[Template:Other uses](/wiki/Template:Other_uses" \o "Template:Other uses) [Template:Pp-vandalism](/wiki/Template:Pp-vandalism) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Very long](/wiki/Template:Very_long)

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**Philosophy** (from [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language) [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), *philosophia*, literally "love of wisdom"[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)) is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) The term was probably coined by [Pythagoras](/wiki/Pythagoras) (c. 570 – c. 495 BC). Philosophical methods include questioning, [critical discussion](/wiki/Socratic_method), [rational argument](/wiki/Dialectic) and systematic presentation.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8) Classic philosophical questions include: Is it possible to [know anything](/wiki/Pyrrhonism) and to prove it?[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) What is [most real](/wiki/Absolute_(philosophy))? However, philosophers might also pose more practical and concrete questions such as: Is there a [best way to live](/wiki/Taoism)? Is it better to be [just or unjust](/wiki/Justice) (if you can get away with it)?[[12]](#cite_note-12) Do humans have [free will](/wiki/Free_will)?[[13]](#cite_note-13) Historically, "philosophy" encompassed any body of knowledge.[[14]](#cite_note-14) From the time of Ancient Greek philosopher [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle) to the 19th century, "[natural philosophy](/wiki/Natural_philosophy)" encompassed [astronomy](/wiki/Astronomy), [medicine](/wiki/Medicine) and [physics](/wiki/Physics).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) For example, [Newton's](/wiki/Issac_Newton) 1687 [*Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*](/wiki/Philosophiæ_Naturalis_Principia_Mathematica) later became classified as a book of physics. In the 19th century, the growth of modern [research universities](/wiki/University) led academic philosophy and other disciplines to [professionalize](/wiki/Contemporary_philosophy) and specialize.[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) In the modern era, some investigations that were traditionally part of philosophy became separate academic disciplines, including [psychology](/wiki/Psychology), [sociology](/wiki/Sociology), [linguistics](/wiki/Linguistics) and [economics](/wiki/Economics).

Other investigations closely related to art, science, politics, or other pursuits remained part of philosophy. For example, is [beauty](/wiki/Beauty) objective or subjective?[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18) Are there many [scientific methods](/wiki/Scientific_method) or just one?[[19]](#cite_note-19) Is political [utopia](/wiki/Utopia) a hopeful dream or hopeless fantasy?[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22) Major sub-fields of academic philosophy include [metaphysics](/wiki/Metaphysics) ("concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being"),[[23]](#cite_note-23) [epistemology](/wiki/Epistemology) (about the "nature and grounds of knowledge [and]...its limits and validity" [[24]](#cite_note-24)), [ethics](/wiki/Ethics), [aesthetics](/wiki/Aesthetics), [political philosophy](/wiki/Political_philosophy), [logic](/wiki/Logic), [philosophy of science](/wiki/Philosophy_of_science) and the [history of Western philosophy](/wiki/History_of_Western_philosophy).

Since the 20th century professional [philosophers](/wiki/Philosopher) contribute to society primarily as [professors](/wiki/Professor), researchers and writers. However, many of those who study philosophy in undergraduate or graduate programs contribute in the fields of law, journalism, politics, religion, science, business and various art and entertainment activities.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[Template:Toclimit](/wiki/Template:Toclimit)

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## Introduction[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

### Philosophy and culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

In one sense, philosophy is synonymous with wisdom or learning. In that sense, all cultures have a philosophical tradition.

Western philosophy

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Western philosophy](/wiki/Western_philosophy) dates to the Greek philosophers, who were active in [Ancient Greece](/wiki/Ancient_Greece) beginning in the 6th century BC. [Pythagoras](/wiki/Pythagoras) distinguished himself from other "wise ones" by calling himself a mere *lover of wisdom*, suggesting that he was not wise.[[26]](#cite_note-26) [Socrates](/wiki/Socrates) used this title and insisted that he possessed no *wisdom* but was a *pursuer of* wisdom.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Socrates' student [Plato](/wiki/Plato) is often credited as the founder of Western philosophy. The philosopher [Alfred North Whitehead](/wiki/Alfred_North_Whitehead) said of Plato: "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them."[[28]](#cite_note-28)

Eastern philosophy

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [right|thumb|150px|The Iranian prophet](/wiki/File:Zarathushtra.jpg) [Zarathustra](/wiki/Zarathustra) is credited as the founder of [Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Zoroastrianism). Eastern philosophy is a term that encompasses the many philosophical currents originating outside Europe, including [China](/wiki/China), [India](/wiki/India), [Japan](/wiki/Japan), [Persia](/wiki/Persian_Empire) and other regions. They have their own timelines, regions and philosophers. Major traditions include:

* [African philosophy](/wiki/African_philosophy) and [Ethiopian philosophy](/wiki/Ethiopian_philosophy)
* [Ancient Egyptian philosophy](/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_philosophy) and [Babylonian literature](/wiki/Babylonian_literature#Philosophy)
* [Indian philosophy](/wiki/Indian_philosophy), [Jain philosophy](/wiki/Jain_philosophy) and [Hindu philosophy](/wiki/Hindu_philosophy)
* [Iranian philosophy](/wiki/Iranian_philosophy)
* East Asian [Neo-Confucianism](/wiki/Neo-Confucianism) and [Buddhist philosophy#Chinese Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhist_philosophy#Chinese_Buddhism), [Japanese philosophy](/wiki/Japanese_philosophy) and [Korean philosophy](/wiki/Korean_philosophy)
* Persian [Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Zoroastrianism)
* Middle Eastern [Islamic philosophy](/wiki/Islamic_philosophy)
* European [Jewish philosophy](/wiki/Jewish_philosophy) and [Christian philosophy](/wiki/Christian_philosophy)
* Mesoamerican [Aztec philosophy](/wiki/Aztec_philosophy)

### Philosophy and knowledge[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Traditionally, the term "philosophy" referred to any body of knowledge.[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[29]](#cite_note-29) In this sense, philosophy is closely related to religion, mathematics, natural science, education and politics. Newton's 1687 "[Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy](/wiki/Philosophiæ_Naturalis_Principia_Mathematica)" is classified in the 2000s as a book of physics; he used the term "[natural philosophy](/wiki/Natural_philosophy)" because it used to encompass disciplines that later became associated with sciences such as [astronomy](/wiki/Astronomy), [medicine](/wiki/Medicine) and [physics](/wiki/Physics).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Philosophy was traditionally divided into three major branches:

* [Natural philosophy](/wiki/Science) ("*physics")* was the study of the physical world (*physis,* lit: nature);
* [Moral philosophy](/wiki/Ethics) ("*ethics"*) was the study of goodness, right and wrong, beauty, justice and virtue (*ethos,* lit: custom);
* [Metaphysical philosophy](/wiki/Metaphysics) *("logos")* was the study of [existence](/wiki/Existence), causation, [God](/wiki/God), [logic](/wiki/Logic), [forms](/wiki/Universal_(metaphysics)) and other abstract objects ("*meta-physika"* lit: "what comes after physics").[[30]](#cite_note-30)This division is not obsolete but has changed. Natural philosophy has split into the various natural sciences, especially astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology and cosmology. Moral philosophy has birthed the social sciences, but still includes value theory (including aesthetics, ethics, political philosophy, etc.). Metaphysical philosophy has birthed formal sciences such as logic, mathematics and philosophy of science, but still includes epistemology, cosmology and others.

### Philosophical progress[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

Many philosophical debates that began in ancient times are still debated today. [Colin McGinn](/wiki/Colin_McGinn) and others claim that no [philosophical progress](/wiki/Philosophical_progress) has occurred during that interval.[[31]](#cite_note-31) [Chalmers](/wiki/David_Chalmers) and others, by contrast, see progress in philosophy similar to that in science,[[32]](#cite_note-32) while Talbot Brewer argued that "progress" is the wrong standard by which to judge philosophical activity.[[33]](#cite_note-33)

## Philosophical categories[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

Philosopher questions can be grouped into categories. These groupings allow philosophers to focus on a set of similar topics and interact with other thinkers who are interested in the same questions. The groupings also make philosophy easier for students to approach. Students can learn the basic principles involved in one aspect of the field without being overwhelmed with the entire set of philosophical theories.

Various sources present different categorical schemes. The categories adopted in this article aim for breadth and simplicity.

These five major branches can be separated into sub-branches and each sub-branch contains many specific fields of study.[[34]](#cite_note-34)\* [Metaphysics](/wiki/Metaphysics) and [epistemology](/wiki/Epistemology)

* [Value theory](/wiki/Value_theory)
* Science, [logic](/wiki/Logic) and mathematics
* History of Western philosophy[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)
* Philosophical traditions

These divisions are neither exhaustive, nor mutually exclusive. (A philosopher might specialize in [Kantian](/wiki/Kant) epistemology, or [Platonic](/wiki/Plato) aesthetics, or modern political philosophy.) Furthermore, these philosophical inquiries sometimes overlap with each other and with other inquiries such as science, religion or mathematics.[[35]](#cite_note-35)

### Metaphysics and epistemology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

#### Metaphysics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Metaphysics is the study of the most general features of [reality](/wiki/Reality), such as [existence](/wiki/Existence), [time](/wiki/Time), [objects](/wiki/Object_(philosophy)) and their [properties](/wiki/Property_(philosophy)), wholes and their parts, events, processes and [causation](/wiki/Causality) and the relationship between [mind](/wiki/Mind) and [body](/wiki/Human_body). Metaphysics includes [cosmology](/wiki/Cosmology), the study of the [world](/wiki/World) in its entirety and [ontology](/wiki/Ontology), the study of [being](/wiki/Being).

#### Epistemology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main articleEpistemology](/wiki/Template:Main_article) is the study of knowledge (Greek episteme).[[36]](#cite_note-36) Epistemologists study the putative sources of knowledge, including intuition, a priori reason, memory, perceptual knowledge, self-knowledge and testimony. They also ask: What is [truth](/wiki/Truth)? Is knowledge justified true belief? Are any beliefs [justified](/wiki/Theory_of_justification)? Putative knowledge includes propositional knowledge (knowledge that something is the case), know-how (knowledge of how to do something) and acquaintance (familiarity with someone or something). Epistemologists examine these and ask whether knowledge is really possible.

Among the numerous topics within metaphysics and epistemology, broadly construed are:

* [Philosophy of language](/wiki/Philosophy_of_language) explores the nature, the origins and the use of language.
* [Philosophy of mind](/wiki/Philosophy_of_mind) explores the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body. It is typified by disputes between [dualism](/wiki/Dualism_(philosophy_of_mind)) and [materialism](/wiki/Materialism). In recent years this branch has become related to [cognitive science](/wiki/Cognitive_science).
* [Philosophy of religion](/wiki/Philosophy_of_religion) explores questions that arise in connection with religions, including the soul, the afterlife, God, religious experience, analysis of religious vocabulary and texts and the relationship of [religion](/wiki/Religion) and [science](/wiki/Science).
* [Philosophy of human nature](/wiki/Human_nature) analyzes the unique characteristics of human beings, such as rationality, politics and culture.
* [Metaphilosophy](/wiki/Metaphilosophy) explores the aims of philosophy, its boundaries and its methods.

### Value theory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Value theory (or [axiology](/wiki/Axiology)) is the major branch of philosophy that addresses topics such as goodness, beauty and justice. Value theory includes ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy, feminist philosophy, philosophy of law and more.

#### Ethics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Ethics, or "moral philosophy", studies and considers what is good and bad [conduct](/wiki/Action_(philosophy)), right and [wrong](/wiki/Wrong) [values](/wiki/Values_(philosophy)), and [good and evil](/wiki/Good_and_evil). Its primary investigations include how to live a good life and identifying standards of [morality](/wiki/Morality). It also includes [meta-investigations](/wiki/Meta-analysis) about whether a best way to live or related standards exists. The main branches of ethics are [normative ethics](/wiki/Normative_ethics), [meta-ethics](/wiki/Meta-ethics) and [applied ethics](/wiki/Applied_ethics).

#### Aesthetics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Aesthetics is the "critical reflection on art, culture and [nature](/wiki/Nature)."[[37]](#cite_note-37)[[38]](#cite_note-38) It addresses the nature of [art](/wiki/Art), [beauty](/wiki/Beauty) and [taste](/wiki/Taste_(sociology)), enjoyment, emotional values, perception and with the creation and appreciation of beauty.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) It is more precisely defined as the study of [sensory](/wiki/Senses) or sensori-emotional values, sometimes called [judgments](/wiki/Judgment) of [sentiment](/wiki/Feeling) and taste.[[41]](#cite_note-41) It divides into art theory, [literary theory](/wiki/Literary_theory), [film theory](/wiki/Film_theory) and [music theory](/wiki/Music_theory). An example from art theory is to discern the set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist or artistic movement such as the [Cubist](/wiki/Cubist) aesthetic.[[42]](#cite_note-42) The [philosophy of film](/wiki/Philosophy_of_film) analyzes films and filmmakers for their philosophical content and explores film (images, cinema, etc.) as a medium for philosophical reflection and expression.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

#### Political philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [left|thumb|](/wiki/File:Thomas_Hobbes_(portrait).jpg)[Thomas Hobbes](/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes)

Political philosophy is the study of [government](/wiki/Government) and the relationship of individuals (or families and clans) to communities including the [state](/wiki/State_(polity)). It includes questions about justice, law, property and the rights and obligations of the citizen. Politics and ethics are traditionally linked subjects, as both discuss the question of what how people should live together.

Other branches of value theory:

There are a variety of branches of value theory.

* [Philosophy of law](/wiki/Philosophy_of_law) (often called [jurisprudence](/wiki/Jurisprudence)) explores the varying theories explaining the nature and interpretation of laws.
* [Philosophy of education](/wiki/Philosophy_of_education) analyzes the definition and content of education, as well as the goals and challenges of educators.
* [Feminist philosophy](/wiki/Feminist_philosophy) explores questions surrounding gender, sexuality and the body including the nature of [feminism](/wiki/Feminism) itself as a social and philosophical movement.
* [Philosophy of sport](/wiki/Philosophy_of_sport) analyzes sports, games and other forms of play as sociological and uniquely human activities.

### Logic, science and mathematics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

Many academic disciplines generated philosophical inquiry. The relationship between "X" and the "philosophy of X" is debated. [Richard Feynman](/wiki/Richard_Feynman) argued that the philosophy of a topic is irrelevant to its primary study, saying that "[philosophy of science](/wiki/Philosophy_of_science) is as useful to scientists as [ornithology](/wiki/Ornithology) is to birds." [Curtis White](/wiki/Curtis_White), by contrast, argued that philosophical tools are essential to humanities, sciences and social sciences.[[43]](#cite_note-43) Its topics are numbers, symbols and the formal methods of reasoning as employed in the social and natural sciences.

#### Logic[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main articleLogic](/wiki/Template:Main_article) is the study of reasoning and argument. An argument is "*a* *connected series of statements intended to establish a proposition*." The connected series of statements are "[premises](/wiki/Premise)" and the proposition is the conclusion. For example:

1. All humans are mortal. (premise)
2. Socrates is a human. (premise)
3. Therefore, Socrates is mortal. (conclusion)

Because sound reasoning is an essential element of all sciences,[[44]](#cite_note-44) social sciences and humanities disciplines, logic became a [formal science](/wiki/Formal_science). Sub-fields include [mathematical logic](/wiki/Mathematical_logic), [philosophical logic](/wiki/Philosophical_logic), [Modal logic](/wiki/Modal_logic), [computational logic](/wiki/Computational_logic) and [non-classical logics](/wiki/Non-classical_logic).

#### Philosophy of science[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) This branch explores the foundations, methods, history, implications and purpose of science. Many of its sub-divisions correspond to a specific branch of science. For example, [philosophy of biology](/wiki/Philosophy_of_biology) deals specifically with the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical issues in the biomedical and life sciences. The [philosophy of mathematics](/wiki/Philosophy_of_mathematics) studies the philosophical assumptions, foundations and implications of mathematics.

### History of philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Some philosophers specialize in one or more historical periods. The history of philosophy (study of a specific period, individual or school) is related to but not the same as the [philosophy of history](/wiki/Philosophy_of_history) (the theoretical aspect of history, which deals with questions such as the nature of historical evidence and the possibility of objectivity).

Hegel's [*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*](/wiki/Lectures_on_the_Philosophy_of_History) influenced many philosophers to interpret truth in light of history, a view called [historicism](/wiki/Historicism).

### Philosophical schools[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

Some philosophers specialize in one or more of the major philosophical schools, such as [Continental philosophy](/wiki/Continental_philosophy), [Analytical philosophy](/wiki/Analytical_philosophy), [Thomism](/wiki/Thomism), [Asian philosophy](/wiki/Asian_philosophy) or [African philosophy](/wiki/African_philosophy).

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect)

[Western philosophy](/wiki/Western_philosophy) has a long history dating back to the time of Socrates. It is conventionally divided into three large eras: ancient, medieval, and modern. Philosophy in the 20th century to present is considered "Contemporary philosophy". The history of philosophy is a rich field of study. This article does not aim for comprehensive detail but for a brief introduction to each period, with relevant links to other articles. The three historical periods are divided roughly as follows:

* Ancient (from 585 BC-400 AD)
* Medieval (400 - 1500)
* Modern (1500 - 1900)

## Ancient[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Sanzio_01_Plato_Aristotle.jpg)[Plato](/wiki/Plato) (*left*) and [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle) (*right*): detail from [*The School of Athens*](/wiki/The_School_of_Athens) by [Raffaello Sanzio](/wiki/Raffaello_Sanzio), 1509

[The pre-Socratic period](/wiki/Pre-Socratic_philosophy)

[right|thumb|200x200px|](/wiki/File:Turkey_ancient_region_map_ionia.JPG)[Ionia](/wiki/Ionia), source of early Greek philosophy, in western [Asia Minor](/wiki/Asia_Minor) Ancient philosophers first articulated questions about the "arche" (the cause or first principle) of the [universe](/wiki/Universe). Western Philosophy is generally said to begin in the Greek cities of western Asia Minor (Ionia) with [Thales](/wiki/Thales) of [Miletus](/wiki/Miletus), who was active around 585 B.C. and left us the opaque dictum, "all is water." His most noted students were respectively [Anaximander](/wiki/Anaximander) (all is [apeiron](/wiki/Apeiron_(cosmology)) (roughly, *the unlimited*)) and [Anaximenes of Miletus](/wiki/Anaximenes_of_Miletus) ("all is air"). [Pythagoras](/wiki/Pythagoras), from the island of Samos off the coast of Ionia, later lived at Croton in southern Italy (Magna Graecia). [Pythagoreans](/wiki/Pythagoreanism) hold that "all is number," giving *formal* accounts in contrast to the previous *material* of the Ionians. They also believe in [metempsychosis](/wiki/Metempsychosis), the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation.

Socrates

[thumb|241x241px|Bust of Socrates](/wiki/File:Socrates_Pio-Clementino_Inv314.jpg) The key figure in Greek philosophy is [Socrates](/wiki/Socrates). Socrates studied under several Sophists but transformed Greek philosophy into a unified and continuous project that is still pursued today is. It is said that following a visit to the [Oracle of Delphi](/wiki/Oracle_of_Delphi) he spent much of his life questioning anyone in Athens who would engage him, in order to disprove the oracular prophecy that there would be no man wiser than Socrates. Socrates used a critical approach called the "[elenchus](/wiki/Socratic_method)" or Socratic method to examine people's views. He aimed to study human things: the good life, justice, beauty, and virtue. Although Socrates wrote nothing himself, some of his many disciples wrote down his conversations. He was tried for corrupting the youth and impiety by the Greek democracy. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. Although his friends offered to help him escape from prison, he chose to remain in Athens and abide by his principles. His execution consisting in drinking the poison hemlock and he died in 399 B.C.

[**Plato**](/wiki/Plato)

Socrates' most important student was Plato. Plato founded the [Academy](/wiki/Academy) of Athens and wrote a number of dialogues, which applied the [Socratic method](/wiki/Socratic_method) of inquiry to examine philosophical problems. Some central ideas of Plato's dialogues are the immortality of the soul, the benefits of being just, that evil is ignorance, and the [Theory of Forms](/wiki/The_Forms). Forms are universal properties constitute true reality and contrast with the changeable material things he called "becoming".

*Aristotle*

Plato's most outstanding student was [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle). Aristotle was perhaps the first truly systematic philosopher and scientist. He wrote books on physics, biology, zoology, metaphysics, aesthetics, poetry, theater, music, rhetoric, politics and logic. [Aristotelian logic](/wiki/Aristotelian_logic) was the first type of [logic](/wiki/Logic) to attempt to categorize every valid [syllogism](/wiki/Syllogism). Aristotle tutored Alexander the Great. Aristotelian philosophy exercised considerable influence on almost all western philosophers, including Greek, Roman, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic thinkers.

The [Neoplatonic](/wiki/Neoplatonic) and [Christian](/wiki/Christian) philosophers of [Late Antiquity](/wiki/Late_Antiquity).

## Medieval[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Early and Late Medieval Philosophy

Medieval philosophy is the philosophy of [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe) and the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East) during the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages), roughly extending from the Christianization of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire) until the Renaissance.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Medieval philosophy is defined partly by the rediscovery and further development of classical [Greek](/wiki/Greek_philosophy) and [Hellenistic philosophy](/wiki/Hellenistic_philosophy), and partly by the need to address theological problems and to integrate the then widespread sacred doctrines of [Abrahamic religion](/wiki/Abrahamic_religion) ([Islam](/wiki/Islam), [Judaism](/wiki/Judaism), and [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity)) with [secular](/wiki/Secularism) learning. Early medieval philosophy was influenced by the likes of [Stoicism](/wiki/Stoicism), [neo-Platonism](/wiki/Neo-Platonism), but, above all, the philosophy of [Plato](/wiki/Plato) himself.

Some problems discussed throughout this period are the relation of [faith](/wiki/Faith) to [reason](/wiki/Reason), the existence and unity of [God](/wiki/God), the object of [theology](/wiki/Theology) and [metaphysics](/wiki/Metaphysics), the problems of knowledge, of universals, and of individuation. The prominent figure of this period was St. Augustine who adopted Plato's thought and Christianized it in the 4th century and whose influence dominated medieval philosophy perhaps up to end of the era but was checked with the arrival of Aristotle's texts. Augustinianism was the preferred starting point for most philosophers (including the great [St. Anselm of Canterbury](/wiki/St._Anselm_of_Canterbury)) up until the 13th century.

[left|thumb|300x300px|St.](/wiki/File:St-thomas-aquinas.jpg) [Thomas Aquinas](/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas) Thomas Aquinas, the father of [Thomism](/wiki/Thomism), was immensely influential in Catholic Europe; he placed a great emphasis on reason and argumentation, and was one of the first to use the new translation of Aristotle's metaphysical and epistemological writing.

Philosophers from the Middle Ages include the Christian philosophers [Augustine of Hippo](/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo), [Boethius](/wiki/Boethius), [Anselm](/wiki/Anselm_of_Canterbury), [Gilbert of Poitiers](/wiki/Gilbert_of_Poitiers), [Peter Abelard](/wiki/Peter_Abelard), [Roger Bacon](/wiki/Roger_Bacon), [Bonaventure](/wiki/Bonaventure), [Thomas Aquinas](/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas), [Duns Scotus](/wiki/Duns_Scotus), [William of Ockham](/wiki/William_of_Ockham) and [Jean Buridan](/wiki/Jean_Buridan); the Jewish philosophers [Maimonides](/wiki/Maimonides) and [Gersonides](/wiki/Gersonides); and the [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) philosophers [Alkindus](/wiki/Al-Kindi), [Alfarabi](/wiki/Al-Farabi), [Alhazen](/wiki/Ibn_al-Haytham), [Avicenna](/wiki/Avicenna), [Algazel](/wiki/Al-Ghazali), [Avempace](/wiki/Ibn_Bajjah), [Abubacer](/wiki/Ibn_Tufail), [Ibn Khaldūn](/wiki/Ibn_Khaldūn), and [Averroes](/wiki/Averroes). The medieval tradition of [Scholasticism](/wiki/Scholasticism) continued to flourish as late as the 17th century, in figures such as [Francisco Suarez](/wiki/Francisco_Suarez) and [John of St. Thomas](/wiki/John_of_St._Thomas).

Late Medieval and Renaissance

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Giordano_Bruno_Campo_dei_Fiori.jpg)[Giordano Bruno](/wiki/Giordano_Bruno) The Renaissance ("rebirth") was a period of transition between the Middle Ages and modern thought,[[46]](#cite_note-46) in which the recovery of classical texts helped shift philosophical interests away from technical studies in logic, metaphysics, and theology towards eclectic inquiries into morality, philology, and mysticism.[[47]](#cite_note-47)[[48]](#cite_note-48) The study of the classics and the humane arts generally, such as history and literature, enjoyed a scholarly interest hitherto unknown in Christendom, a tendency referred to as [humanism](/wiki/Humanism).[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) Displacing the medieval interest in metaphysics and logic, the humanists followed [Petrarch](/wiki/Petrarch) in making man and his virtues the focus of philosophy.[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52)

## Modern[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

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The term "Modern Philosophy" has multiple usages. For example, [Thomas Hobbes](/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes) is sometimes considered the first modern philosopher because he applied a systematic method to political philosophy.[[53]](#cite_note-53)[[54]](#cite_note-54) By contrast, [René Descartes](/wiki/René_Descartes) is often considered the first modern philosopher because he grounded his philosophy in problems of *knowledge*, rather than problems of metaphysics.[[55]](#cite_note-55) [thumb|171x171px|René DescartesModern](/wiki/File:Frans_Hals_-_Portret_van_René_Descartes.jpg) philosophy and especially [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) philosophy[[56]](#cite_note-56) is distinguished by its increasing independence from traditional authorities such as the Church, academia, and Aristotelianism;[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58) a new focus on the foundations of knowledge and metaphysical system-building;[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[60]](#cite_note-60) and the emergence of modern physics out of natural philosophy.[[61]](#cite_note-61)

Early Modern

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:JohnLocke.png)[John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke)

Some central topics of philosophy in this period include the nature of the mind and its relation to the body, the implications of the new natural sciences for traditional theological topics such as free will and God, and the emergence of a secular basis for moral and political philosophy.[[62]](#cite_note-62) These trends first distinctively coalesce in [Francis Bacon's](/wiki/Francis_Bacon) call for a new, empirical program for expanding knowledge, and soon found massively influential form in the mechanical physics and rationalist metaphysics of [René Descartes](/wiki/René_Descartes).[[63]](#cite_note-63) Other notable modern philosophers include [Spinoza](/wiki/Spinoza), [Leibniz](/wiki/Gottfried_Wilhelm_Leibniz), [Locke](/wiki/John_Locke), [Berkeley](/wiki/George_Berkeley), [Hume](/wiki/David_Hume), and [Kant](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant).[[64]](#cite_note-64)[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66) Many other contributors were philosophers, scientists, medical doctors, and politicians. A short list includes [Galileo Galilei](/wiki/Galileo_Galilei), [Pierre Gassendi](/wiki/Pierre_Gassendi), [Blaise Pascal](/wiki/Blaise_Pascal), [Nicolas Malebranche](/wiki/Nicolas_Malebranche), [Isaac Newton](/wiki/Isaac_Newton), [Christian Wolff](/wiki/Christian_Wolff_(philosopher)), [Montesquieu](/wiki/Montesquieu), [Pierre Bayle](/wiki/Pierre_Bayle), [Thomas Reid](/wiki/Thomas_Reid), [Jean d'Alembert](/wiki/Jean_d'Alembert), [Adam Smith](/wiki/Adam_Smith), and [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau).

The approximate end of the early modern period is most often identified with [Immanuel Kant's](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant) systematic attempt to limit metaphysics, justify scientific knowledge, and reconcile both of these with morality and freedom.[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68)[[69]](#cite_note-69) [left|thumb|216x216px|Immanuel Kant](/wiki/File:Immanuel_Kant_(painted_portrait).jpg)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Painting_of_David_Hume.jpg)[David Hume](/wiki/David_Hume)

19th-century

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [right|thumb|217x217px|](/wiki/File:Nietzsche187a.jpg)[Friedrich Nietzsche](/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche) Later modern philosophy is usually considered to begin after the philosophy of [Immanuel Kant](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant) at the beginning of the 19th century.[[70]](#cite_note-70) German philosophy exercised broad influence in this century, owing in part to the dominance of the German university system.[[71]](#cite_note-71) [German idealists](/wiki/German_idealist), such as [Johann Gottlieb Fichte](/wiki/Johann_Gottlieb_Fichte), [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel](/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel), and [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling](/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling), transformed the work of Kant by maintaining that the world is constituted by a rational or mind-like process, and as such is entirely knowable.[[72]](#cite_note-72) [Arthur Schopenhauer's](/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer) identification of this world-constituting process as an irrational [will to live](/wiki/Will_to_live) influenced later 19th- and early 20th-century thinking, such as the work of [Friedrich Nietzsche](/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche).

The [19th century](/wiki/19th-century_philosophy) took the radical notions of self-organization and intrinsic order from Goethe and Kantian metaphysics, and proceeded to produce a long elaboration on the tension between systematization and organic development. Foremost was the work of [Hegel](/wiki/Hegel), whose *Logic* and *Phenomenology of Spirit* produced a "dialectical" framework for ordering of knowledge. [left|thumb|160x160px|Hegel](/wiki/File:G.W.F._Hegel_(by_Sichling,_after_Sebbers).jpg) As with the 18th century, developments in science arose from philosophy and also challenged philosophy: most importantly the work of Charles Darwin, which was based on the idea of organic self-regulation found in philosophers such as Smith, but fundamentally challenged established conceptions.

After Hegel's death in 1831, 19th-century philosophy largely turned against idealism in favor of varieties of philosophical [naturalism](/wiki/Naturalism_(philosophy)), such as the [positivism](/wiki/Positivism) of [Auguste Comte](/wiki/Auguste_Comte), the empiricism of [John Stuart Mill](/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill), and the materialism of [Karl Marx](/wiki/Karl_Marx). Logic began a period of its most significant advances since the inception of the discipline, as increasing mathematical precision opened entire fields of inference to formalization in the work of [George Boole](/wiki/George_Boole) and [Gottlob Frege](/wiki/Gottlob_Frege).[[73]](#cite_note-73) Other philosophers who initiated lines of thought that would continue to shape philosophy into the 20th century include:

* [Gottlob Frege](/wiki/Gottlob_Frege) and [Henry Sidgwick](/wiki/Henry_Sidgwick), whose work in logic and ethics, respectively, provided the tools for early [analytic philosophy](/wiki/Analytic_philosophy).
* [Charles Sanders Peirce](/wiki/Charles_Sanders_Peirce) and [William James](/wiki/William_James), who founded [pragmatism](/wiki/Pragmatism).
* [Søren Kierkegaard](/wiki/Søren_Kierkegaard) and [Friedrich Nietzsche](/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche), who laid the groundwork for [existentialism](/wiki/Existentialism) and [post-structuralism](/wiki/Post-structuralism).

## Contemporary approaches[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The three major contemporary approaches to academic philosophy are [Analytic philosophy](/wiki/Analytic_philosophy), [continental philosophy](/wiki/Continental_philosophy) and [pragmatism](/wiki/Pragmatism).[[74]](#cite_note-74)