

# PHILOSOPHY 101

FALL 2016

[PHIL101.COLINMCLEAR.NET](http://PHIL101.COLINMCLEAR.NET)

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# CLASS INFO

**COURSE WEBSITE: [HTTP://PHIL101.COLINMCLEAR.NET](http://phil101.colinmclear.net)**

- syllabus
- course assignments
- readings (posted online)
- announcements

# CLICKERS

- Always bring to class
- Available at the bookstore

# WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

# THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

- Originates with ancient Greek study of nature
- Philosophy means "love of wisdom" (φιλοσοφία, "*philosophia*")

*The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term*

—Wilfrid Sellars

# PHILOSOPHY AS ARGUMENT



# WHAT IS AN ARGUMENT?

GIPHY

## Argument:

A statement or sequence of statements (truth claims called 'premises') which logically support the truth of some further statement (a truth claim called a 'conclusion').

## PARTS OF AN ARGUMENT

- Evidence ("premises")
- What follows from the premises ("conclusion")

Both premises and conclusion must consist of statements or propositions—i.e. sentences that can be true or false

- Declarative statements: "This class is boring"
- Hypothetical statements: "If the class is boring it is probably easy"
- False statements: "PHIL 101 is an easy A"
- Questions: "What is the meaning of life?"
- Commands: "Run away!"

## KINDS OF ARGUMENT

### Deductive Argument:

the conclusion follows from the premises *necessarily*

### Inductive Argument:

the conclusion is made *probable* by the premises

### Abductive Argument:

the conclusion is the *best explanation* of the truth of the premises

## A SIMPLE DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENT

1. All humans are mortal
2. John is human
3.  $\therefore$  John is mortal

- Assessing the argument
  - Assuming that the premises are true, could the conclusion be false?
  - Does the conclusion follow from the premises?

## STRUCTURE

1. All humans are mortal
2. John is human
3.  $\therefore$  John is mortal

1. All A are B
2. x is A
3.  $\therefore$  x is B

## VALIDITY & SOUNDNESS

### Valid Argument:

An argument whose structure *guarantees* that, if the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true

### Sound Argument:

A valid argument whose premises are *true*

## ARGUMENT EXTRACTION

1. Is there an argument being made?
2. What's the conclusion of the argument?
3. What support does the conclusion have?
4. What material is essential to the argument and what is extraneous?
5. Is the argument valid?
6. Is the argument sound?



*There is no reason to think that there are any absolute moral truths. We can see this when we consider different cultural outlooks concerning what is morally required. For example, indigenous Inuit culture considered infanticide to be morally permissible in some situations. But modern American culture clearly thinks infanticide is always morally wrong. So what's morally right or wrong is just a matter of opinion, which can vary from culture to culture. (James Rachels, The Elements of Moral Theory)*

## SAMPLE EXTRACTION

1. If moral truths were absolute then they would not vary from culture to culture
2. What's considered morally right or wrong does vary from culture to culture
3.  $\therefore$  There are no absolute moral truths

