

# Western Political Philosophy



Philosophy, (from Greek, by way of Latin, philosophia, “love of wisdom”) the rational, abstract, and methodical consideration of reality as a whole or of fundamental dimensions of human existence and experience. Philosophical inquiry is a central element in the intellectual history of many civilizations. Philosophy tells us how to make scientific ideas and how to change crude ideas into scientific one.

## Basic concepts:



- **Idea**

A particular term in philosophy which not only has meaning but also some explanation.

Philosophy is the construction of various ideas about various issues on which debate can be putted.

- **Logic**

A rational approach towards any idea is called logic.

Mostly opposite to belief system. But if the same system is justify with facts and figures, then it's logic.

Logic can be of two types:

1. Inductive logic is a method of drawing conclusions by going from the specific to the general. It's usually opposite to deductive logic.
2. Deductive reasoning is a logical approach where you progress from general ideas to specific conclusions.

Science mostly rely upon inductive logic bit sometimes deductive logic is also applied.

- **Empiricism**

The derivation of the term empiricism from the ancient Greek word empeiria, “experience.”

General observation and experience with the help of five senses like smell, hear, touch, taste, and smell called empiricism

Only empirical knowledge is acceptable in western philosophy.

- **Objectivity**

The fact of being based on facts and not influenced by personal beliefs or feelings called objectivity.

Personal opinion is not considered but only reality and facts either it is rejecting your personal opinion. Distance yourself from the research and only rely on scientific facts.

- **Subjectivity**

Subjectivity refers to how someone's judgment is shaped by personal opinions and feelings instead of outside influences. Subjectivity is partially responsible for why one person loves an abstract painting while another person hates it.

One's personal life, experiences, culture, society, religion etc. comes in research and ideas and make them biased.

Subjectivity or biased research is not considered good in philosophy. A research must be maximum objective and less subjective.

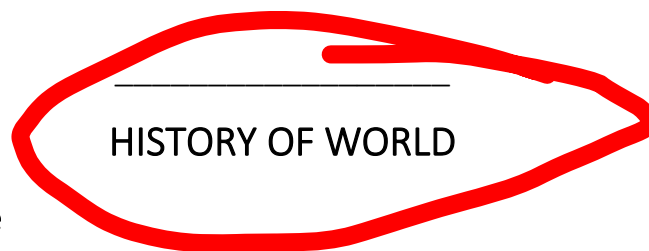
- **Relativity**

See anything as compared to other. The theory suggests that there is reality in this world but only perspectives. Everyone not perceive everything according to their view point, so to reach at right conclusion, all the views must be considered. For example various views on Kashmir issue.

- **Normative approach**

The theory based upon norms and values like religious norms, social norms and others.

Normative approach is discouraged in research. Non normative approach is used in research in which values are excluded from research. Non normative approach is opposite to normative approach.



- **Stone Age**

The lowest rank of history about which we have little or no knowledge. This is the time period before the invention of wheel.

This period is also called as pre historic time period because nothing is available in writings. People were not known with writhing. There was no intellect in this age. Only means of living were known to them.

- **Greeks era (1000B.C.-Christ)**

It was the first modern era whose history is recorded. It considered the first age of intellect and knowledge. There was comprehensive knowledge of natural, social , geographical sciences. Almost

all fields of knowledge were covered and people wrote various books and Greeks are known as the pioneers of knowledge.

Almost all sciences of Greeks were called Mythology (derived from Myth, believes, religion). This period was the mixture of both mythology and modern sciences.

- **Dark Ages (Christ-1000A.D.)**

Glory of Greeks lost and no major development in knowledge was observed in this age. Church started to dominate and people were made restricted to question any happening. In context of knowledge, Europe remained stagnant and dark in during this age.

In East, the same time was the period of glory. Muslim thoughts started to develop. Muslims produced knowledge about every field of sciences and philosophy. Their sources were also Greeks.

- **Middle Ages (1000A.D.- 1600A.D.)**

About Middle of this century. Debate between religion and sciences started and people started to question every happening instead of blind believing.

Sciences were unchained from religion and development took place. It was beginning of sciences and known as age of reasoning.

- **Modernism (1700-1945)**

Known as industrial age and there was birth of capitalism. In this period there was pure implication of science in all fields of knowledge, even in arts, humanities and behavioral sciences. So, entire society emerged as scientific.

- **Post modern(1945-present)**

Moved from science to technology ( maximum output with minimum input). Sciences have developed enough and issues related to human rights, behaviors etc. becomes point of concern.

Knowledge always takes help from history and every phase is linked with the other one. There must be connectivity and no gap between knowledge. Every age has its part in knowledge. Dark ages show that knowledge can be reversed if chains put on sciences.

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## **Ancient Greeks Thoughts** (1000B.C.-400B.C.)

There were multiple school of thought in this time period but most important were Sophists. There were crude ideas about politics and more focus was on nature of universe related to man. Physical objective and metaphysics were the matters of great importance.

- **Greeks City State**

**Features:**

- i. Concept of state is different from modern one as there was no legal status of state and there were only limited states.
- ii. Its just like a town, not very much populated.
- iii. Every state had different culture, political structure, norms etc. as their Typology ( physical structure of land like forests, desert, mountain, rivers). Cities were geographical disconnected with poor means of transportation and communication. There were less frequent interaction.
- iv. Limited population mostly less than 1000.
- v. No uniform pattern of government but most City States had monarchy.
- vi. They never made distinction between State and Society. There was no difference between laws and moral norms.
- vii. They were fascist of their time. They believed on race superiority. Non Greeks were not allowed to reside in City State.
- viii. Citizens were the privileged class and other class was of slaves, non citizens. Slaves were the commodity and had no say in government. Not all the residents were considered citizens.
- ix. Greeks linked everything with mythology.
- x. There was direct democracy. All citizens would be the part of government and there were period meetings where they discuss there and issues and found some way forward.


- **Ancient Greeks**

❖ **Sophists**

They were teachers in 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> B.C. who had contributed in Western Philosophy. They belong to similar school of thought. Sophists were the connectivity between ancient Greeks and Socrates. Socrates was also considered from same school of thought. Their number was limited about 150 because all the teachers were not Sophists

**Features:**

- i. Sophists were teachers who were paid for teaching. They teach only those who pay for it and it is one of their symptom.
- ii. They were not limited to one state but move from state to state.
- iii. They believed on the organic nature of state (states are just like human being, have specific structure and function). There is need to understand human nature to get better understanding of state.
- iv. They believed in the idea of relativism (means nothing is certain, everything is just a perspective). There is nothing absolute in politics. To find out the real truth, need to observe all perspectives.

- v. Sophists are considered the pioneers of relativism.
  - vi. They believed everything is challengeable and they were radicals of there time.
  - vii. They considered themselves pro democratic because the system offers complete freedom of speech. They were also the pioneers of democracy.
  - viii. They supported active participation of every citizen in politics.
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## Socrates

(470B.C-300B.C.)

Socrates is considered an ancient Greeks philosopher who belonged to Athens, the center of knowledge. He belonged to an ordinary family. His mother was a house wife and his father made military weapons. He himself was an intellectual person and adopted teaching as profession. He taught for money, which linked him with Sophists. It was the age of argument, writings were not present.

### ❖ Currents of age

Athens was prosperous and center of knowledge, learning and progressing ideas.

It was the age of Sophists ideas like relativism, reason etc.

It was the age of direct democracy.

### ❖ Socrates view on relativism

Both were on the view that everything is questionable and there is no truth but only perspectives, but Socrates was on the view that truth also exist in this world. Anything that is best like best government, best philosophy, best laws are truth and one should search for it.

### ❖ Socrates about direct democracy

He believed democracy is not best form of government but worst. He believed virtue is knowledge. Here virtue is excellence and perfection. Greeks believed virtue is something that is hereditary and only good parents can produce virtuous child. Virtue can not be learnt. Socrates opposed this view and said, knowledge is teachable, virtue is knowledge and can be gained through effort.

If someone learn more and the other one less and some are even unable or not interested. So, virtue is not uniform in society. There is virtuous inequality in society.

Those with more virtue are liable to rule, not everyone as in the case of direct democracy. He supported rule by intellectuals. For criticizing democracy, he was given death penalty.

### ❖ Socrates about Mythology

Socrates challenged mythology and argued that god has nothing to do with political system but only with virtue because condition of society change due to virtue not of gods or goddess. So, there is no need to involve gods in politics. People must challenge god at first to learn virtue.

Because of his large following, Socrates came in limelight. Rulers warned him to stop his preaching especially related to religion. Youngsters were buying his argument because of their age of radicalism. Socrates had allegations of corrupting the young minds. On the basis of these allegations, Socrates was trailed by Court if 30 and he was given death penalty. He putted a condition to accept this death in front of his students. He said, the poison could kill him but not his ideas.

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## **The End of Athenian Democracy**

In the year 507 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes introduced a system of political reforms that he called demokratia, or “rule by the people” (from demos, “the people,” and kratos, or “power”). It was the first known democracy in the world.

This system was comprised of three separate institutions: the ekklesia, a sovereign governing body that wrote laws and dictated foreign policy; the boule, a council of representatives from the ten Athenian tribes and the dikasteria, the popular courts in which citizens argued cases before a group of lottery-selected jurors. Although this Athenian democracy would survive for only two centuries, its invention by Cleisthenes, “The Father of Democracy,” was one of ancient Greece’s most enduring contributions to the modern world. The Greek system of direct democracy would pave the way for representative democracies across the globe.

## **Who Could Vote in Ancient Greece?**

“In a democracy,” the Greek historian Herodotus wrote, “there is, first, that most splendid of virtues, equality before the law.” It was true that Cleisthenes’ demokratia abolished the political distinctions between the Athenian aristocrats who had long monopolized the political decision-making process and the middle- and working-class people who made up the army and the navy (and whose incipient discontent was the reason Cleisthenes introduced his reforms in the first place).

Ostracism, in which a citizen could be expelled from Athens for 10 years, was among the powers of the ekklesia.

However, the “equality” Herodotus described was limited to a small segment of the Athenian population in Ancient Greece. For example, in Athens in the middle of the 4th century there were about 100,000 citizens (Athenian citizenship was limited to men and women whose parents had also been Athenian citizens), about 10,000 metoikoi, or “resident foreigners,” and 150,000 slaves. Out of all those people, only male citizens who were older than 18 were a part of the demos, meaning only about 40,000 people could participate in the democratic process.

### **The Ekklesia**

Athenian democracy was a direct democracy made up of three important institutions. The first was the ekklesia, or Assembly, the sovereign governing body of Athens. Any member of the demos—any one of those 40,000 adult male citizens—was welcome to attend the meetings of the ekklesia, which were held 40 times per year in a hillside auditorium west of the Acropolis called the Pnyx. (Only about 5,000 men attended each session of the Assembly; the rest were serving in the army or navy or working to support their families.)

At the meetings, the ekklesia made decisions about war and foreign policy, wrote and revised laws and approved or condemned the conduct of public officials. (Ostracism, in which a citizen could be expelled from the Athenian city-state for 10 years, was among the powers of the ekklesia.) The group made decisions by simple majority vote.

### **The Boule**

The second important institution was the boule, or Council of Five Hundred. The boule was a group of 500 men, 50 from each of ten Athenian tribes, who served on the Council for one year. Unlike the ekklesia, the boule met every day and did most of the hands-on work of governance. It supervised government workers and was in charge of things like navy ships (triremes) and army horses. It dealt with ambassadors and representatives from other city-states. Its main function was to decide what matters would come before the ekklesia. In this way, the 500 members of the boule dictated how the entire democracy would work.

Positions on the boule were chosen by lot and not by election. This was because, in theory, a random lottery was more democratic than an election: pure chance, after all, could not be influenced by things like money or popularity. The lottery system also prevented the establishment of a permanent class of civil servants who might be tempted to use the government to advance or enrich themselves. However, historians argue that selection to



the boule was not always just a matter of chance. They note that wealthy and influential people—and their relatives—served on the Council much more frequently than would be likely in a truly random lottery.

### **The Dikasteria**

The third important institution was the popular courts, or dikasteria. Every day, more than 500 jurors were chosen by lot from a pool of male citizens older than 30. Of all the democratic institutions, Aristotle argued that the dikasteria “contributed most to the strength of democracy” because the jury had almost unlimited power.

There were no police in Athens, so it was the demos themselves who brought court cases, argued for the prosecution and the defense and delivered verdicts and sentences by majority rule. (There were also no rules about what kinds of cases could be prosecuted or what could and could not be said at trial, and so Athenian citizens frequently used the dikasteria to punish or embarrass their enemies.)

Jurors were paid a wage for their work, so that the job could be accessible to everyone and not just the wealthy (but, since the wage was less than what the average worker earned in a day, the typical juror was an elderly retiree). Since Athenians did not pay taxes, the money for these payments came from customs duties, contributions from allies and taxes levied on the metoikoi. The one exception to this rule was the leitourgia, or liturgy, which was a kind of tax that wealthy people volunteered to pay to sponsor major civic undertakings such as the maintenance of a navy ship (this liturgy was called the trierarchia) or the production of a play or choral performance at the city’s annual festival.

### **The End of Athenian “democracy**

Around 460 B.C., under the rule of the general Pericles (generals were among the only public officials who were elected, not appointed) Athenian democracy began to evolve into something that we would call an aristocracy: the rule of what Herodotus called “the one man, the best.” Though democratic ideals and processes did not survive in ancient Greece, they have been influencing politicians and governments ever since.

Modern representative democracies, in contrast to direct democracies, have citizens who vote for representatives who create and enact laws on their behalf. Canada, The United States and South Africa are all examples of modern-day representative democracies.

