



Which of these questions are we going to talk about in this course?

This course is an introduction to metaphysics and epistemology. Both of these words also derive from ancient Greek words.

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.'

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The sciences have particular methods which are designed to deliver

answer to some limited range of questions. Philosophy is the

answer any question whatever about reality. As we will see, philosophy

so understood is not really an alternative to scientific investigation of

incorporates rather than opposes the results of the sciences.

the world: it is an attempt to understand the nature of reality which



completely unrestricted discipline: it is the attempt to use reason to

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