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Week 1 – What Is Philosophy?

Focus:

- Importance of supporting claims with reasons/arguments
- What is Human Nature: Rationality, conscious, language, freewill, personhood

Readings

What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction To Philosophy – Nagel (1987)

- We start to question matters of philosophy often as young as 14; “What exists,” “Can we know anything,” “What is right and wrong,” “Does life have meaning,” “Is death the end,”
- The centre of philosophy are the questions we find naturally puzzling
- Philosophy only relies on thought and hypothesis
- Philosophy questions common ideas, e.g. the concept of time, existence, knowledge, right or wrong, language
- There are more than two sides to every philosophical question
- Philosophy comes from the Greek ‘Philosophia’, meaning “Love of Wisdom”

Lectures 1 & 2 – Introduction to Philosophy

Three Major Philosophical Areas:

METAPHYSICS	AESTHETICS	EPISTEMOLOGY
The study of that which exists: The basic principle of things (i.e time, reality, being, knowing and other abstract concepts)	The study of that which is beautiful Principles concerned with the nature and concept of beauty and art	The study of knowledge Methods and validity of knowledge The distinction between justified belief (argument) and opinion

Opinion Vs. Argument

- An opinion is a statement of belief or attitude. Disagreements and verbal conflict occur when there is a difference of opinion
- An argument (justified belief/reasoned opinion) is a statement of belief that is backed up with reason and logic
- An argument seeks to support a claim - a *conclusion*
- Supportive reasoning and logic is a *premise* or *premises*
- The structure of an argument should be:
OPINION/CLAIM > PREMISE > CONCLUSION

Informative Language

- Informative Language will set out a *claim* (also known as a *proposition*)
- A claim can be true or false (i.e my sister is older than me)
- Your supportive reason is your premise (i.e my sister was born before I was)

Humans are driven by natural curiosity

- *We want to understand “how and why humans have come to live such extraordinary lives.”*
- Cecelia Heyes 2014
- *“All men by nature desire to know”*
- Aristotle (*Metaphysics, 980a 1*)