

This is no accident. All of these other fields — the natural sciences (like physics, chemistry, and biology), the social and human sciences (like economics, sociology, psychology, and political science), and others — were once part of philosophy. Isaac Newton was a philosopher; so was Charles Darwin; so was Adam Smith.

This is all, we current philosophers think, excellent. But it doesn't mean that we can just do science and forget about philosophy. There remain questions — fundamental, basic questions — which we have not been able to devise any science capable of answering. Those questions are the ones philosophers try to answer.

These great philosophers went on to form systematic new ways of answering the questions in which they were interested. These 'new ways of answering questions' are just what we now call 'sciences.'

Philosophy, by contrast, is the attempt to form true beliefs about the world on the basis of reason.

Can you think of any other academic departments at Notre Dame that
might describe themselves in this way?

Yes, quite a few. Physics, economics, psychology, biology, sociology,
political science (maybe) the list goes on and on.

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