

Definitions for PHI 105

A **syllogism** is an argument with a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

A syllogistic argument is **valid** if it is not possible for the two premises to be true and the conclusion false.

A syllogistic argument is **sound** if it is valid and the premises are true.

A **necessary truth** is a proposition that cannot possibly be false; it is true in every possible world.

A **contingent truth** is a proposition that is true but might have been false; it is true in this world but not in every possible world.

The **law of noncontradiction** is that a proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same respect.

The **principle of sufficient reason** is that for everything that exists, and for every fact or event, there must be a sufficient reason it is so and not otherwise.

The **fallacy of equivocation** is a logically invalid inference that occurs when a word occurs in different premises with different meanings.

Example: All rivers have banks. All banks have money. Therefore, all rivers have money.

The **absurd** (in Camus) the fact that life has no meaning together with the fact that, as rational beings, we cannot help seeking the meaning of life.

Existentialism is the view that humans exist before they have an essence.

According to the standard metaphysical understanding, the **essence** of an entity consists of the properties it cannot exist without.

Moral subjectivism is the view that an act is morally right (or wrong) for an agent to perform if and only if that agent believes that it is right (or wrong).

Value subjectivism is the view that a thing has value only if someone values it.

Instrumental value is the value that something has a means to something else of value.

Ultimate value is non-instrumental value, the value that something has for its own sake.

Hedonism as a general theory of value is that only pleasure is ultimately good or good for its own sake.

A person's **welfare** consists in what is ultimately good for that person.

Hedonism as a theory of individual welfare is that only pleasure is ultimately good for anyone.

Psychological hedonism is the view that we are motivated only by thoughts of our own future pleasure and pain.

The **termination thesis** is that we cease to exist at the moment that we die.

Net happiness is the total amount of happiness minus the total amount of unhappiness.

Utilitarianism is the view that we should always act to maximize total net happiness.

Egoism is the view that we should always act to maximize our own net happiness.

Net pleasure is the total amount of pleasure minus the total amount of pain.

Hedonistic utilitarianism is the view that we should always act so as to maximize total net pleasure.

An **intrinsic desire** is a desire for something for its own sake.

The **intrinsic desire satisfaction theory of individual welfare** is that the only thing that is ultimately good for us is the satisfaction of our intrinsic desires.

Preference utilitarianism is the view that we should act to maximize the overall satisfaction of intrinsic desires.

A **higher pleasure** is one that we experience in exercising our higher human capacities.

The **higher human capacities** are those mental capacities that humans have but animals do not have, such as various reasoning and imagination abilities.