** Hmm... maybe not. Being reckless isn't the same as being courageous.

**Socrates:** So, courage must involve more than just facing danger without fear?

**Student:** Yes, I think courage means facing danger *wisely*.

**Socrates:** Good. And does one need to know *when* it is right to face danger?

**Student:** Yes, otherwise it would just be foolishness.

**Socrates:** Then, would you say courage is not simply fearlessness, but *knowing when and how to face fear properly*?

**Student:** Yes! That seems much closer to the truth.....





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**Socrates:** Excellent. You see, by questioning what we first believed, we have found a deeper understanding of courage.

## What just happened?



- Socrates **didn't** argue or lecture.
- He **guided** the student with **questions**.
- The student **discovered a richer idea** by *rethinking* their first belief.



# HEGELIAN DIALECTIC METHOD



## 1. Thesis:

Idea: "Freedom means doing whatever I want."

## 2. Antithesis:

Challenge: "If everyone does whatever they want, society falls into chaos. True freedom can't exist without order."

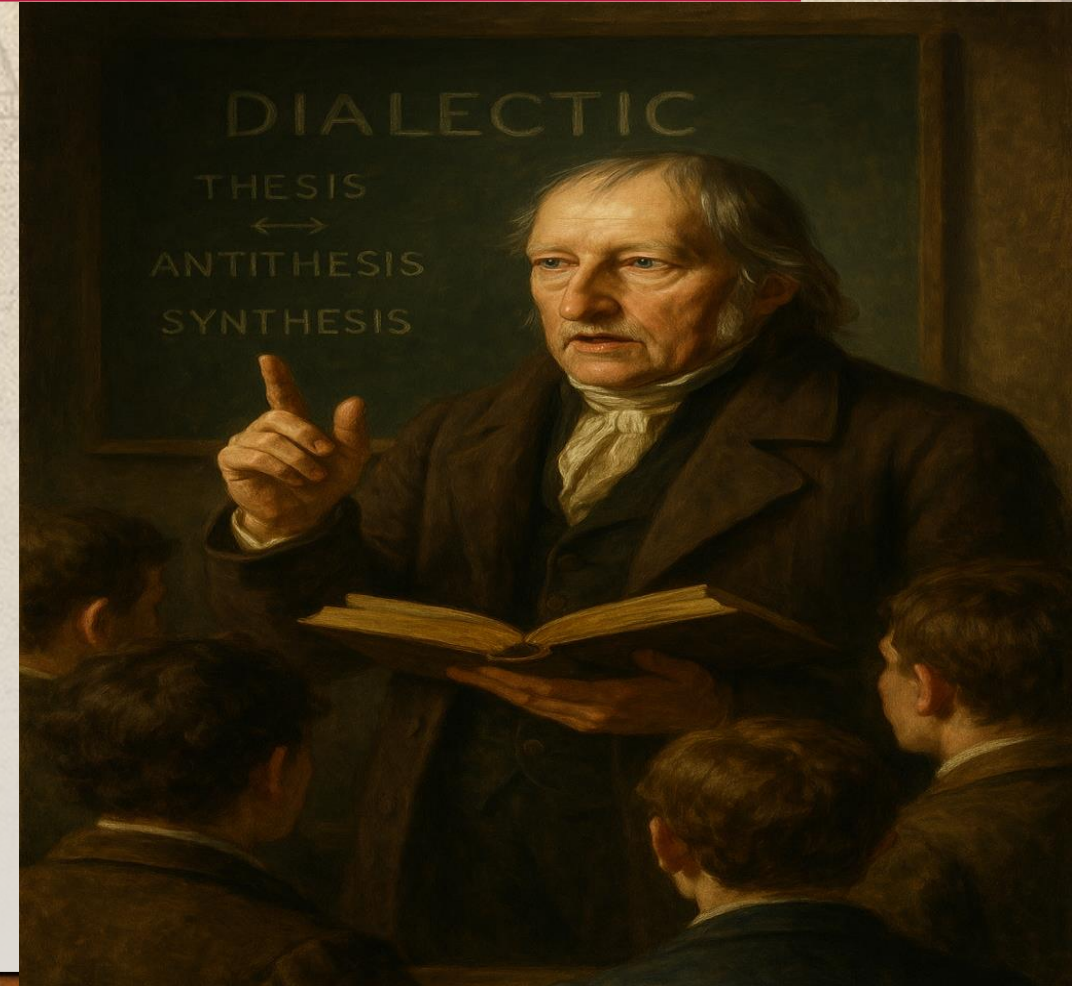
## 3. Synthesis:

New Idea: "Real freedom means living under laws I agree to — rules that protect freedom for everyone."



## Key Insight:

Instead of picking one side (total freedom or total order), Hegel's dialectic **moves forward** by *integrating* the tension into a **richer, higher idea**.



Hegel with his students



## TOPIC 2. INDUCTIVE VS. DEDUCTIVE LOGIC

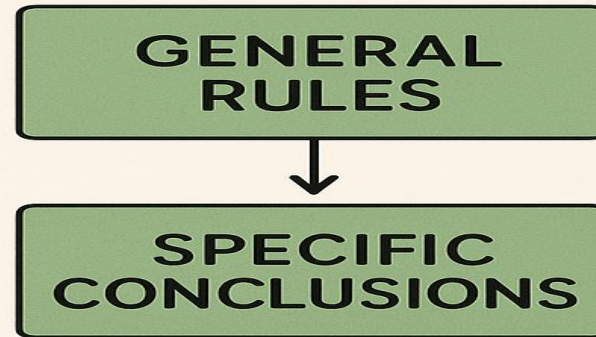


**Deductive Logic:** From general rules to specific conclusions; guaranteed if premises are true.

**Inductive Logic:** From specific observations to general conclusions; probabilistic, not certain.

**Importance:** law and other discipline uses both to build and test theories.

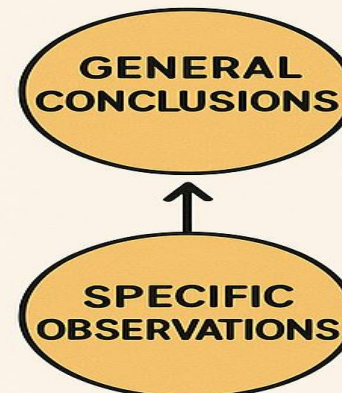
### DEDUCTIVE LOGIC



From general rules to specific conclusions; guaranteed if premises are true.

“All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal.”

### INDUCTIVE LOGIC



From specific observations to general conclusions; probabilistic, not certain

Observing the sunrise daily → Expecting it will rise tomorrow



CONT'D

Example of inductive and deductive reasoning in law

## Deductive and Inductive Reasoning in Law

### DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Starts with a general rule or law and applies it to a specific case.



#### EXAMPLE:

All contracts signed by minors are void.  
John is a minor.  
Therefore, John's contract void.

### INDUCTIVE REASONING

Starts with specific cases or evidence to form a general rule or conclusion.



#### EXAMPLE:

In past cases, courts ruled that texting while driving is negligence.  
Based on this pattern, texting while driving can generally be considered negligent.



# TOPIC3. ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS

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**Ethical Dilemmas:** These occur when someone faces two or more conflicting moral choices, where choosing one right action means violating another important principle.

- Utilitarianism:** This theory suggests we should act in ways that bring the greatest happiness to the most people, even if it means some individuals may be worse off.

- Deontology (Kantian Ethics):** According to this view, we must always act out of duty and respect for moral rules, treating people as ends in themselves, not as means to an end.



Mentorship with a Master, Kant



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- **Virtue Ethics:** This approach focuses on developing good character traits—like honesty, courage, and wisdom—so that we naturally make ethical decisions in daily life.
- **Modern Issues:** Ethical thinking today is tested by new challenges like artificial intelligence, unequal access to healthcare, and global human rights concerns.



# TOPIC 4. EPISTEMOLOGY

**Definition:** The study of knowledge — its nature, sources, and limits.

**Rationalism:** Knowledge comes from reason (e.g., Descartes).



**Descartes' Idea:** The image references Descartes' motto, "I think, therefore I am," which is a core tenet of rationalism—reason proves existence.

**Erasing the Head:** An eraser removes Descartes' head, symbolizing the loss of the source of thought.

**Rationalism Questioned:** It humorously suggests that if the mind (or head) is removed, then the foundation of rational thought is gone.

**Core Critique:** The image challenges the idea that reason alone defines existence, hinting that physical presence matters too.  
way.



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**Empiricism:** Knowledge comes from sensory experience (e.g., Locke, Hume).

**Problem of Induction:** We cannot absolutely guarantee future events based on experience.

**Why It Matters:** Helps science, critical thinking, and evaluating truth claims.



# TOPIC5. PHILOSOPHY OF ESSENCE, EXISTENCE, AND RELATIONS

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**Essence:** The defining characteristics that make something what it is—its fundamental nature.

**Existence:** In existentialist thought (e.g., **Jean-Paul Sartre**), being comes first; we then create our own identity through our choices.

**Relational Ontology:** Identity isn't fixed—it emerges from our interactions and relationships with others rather than from isolated, intrinsic properties.

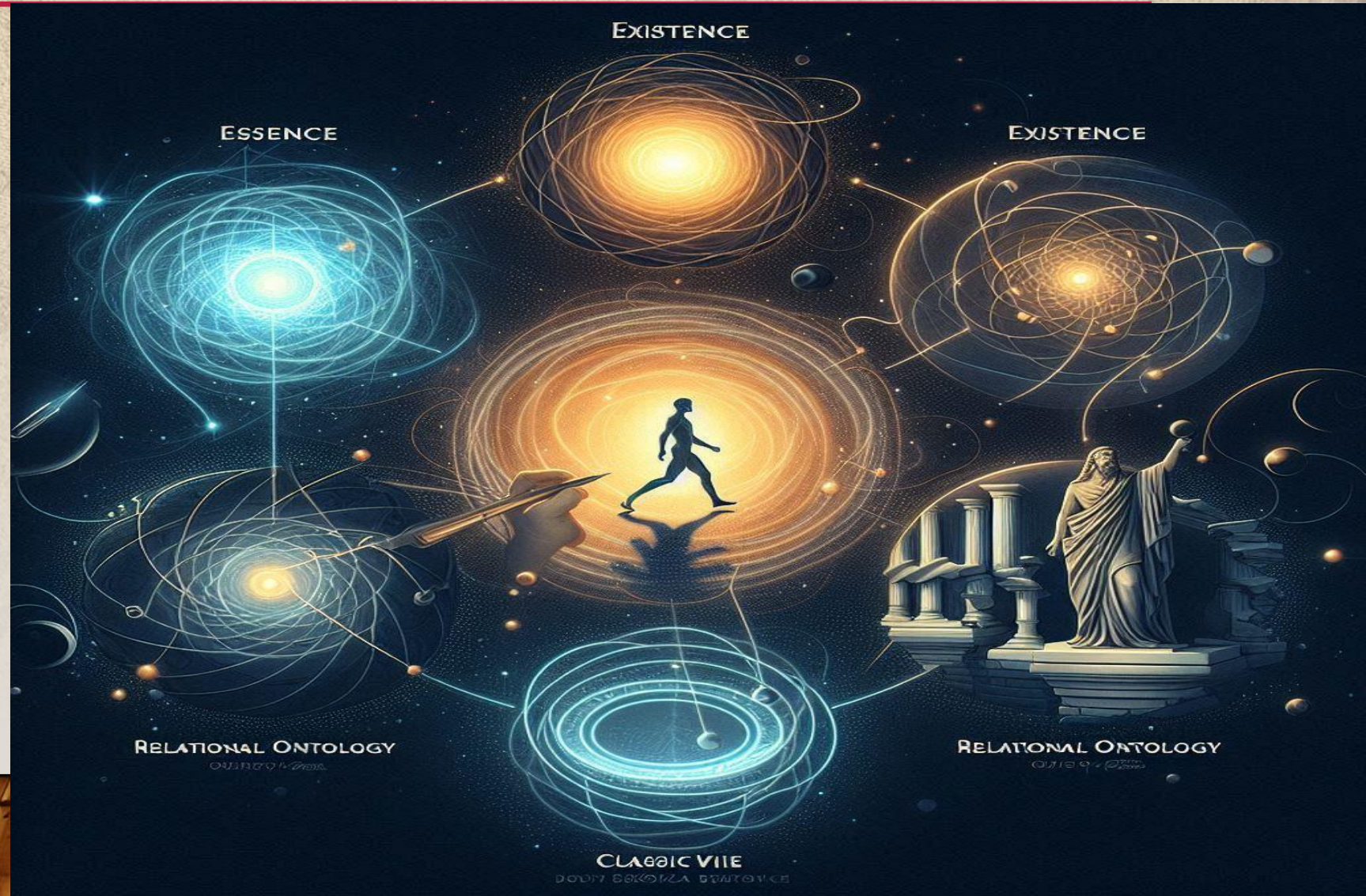
**Classical View:** Thinkers like Aristotle and **Thomas Aquinas** believed in stable, unchanging essences that determine an entity's nature.

**Modern View:** Emphasizes freedom, choice, and personal responsibility in shaping who we become, rather than following a predetermined essence.



# CONT'D

The image uses layered symbols to illustrate the philosophical evolution—from the idea of a fixed essence to the dynamic process of self-creation through existence and relationships, bridging classical and modern thought. Each element invites the viewer to reflect on how we are both defined by intrinsic qualities and by the choices and connections we make in life.





# TOPIC 6. ORIGINS OF LAW IN PHILOSOPHY

The debate over the roots of law asks whether legal systems arise from immutable moral principles or are simply human constructs shaped by power. This discussion influences how we view justice, human rights, and democracy.



Jeremy Bentham while arguing on Legal positivism



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## Natural Law Theory

Natural law theory holds that law derives from universal moral principles intrinsic to nature. Philosophers like **Aristotle** and **Thomas Aquinas** argued that laws gain legitimacy only when they reflect this higher moral order. In this view, the rightness of laws is measured by their alignment with the immutable truths inherent in the cosmos. A deviation from these truths may render a legal system unjust or flawed.



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## Legal Positivism

Legal positivism posits that law is a human-made construct, valid solely because it is created by recognized authorities rather than by any inherent moral truth. Thinkers such as **Jeremy Bentham** and **H.L.A. Hart** emphasize that the legitimacy of a law is determined by its formal enactment and adherence to established procedures. For positivists, law remains separate from morality; its authority stems from social acceptance and institutional decree rather than universal ethics



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## Why It Matters●

The debate over the origins of law is not merely academic; it fundamentally influences contemporary discussions on justice, human rights, and democracy. How we perceive the source of legal authority informs debates on the legitimacy of laws and the fairness of social contracts. This, in turn, affects policy-making, judicial reasoning, and citizens' trust in legal institutions.





**THANK YOU!**  
**FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.**

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