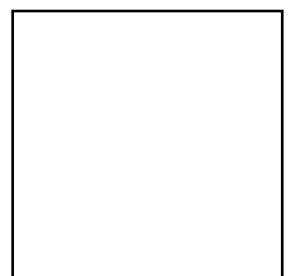
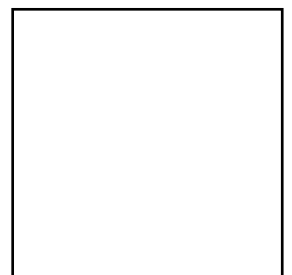
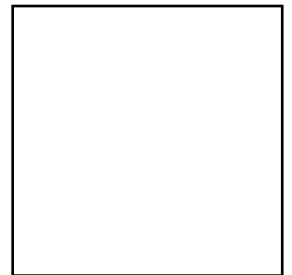


Nelson Thornes
Distance Learning

AS Philosophy

Robert Ellis



Nelson Thornes

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Your tutor may not be immediately available on these numbers, but messages can be left or sent via the fax and will be passed on.

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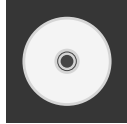
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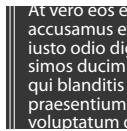
Hand-in activity (either by post or e-mail)



Listening



Discussion



Reading



Internet research or online activity



Kerboodle activity

Study Calendar



AS Philosophy | 2011–12

Study week	Start date	Unit	Tutor-assessed assignment	Work due date
		Introduction		
1		1.1 Philosophy and philosophical issues		
2		1.2 What is tolerance?		
3		1.3 Arguments for tolerance	Assignment 1.3	
4		1.4 Sources of tolerance		
5		1.5 Limits of tolerance	Assignment 1.5	
6		1.6 Tolerating intolerance		
7		1.7 Tolerance, religion and social difference	Assignment 1.7	
8		1.8 What is determinism?		
9		1.9 Determinism and human action	Assignment 1.9	
10		1.10 Freewill and indeterminism		
11		1.11 Compatibilist freewill		
12		1.12 Determinism and moral responsibility	Assignment 1.12	
13		1.13 Determinism and rationality		
14		2.1 What is a person?		
15		2.2 Personhood and the sorites paradox	Assignment 2.2	
16		2.3 Are all humans persons?		
17		2.4 Can non-humans be persons?		
18		2.5 Personal identity through time		
19		2.6 Survival through time	Assignment 2.6	
20		2.7 Introduction to reason and experience		
21		2.8 Innate ideas		
22		2.9 Blank slates	Assignment 2.9	
23		2.10 A priori knowledge		
24		2.11 Empirical knowledge	Assignment 2.11	
25		2.12 Certainty		

Study week	Start date	Unit	Tutor-assessed assignment	Work due date
26		2.13 Conceptual schemes	Assignment 2.13	
27		Revision week 1 (if available)		
28		Revision week 2 (if available)		
29		Revision week 3 (if available)		
30		Revision week 4 (if available)		

Contact Numbers

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Your Tutor



Introduction



Welcome to AS Philosophy! The aim of this introductory study guide is to help you to get the very best out of your distance learning course. This study guide will give you introductory information to read and refer to, but there will also be an introductory unit (1.1) to work through, introducing the nature of the subject and the main themes of the course.

This introduction covers the following themes:

- The structure of the course and the exams
- Resources
- Your study pack and how to go through it
- Your tutorials/visits
- Assignments
- Contacts

You must make sure that you **read this guide thoroughly** before you start to work through your units. If you have not done it before, distance learning will be quite different from the kind of learning which you have been used to.

The structure of the course and the exams

Aims of the AS Philosophy course

The syllabus describes the AS Philosophy course as intending to enable students to:

- Gain knowledge and understanding of philosophy through consideration of some important philosophical issues and approaches to problems.
- Develop a rigorous approach, both critical and constructive, to the study of philosophy and the nature of argument.
- Develop a set of transferable intellectual skills—including comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation—which will facilitate the development of independent thinking, based on critical examination of evidence and rational argumentation, and which will be applicable in the study of other academic subjects and in reflection on other important aspects of human experience.
- Practise and enhance the ability to construct, develop and maintain clear and coherent arguments.

Syllabus content

The AS course has been radically changed in 2008, so that it now has more emphasis on philosophical questions and less on learning theories than it had previously. The new structure of the AS course is that students study four topic areas in philosophy, which provide an introduction to philosophical ideas and approaches.

On this course students study two modules. Each module consists of two topics, and each topic will be studied in 6 or 7 units, which will take approximately 6 or 7 weeks. Please note that the order in which we study the two modules is the other way round to the numbering of the units in the exam: so module 1 in the course becomes unit 2 in the exam, and module 2 in the course becomes unit 1 in the exam. The reason for this is that the most challenging (and compulsory)

topic—reason and experience—is the one we will leave until last, and this is found in the exam unit 1.

Module	Areas studied
1 (Unit 2)	Freewill and determinism, Tolerance
2 (Unit 1)	Persons, Reason and experience

Objectives on which you will be assessed in the AS exam

These assessment objectives are the ones that the markers of your exams (and before that your tutor marking your work) will be assessing you on. During the course you will need to develop the skills required to fulfil these objectives. Exam and assignment questions will be of two types according to the assessment objective being tested.

Assessment objectives		Weighting at AS
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the themes selected for study. Show an awareness of the central debates and relevant philosophical positions and of the nature of arguments employed.	40%
AO2	Interpret and analyse philosophical argument, applying relevant points and examples.	40%
AO3	Assess arguments and counter-arguments. Construct and evaluate arguments in order to form reasoned judgements.	20%

The **quality of written communication** is also taken into account in all the assessment objectives.

The AS Philosophy exam

At the end of the AS course you will sit two written examinations, corresponding to the two modules you have studied. The exam board running these exams is AQA.

1. Unit 1 (An Introduction to Philosophy 1)—this will include questions on *Persons* and *Reason and Experience*.
2. Unit 2 (An Introduction to Philosophy 2)—this will include questions on *Freewill and Determinism* and *Tolerance*.

Each of these exams is 1 hour 30 minutes long. The exam paper will include one question on each of a number of topics, two of which you will have studied. So on each paper you will answer two structured questions (each divided into: part a, which assesses AO1, and part b, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3).

Resources

Essential Book

In order to do the activities in this course, you will need to refer the following book:

Mike Atherton, Chris Cluett, Oliver McAdoo, David Rawlinson & Julian Sidoli, *AQA AS Philosophy Student's Book*, Nelson Thornes, 2008, ISBN 978-0748798582.

Further reading books

At the end of each section covering a topic area there will also be suggestions for further reading. It is advised that you read as much as possible in order to further your understanding of the topics. Philosophy is also a subject where there are many different viewpoints, and reading a different writer either from this file

or the textbook can give you an entirely different understanding of a topic. The books recommended for further reading, in addition to the one given above, are as follows.

Thomas Pink	<i>Free will: A Very Short Introduction</i>	Oxford University Press	978-0192853585
Ted Honderich	<i>How Free Are You?: The Determinism Problem</i>	Oxford University Press	978-0199251971
Catriona McKinnon	<i>Toleration: A Critical Introduction</i>	Routledge	978-0415322904
Jonathan Glover	<i>I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity</i>	Penguin	978-0140146509
Peter Carruthers	<i>Introducing Persons</i>	Routledge	978-0415045124
Peter Cole	<i>The Theory of Knowledge</i>	Hodder & Stoughton	978-0340804827
Daniel Cardinal, Jeremy Hayward, and Gerald Jones	<i>Epistemology: The Theory of knowledge (Philosophy in Focus)</i>	Hodder Murray	978-0719579677



You will frequently be directed to the Nelson Thornes resource site, Kerboodle (<http://live.kerboodle.com/NT3/common/login.aspx>). Your tutor will provide you with login details to access Kerboodle.

Videos

Philosophy is a difficult (but not impossible) subject to make work on video. However, videos can be an invaluable way to get a visual impact and give another dimension to your learning of philosophy, especially if you are a visual learner.

The Examined Life series is a very useful set of videos made for philosophy students. Sometimes they go a bit too fast or give a bit too much complexity for AS level, so you do not necessarily need to feel that you have to know every point mentioned, and should feel free to rewind or re-watch the trickier points. Nevertheless they can be a very useful adjunct to your learning, either watched near the beginning of a topic as an introduction or used as a revision aid.

There are five video titles from this series especially recommended for this course. These are available from **www.intelecom.org**. If your school does not have them, you can ask your school link teacher if it is possible to buy them.

- *What is Philosophy?* (relates to 1.1)
- *Do we have free will?* (relates to 1.8 to 1.13)
- *Is reason the source of knowledge?* (relates to 2.8 and 2.10)
- *Does knowledge depend on experience?* (relates to 2.9 and 2.11)
- *Does the mind shape the world?* (relates to 2.13)

Websites

There are many philosophy websites which may be helpful to you. The following are particularly useful, as well as containing links to other sites:

- Episteme Links **www.epistemelinks.com/index.asp**
- Guide to Philosophy on the Internet **www.earlham.edu/~peters/gpi/index.htm**
- Philosophy Pages **www.philosophypages.com**
- Philosophy Now magazine **www.philosophynow.org**

- Philosophy resources www.valdosta.edu/~rbarnett/phi/resource.html
- Resource Central—Philosophy www.resourcehelp.com/qserphilos.htm
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy www.seop.leeds.ac.uk/contents.html
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy www.iep.utm.edu
- The Philosophers' Magazine www.philosophersnet.com
- The Tree of Philosophy www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/top/toc.html
- A Level Philosophy www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk
- Squashed Philosophers www.btinternet.com/~glynnhughes/squashed
- Sparknotes www.sparknotes.com/philosophy
- Intute accredited philosophy resources www.intute.ac.uk/artsandhumanities/philosophy

An online guide to how to get the best out of philosophy resources on the web is available at www.vts.intute.ac.uk/he/tutorial/philosophy.

The study pack and how to go through it

You have probably had a look through your study pack already. If you haven't, have a quick look now.

You will notice that there is a particular topic for each week. The reading and the activities are **essential** to your understanding—you *cannot get through this course without doing the reading and the activities*.

Organising your work

For a normal AS level course you would attend lessons for about four or five hours per week. Because this is a distance learning course, you will do most of the work yourself either at home, or during your free lessons at school. In order to complete your units fully you will therefore need to set aside around four–five hours per week. **This does not include time to complete assignments.** There are other things you need to think about:

- You must take responsibility for your own learning. If you don't keep up with the required work, you will be highly unlikely to achieve exam success.
- You must be very self-motivated. Distance learning can be very difficult if you are the kind of person who needs to be pushed all the time. If you don't think that you can keep yourself going, then maybe distance learning isn't for you.
- You must be organised. You will have a folder in which to keep all your printed units. You need to add your own notes to these and keep these notes organised. To help with this it is suggested that you do the following:
 - Use dividers to separate the different topics
 - Transfer completed units to another file—otherwise you will end up with lots of paper to carry around
 - File any notes that you make with the relevant units
 - Do the same with any extra resources you pick up
 - Keep marked assignments with the relevant units.

Being organised is a skill and it comes more naturally to some people than others. If you are bad at organising, however, you can learn to be good. It is a skill you will need for university life and beyond.

A Philosophy timetable

In order to find the time to fit your distance learning into your week, it is a good idea to fill in a detailed timetable. Because you will be doing some of your work at home as well as at school, this timetable should include evenings and weekends as well as the hours you are at school. At the end of this study guide you will find a blank timetable. When you have filled it in, you should put this timetable at the front of your file, and make every effort to **stick to it!**

Before deciding when in the week you are going to work on your Philosophy, you should fill in all the commitments that you already have. Include the following:

- your tutorial times
- other subject lessons/tutorials
- times during the school day when you know you will not be doing your Philosophy work, e.g. lunch times/club involvement
- travelling time—allow for the times when you are going to and from school
- home commitments, e.g. meal times, favourite TV programmes, time with your family
- work commitments—any times when you are doing a paid (or unpaid) job
- any other times when you know that you will definitely not be doing your Philosophy—maybe Friday & Saturday nights.

Remember when you're planning your time that as well as Philosophy work you will also have homework for other subjects to do as well, so allow time for this too.

Once you have blocked off these times on your timetable, have a look and see where you can sensibly fit in four-five hours to work on your Philosophy reading and activities. Keep in mind as well that your *assignments* are in addition to this five hours, and will also have to be fitted in.

The activities

Each week you will be asked to carry out small pieces of work, which we will go over in the tutorials. This is so that both you and your tutor can be confident that you have understood the main ideas within that particular topic area. It is very important that you complete all of the activities thoroughly and on time. This means undertaking the required reading and occasionally web research, thinking about your response and writing it down in reasonable detail. Some of the activities are longer than others, and many will contain the unpredictable element of 'thinking time'. You will find most of the activities straightforward, but some you may find difficult.

Problems

Problems you have, with either the reading or the activities, will be addressed at the tutorials. In order to save time in the tutorials, you must **mark or highlight anything that you specifically want to go over in the tutorial.**

Tutorials and visits

Tutorials

You will have one tutorial per week, which will last for one hour and will be via video-conference link. This will be strange for you at first—it will be a bit like talking to a television and having the television talk back to you! You probably haven't had experience of video-conferencing before and you may feel a bit self-conscious or nervous of it at first. But don't worry, you will soon get used to it—and it is a good skill to include in your cv.

Because this is a distance learning course, you will not be 'taught' during your tutorials in the same way as you would in a traditionally taught subject. The tutorials are designed for you to talk about your work and any problems or questions that you might have with it.

A typical tutorial will usually be spent looking at the work which you have covered that week. Your tutor will encourage you to discuss the areas covered, will go over the activities you have done, will explain any complex ideas relating to that week's work and give a general overview of what has been covered. If you haven't done the necessary work before the tutorial, you may find it almost impossible to follow.

It is up to you to raise any issues concerning your work, which you would like to spend more time on. You will find that if you are having a problem with a particular activity or concept, it is quite likely that the rest of your group are as well. So please speak up. Your tutor will want to spend time during the tutorials sorting out any problems you are having with the work so that you get as much as possible from your tutorials and your distance learning pack.

Visits

Your tutor will be visiting you twice a year. These visits are a crucial part of the course, so you must make every effort to be there when your tutor visits. These visits are an excellent opportunity for you and your tutor to meet and get to know each other. There will also be the opportunity for you to speak to your tutor in confidence if you want to. The visits will usually last for two hours and during this time your tutor will want to do the following:

- Review your progress. Your tutor may want to look over your unit work to make sure that you are thoroughly completing the activities. So you must bring all your unit work to date with you, including any extra notes.
- Find out how you are enjoying the course. People learn best when they enjoy what they are learning. For this reason your tutor will want to find out how much you enjoy the subject, the tutorials and the Philosophy work. Hopefully you will enjoy studies through distance learning. If, however, you do have any problems, don't be afraid to tell your tutor how you feel—she or he will want to know the truth so that any issues can be sorted out before they become problems.
- Your tutor will also go through some work with you during the visit, or may show you a video or get you to do a group activity of some kind. These visits will be more than just a chat—be prepared to do some work as well.

Assignments

In this course you will be set an assignment approximately once every two weeks. There are twelve assignments in the course altogether. These assignments take the form of questions for written answers, in the same format as those you meet in the exam. **Completing these assignments is thus an essential part of your preparation for the exam.**

You will be introduced to the assignment format and given some guidance on how to do them as you go along. Here follow some basic points for reference.

Assignment questions (with the exception of the first) will normally consist of two questions, labelled (a) and (b), like those of the questions on the exam paper.

The (a) questions are always worth 15 marks and test Assessment Objective 1, i.e. your ability to 'Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant issues arising in the themes selected for study'. This type of question will usually contain the trigger words 'identify', 'explain', or 'examine'. You will need to explain ideas or arguments that you have studied that are relevant to the question, and illustrate them with examples.

The (b) questions usually include terms like 'assess', 'evaluate' or 'discuss'. They are always worth 30 marks and test all three assessment objectives (though mainly AO2 and AO3). 3 marks are given for AO1, 18 for AO2 and 9 for AO3. So, in this type of question you need to **analyse**, **interpret** and **assess**, breaking down the ideas, giving illustrations, putting forward a view relevant to the question and justifying it. Do not be shy of giving your opinion in these questions, but you also need to persuade others of your opinion by arguing for it and taking into account criticisms of the view you are taking.

Crucial tips for assignment writing

- Answer the question, the whole question and nothing but the question. Keep your focus only on what is directly relevant throughout, and do not allow yourself to gradually deviate ('go off at a tangent') on to anything less relevant.
- Take note of the type of question it is—(a) or (b)—and stick to the appropriate form of writing to meet the assessment objective(s) being tested in that question. **Do not** offer an opinion or argue in (a) questions (you are wasting time if you do), and **do not** offer information for its own sake in (b) questions, only information that supports your argument.
- The key to successful (a) questions is to break down your ideas sufficiently to explain them clearly and in sufficient detail. Planning your answer beforehand

should help with this. Also, always remember to give specific examples to illustrate the point you are making.

- In (b) questions try to avoid the two extremes of either just blurting out your view without justification, or on the other hand being afraid to reach any opinion. Find a position in between these two extremes by experimenting with views and thinking about what kind of justification that can be given for them. You don't have to deeply believe in a position to put it forward in your answer and see if you can justify it.
- In (b) questions, also show awareness of the opposite side of the case and take into account the likely opposing arguments that will be made against yours, saying exactly why they are mistaken.
- Pay close attention to the quality of English in your answers and **check it before you hand it in**. Correct faults in grammar and spelling. These do affect the marks you are given for your work and need to be considered.

Writing formats and submission of assignments

Your tutor will advise you as to the formats he or she will accept assignments in. There are usually two options in distance learning, but some tutors prefer one or the other.

1. Wordprocessed assignments written on computer and either submitted by email or printed out and posted.
2. Handwritten work that is posted.

If your tutor accepts assignments submitted by email, please make sure you write them using software that he or she can open. This will usually mean Word for Windows, but check with your tutor which programs are acceptable. If in doubt, save your document as rich text format (rtf) and submit it in that form.

Do not handwrite a document and then scan it so you can send it by email. This creates a large file as it is still in a graphic format, and it has to be printed out by the tutor to be marked. If you have handwritten your assignment, then please send it by post.

Normally, assignments sent by post are first handed in to the link teacher at your school, who will send all the assignments from your group together in one envelope.

Make sure you include the following details on all assignments:

- Your name and the name of your school on the first page
- The question(s) you are answering—written out above your answers
- If there are multiple sheets, make sure these are numbered and attached, and that all have your name on in case they are separated.

As the exams approach it is a good idea to do at least some of your assignments in a handwritten form, and also in timed conditions, allowing the same amount of time you will have in the exam. You will have to handwrite in the exam (unless you have authorisation to use a laptop due to special needs) and it is a good idea to practise this.

Returned assignments

Your tutor will normally mark your assignments within two weeks of receiving them. Emailed assignments may be marked and returned electronically.

Assignments marked by hand and returned by post obviously take longer. They have to be sent each way and also be given back to you by the link teacher, so please be patient if it takes a while for your assignment to be returned.

Nevertheless, if you haven't had it back after 3 or 4 weeks, allowing for postal delays, do please check with your link teacher and email your tutor to find out what has happened to it.

When you get your assignment back, please look at the comments carefully and act so as to improve the weaknesses pointed out the next time you write an assignment. If you need more explanation, feel free to email your tutor and ask. If there are particularly big weaknesses, or your assignment has received a fail grade, it is a recommended that you rewrite and resubmit your assignment.

Put your returned assignment in your file next to the relevant topic, so that you can return to it and reconsider it in the course of your revision.

Mock exams

After you have completed each module you will normally sit a mock exam on it in the school. You will need to arrange the timing of this with your link teacher. The mock exam papers will then be sent to your tutor to be marked, in the same way that assignments are marked, and you should act similarly on the feedback received.

Contacts

Well, having read this far, it is almost time for you to start your work! If you are unsure about any of the issues covered in this study guide, or if you have any other questions relating to the course, write them down now on a sheet of paper. These might be about the course structure or content, the exams, the homework—or anything at all to do with your distance learning Philosophy course. You should bring your questions with you and ask your tutor, either when you meet him or her or at your next tutorial.

You can also contact your tutor at any (reasonable!) time throughout your course. Usually email is the first line of communication, but it is also possible to phone your tutor. This might be to help with homework or unit work, to discuss your progress, to talk about tutorials or exams. On page viii you will find a list of ways to contact your tutor. Not all of these will be filled in yet. Your tutor will give you the remaining numbers and address during your first tutorial or visit. Please use them.

Acknowledgement

Some of the assignment questions used in these resources are taken with permission from AQA specimen questions. These are all labelled 'AQA specimen question'. Those not labelled in this way have been devised by the author.

Module 1 (AQA Unit 2)

Topic 1 Tolerance

Unit 1 Philosophy and Philosophical Issues

Philosophy is a new subject for nearly everyone studying the AS, so you need some initial orientation before we plunge into the exam syllabus. This unit provides a general introduction to the nature of philosophy, the kinds of things it investigates, and the ways it goes about doing so. It should help you put the rest of the course into a wider context, and also make you aware of some of the skills you will need to develop when studying philosophy.

Learning objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the general nature of philosophy, and some of the main differing views about its scope and purpose
- Identify the main areas of study within philosophy
- Identify simple examples of faulty reasoning
- Evaluate the best ways of making a philosophical discussion productive.

Key terms:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| ■ Philosophy | ■ Epistemology |
| ■ Wisdom | ■ Ethics |
| ■ Analytical philosophy | ■ Logic |
| ■ Necessary conditions | ■ Argument |
| ■ Sufficient conditions | ■ Premise |
| ■ Metaphysics | ■ Conclusion |

Reading:

No specific reading from any textbook is required for this unit. All the resources required will be found here, except that you will be asked to do some research using the internet as part of your preparation. If possible you should also watch the half-hour video *What is Philosophy?* from 'The Examined Life' series.

Different views of philosophy

What is philosophy?

The derivation of the word **philosophy** is from the Greek *philo* (lover) and *sophia* (wisdom). A philosopher was thus originally a 'lover of wisdom'.

Activity 1

- 1 What do you understand by 'wisdom'? Think of an example of a person being *wise*. Look the word up in the dictionary if you're not sure (though one thing to bear in mind when using dictionaries is that they reflect the views of the dictionary writers!).



At vero eos e
accusamus e
iusto odio d
simos ducim
qui blanditi
praesentium
voluptatum d

- 2 Is wisdom different from knowledge? Could someone be wise without being knowledgeable, or *vice-versa*?

When Western philosophy originated in Ancient Greece, a 'philosopher' was also often a scientist (natural, social and political), a psychologist, a literary theorist, and a mathematician. Not only did the philosopher seek wisdom, but he investigated many different types of knowledge and tried to see them in relation to each other. But all this knowledge was seen as helping towards the goal of helping us to live rightly.

Since that time, academic study has become more and more specialised. Physics is now done by physicists, mathematics by mathematicians, etc. So what does that leave for philosophy to do? There is much debate about this. Should philosophy still be concerned with everything, keeping an overview of all knowledge? Or is it particularly concerned with how we should live? Or is it a specialised kind of science only concerned with the meanings of the words we use?

At this point, if possible, watch the video *What Is Philosophy?* from 'The Examined Life' series. As part of that video you will find different philosophers giving their ideas about the main purpose of philosophy. Their ideas can be roughly summarised under the following three headings.

1. 'It examines the foundations of other subjects'

Where other subjects assume certain truths and certain right ways of thinking, philosophy asks whether these are correct. For example, scientists investigate the universe, but philosophers ask if science is capable of reaching true conclusions about the universe (and indeed whether there is a universe at all!). Politics investigates the ways in which we are governed, but philosophy asks whether we should be governed at all.

2. 'It's an under-labourer for the sciences'

Science finds out new knowledge about the universe, but philosophy just clarifies the terms used by the scientists to avoid confusions. For example, biologists might develop the theory of evolution and find further evidence for it, but philosophers clarify the very terms 'theory' and 'evolution', which can be understood in very different ways.

3. 'It teaches us how to live'

Philosophy addresses what it is like to be a human, now, in your experience, and attempts to answer the most basic questions, like 'What is the point of my life?' and 'What should I do with it?' To do this it combines reasoning with the **wisdom** of experience.

How are these views similar or different from each other?

Of the three views here, the first is perhaps most descriptive of philosophy as a whole. The second represents a common approach in modern **analytic philosophy**, the view of philosophy which now dominates in universities in Britain and the US. The third represents the view of philosophy found more in ancient Greece and Rome, and in the Eastern traditions. We are now going to look more closely at the last view, followed by the second.

Ancient view: teaching us how to live

Philosophy is often thought to begin with Socrates in the 4th century. There were ancient philosophers before him (known as the Pre-Socratic philosophers, for example Parmenides and Heraclitus), but it was Socrates who first developed a particularly effective form of philosophical enquiry, often known as *Socratic questioning*.

Socrates himself wrote nothing down, so we only know about this method from the examples of it written down by his disciple Plato in the form of dialogues: philosophical conversations between Socrates and various questioners and disciples. Particularly in the earlier of these dialogues, Socrates claims to know nothing and to just be testing the consistency of others' views by questioning them. In this way he got his questioners to examine their own beliefs rather than just telling them what was right or wrong. In this respect he was one of the first great educators as well as a philosopher.

Socrates' basic technique was to take someone else's views, summarise them, and then work out their implications. He would go step by step, checking that the person agreed with him at each step, but then reach a conclusion which initially seemed absurd to his opponent but which apparently must be true if the original view is true. The opponent would then have to suddenly realise the absurdity of their view, and would then have to either admit they were wrong, or launch some kind of unconvincing blustering defence.

For Socrates this was a method to find truth, but truth was not just a set of 'facts' it was also how we should live. If we see beyond our false beliefs by questioning them, he believed that we would see morality to be true and justifiable.

If you have the video *What Is Philosophy?*, you will see a dramatised example of Socrates' questioning technique there. Alternatively you can read this example of it from one of Plato's dialogues, the *Gorgias*. Socrates is talking to Calicles about whether pleasure and good are the same, and Calicles maintains that they are. Socrates skilfully shows the absurdity of claiming this. His purpose, ultimately, is the practical one of showing Calicles that he shouldn't just seek pleasure.

SOCRATES. We must make a note of this. Calicles of Acharnae declared that pleasure and good are the same, but knowledge and courage are different from one another and different from good.

CALLICLES. But Socrates of Alopecce does not agree with him, or does he?

SOCRATES. He does not. Nor, I think, will Calicles, when he has examined himself properly. Tell me; do you not think that the fortunate are in the opposite state to the unfortunate?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. Then, if these states are opposite, is not the same true of them as of health and sickness? A man, I presume, is never both well and sick at the same time, and never ceases to be well and sick at the same time.

CALLICLES. What do you mean?

SOCRATES. Take any part of the body you like by itself; suppose a man has a malady of the eyes, what is called ophthalmia.

CALLICLES. Very well.

SOCRATES. He does not, I presume, enjoy health in his eyes at the same time?

CALLICLES. By no manner of means.

SOCRATES. Now, when he loses his ophthalmia, does he at that moment lose health in his eyes, so that he ends by losing both together?

CALLICLES. Certainly not.

SOCRATES. Such a conclusion would be illogical as well as surprising, wouldn't it?

CALLICLES. It would indeed.

SOCRATES. The truth is, I imagine, that he acquires and loses each condition by turns.

CALLICLES. I agree.

SOCRATES. Is the same true of strength and weakness?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. And of quickness and slowness?

CALLICLES. Of course.

SOCRATES. Now take good and happiness and their opposites, evil and misery; are both of these acquired by turns and lost by turns?

CALLICLES. Unquestionably.

SOCRATES. Then, if we find any pair of things that a man loses together and possesses together those things will not be good and evil. Are we agreed about this? Think well before you answer.

CALLICLES. I agree most emphatically.

SOCRATES. Go back now to what we agreed before. Did you say that hunger was pleasant or painful? I mean just hunger by itself.

CALLICLES. I should call that painful; but to eat when one is hungry is pleasant.

SOCRATES. I understand. Still, hunger in itself is painful, is it not?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. And thirst also?

CALLICLES. Certainly.

SOCRATES. Shall I go on with further questions, or do you agree that every state of want and desire is painful ?

CALLICLES. You need not labour the point. I agree.

SOCRATES. Very well. But drinking when one is thirsty you would call pleasant, wouldn't you?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. When you say 'drinking when one is thirsty', 'thirsty' is equivalent to 'in pain', is it not?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. And drinking is the satisfaction of the want and a pleasure?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. So it is in connexion with drinking that you speak of enjoyment?

CALLICLES. Certainly.

SOCRATES. When one is thirsty?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. And therefore in pain?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. Do you see what follows? When you speak of drinking, when one is thirsty, you imply the experience of pleasure and pain together. Can you say that these sensations don't occur together at the same time and in the same part of something which you may equally well, I think, call body or soul? Is this true or not?

CALLICLES. Quite true.

SOCRATES. Yet you say that it is impossible to be fortunate and unfortunate at the same time.

CALLICLES. I do.

SOCRATES. But you have agreed that it is possible to feel enjoyment when one is in pain.

CALLICLES. So it appears.

SOCRATES. Then enjoyment is not the same as good fortune nor pain as bad fortune, and pleasure is a different thing from good.... Tell me whether thirst and pleasure don't come to an end together for us all.

CALLICLES. Yes, they do.

SOCRATES. And the same with hunger and the other appetites? Does not the pleasure of satisfying them cease at the same moment as the desire?

CALLICLES. True.

SOCRATES. Then pains and pleasures come to an end together?

CALLICLES. Yes.

SOCRATES. But, as you agreed, good and evil do not come to an end together. Or do you wish to retract that admission?

CALLICLES. By no means. What then?

SOCRATES. The conclusion is, my friend, that good is not identical with pleasure nor evil with pain. The one pair of contraries comes to an end together and the other does not, because they are different. How then can pleasure possibly be the same as good or pain as evil?¹

Activity 2



At vero eos e
accusamus e
iusto odio di
simos ducim
qui blanditis
praesentium
voluptatum



Either watch the video reconstruction or read the passage above, or both, then answer these questions.

- 1 What advantages might this questioning technique have over other ways of teaching?

¹ Plato, *Gorgias* trans. Walter Hamilton, Penguin Classics, pp.96–100

2 Does it have any disadvantages? If so, what are they?

3 How might it help people to live better? Do you think it is likely to succeed?



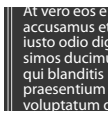
Activity 3



For the ancient philosophers, philosophy was as much a sort of therapy as a form of investigation. Below are some of the ancient schools of philosophy which developed after Socrates, which each had slightly different ways of linking thinking to therapy. Find out some of the basic ideas and approaches of each for them (using reference books or the internet), and note them in the space below (don't write more than will fit into the space!). Concentrate on the main ideas, not on historical details.



The Stoics



The Epicureans

The Sceptics



Analytic view: understanding the meanings of terms

In contrast to this broad view of philosophy, by the beginning of the 20th century some philosophers had developed a much narrower view of what philosophy is for. These philosophers are mainly British and American, and represent the view of philosophy that came to be known as *analytic* philosophy. Some important early analytic philosophers were Gottlob Frege (a German) and Bertrand Russell (an Englishman).

Analytic philosophy is so called because it assumes that the purpose of philosophy is *analysis*: that is, the breaking down of ideas to see what they imply, that is what else must be true if they are true. This often means trying to find out exactly what key words that we often use *mean*. For example, what is 'nature', or 'good'? A philosophical analysis of the meaning of these words usually goes much further than the definition you would find in a dictionary. It tries to find out *the necessary and sufficient conditions*.

To explain this idea let's do an analysis of the word 'crowd'. What exactly is a crowd? It may seem straightforward enough at first glance, but when you start looking into it more closely it isn't so at all.

The **necessary conditions** are what you could not manage without; what must be present to make up the thing you're talking about. So, for example, if I tried to define the term 'crowd', I would probably have to say it was a lot of individuals together. One individual is not a crowd, so there being more than one is *necessary* for there to be a crowd. But do we need more than two, or more than seventeen? We might then argue about what the necessary number to form a 'crowd' is.

The **sufficient conditions** are the totality of what is needed to make up the thing you're talking about. If you find the sufficient conditions for something, wherever those conditions apply, so does that thing. Even if you can establish that, say, six people are required to make a crowd and this is a necessary condition, not every group of six people are a crowd. Six people are not a *sufficient* condition.

Even if there were thousands of individuals, but they were all spaced out miles apart from each other, we probably wouldn't say they were a crowd. So perhaps we need to also say that they're all within a certain average distance of each other: let's say 2 feet (though we could certainly argue about this as well). So to give a full definition of a crowd, we'd have to say something like:

A crowd = A group of at least six individuals within an average distance of two feet of each other.

If this is to provide the *sufficient conditions* for a crowd, *any* group of at least six individuals within an average distance of two feet of each other must be a crowd, without exception. If you can think of an exception, then you haven't got the sufficient conditions pinned down yet. If, on the other hand, you can think of a crowd which is less than six individuals *or* which are further away than two feet from each other, the definition hasn't got the necessary conditions either.

Activity 4



- 1 Does that definition of 'crowd' seem adequate? Can you think of any exceptions which show that it hasn't got the necessary or sufficient conditions?

- 2 What might be wrong with the following definitions? Specify if it's failed to capture either the necessary or the sufficient conditions, or both. Can you think of any exceptions?
- a. **Art** is a human being expressing themselves by manipulating materials with skill.

 - b. **An elephant** is a wrinkly grey animal.

 - c. **A person** is a being who can think and be aware of its own existence.

 - d. **Death** is when your heart stops beating.

 - e. **Religion** is the worship of God.



Analysis like this has always been part of philosophy, but analytic philosophers claim that it is the main business of philosophy. For analytic philosophers, philosophy should **not** be trying to find out what is ultimately true or ultimately good. Investigating the world to find out what is true about it (as far as we can) is the role of science, but philosophy just works out what is implied by what we already assume to be true. It makes our ideas clearer through thought and reflection, and removes confusions in them. It can only judge them to be consistent or inconsistent, never right or wrong.

The analytic approach to philosophy still dominates the majority of Philosophy departments in UK and US universities, but it is not the only view of philosophy in the modern world. The alternative, dominant in France, Germany, and other continental European countries, is often known as 'Continental' Philosophy. Continental philosophers are still likely to be concerned with issues like truth, the meaning of life, and how to live, and to be influenced by other disciplines (like psychology) outside philosophy. Analytic philosophers tend to accuse Continental philosophers of being vague wafflers, whilst Continental philosophers accuse analytic philosophers of being narrow-minded.

Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy

'Philosophy' as a subject taught in Western colleges and universities also concentrates almost exclusively on the Western tradition of philosophy: that is, the philosophy which developed in Europe and in places where formerly European people settled, such as America. But there are many other philosophical traditions: The Chinese Philosophy which goes back to Confucius and Lao Tze, the Indian Philosophy which developed with Hinduism and Buddhism, Islamic Philosophy, and African Philosophy. Occasionally these philosophies are taken seriously by

university philosophy departments in the West, but more usually they are left to scholars of Religious Studies. Hence they are not available for study in A level Philosophy (though Hindu or Buddhist philosophy can be studied for Religious Studies). Why is this?

One reason is that they do not fit the analytic understanding of what philosophy is. These philosophies do deal with many of the same questions as Western philosophy, but always from quite a practical standpoint, asking how we should live. They are thus often considered to be 'religious'. But this is equally true of Ancient Greek philosophy. Socrates, the founder of Western Philosophy, was just as much concerned with how we should live our lives as Confucius or the Buddha. Yet Ancient Greek philosophy is widely accepted to be 'philosophy'. So probably the real reason that Eastern Philosophy is excluded is just cultural tradition. The Ancient Greeks are a bit more familiar in the Western cultural tradition than the Ancient Chinese or Ancient Indians, and had more effect on our history.

In philosophy, however, no questions are barred. Even if for the moment we focus only on Western philosophy, we can still legitimately ask, "What effect does this have?" or "Do we only see things in a certain way because of a Western conditioning?" So, even if philosophy is usually the product of one particular culture, it's still possible to use it to try to get beyond the limitations of that culture. A number of philosophers in the Western tradition seem to have been influenced in some way by contact with the East to question the assumptions of their own culture: for example Pyrrho of Elis, the founder of scepticism in ancient Greece, and Schopenhauer in the 19th century.

Different areas of Philosophy

Activity 5

Below you will see a diagram of the different sub-divisions of philosophy. Here is a list of some different topics in philosophy. See if you can allocate them to the appropriate areas of the subject.

Whether it is right to eat animals

The existence of the soul

Whether God exists

The justification of punishment

The nature of being

Whether our self can be split

Whether we can claim to know about what we see

Whether sociology is a science

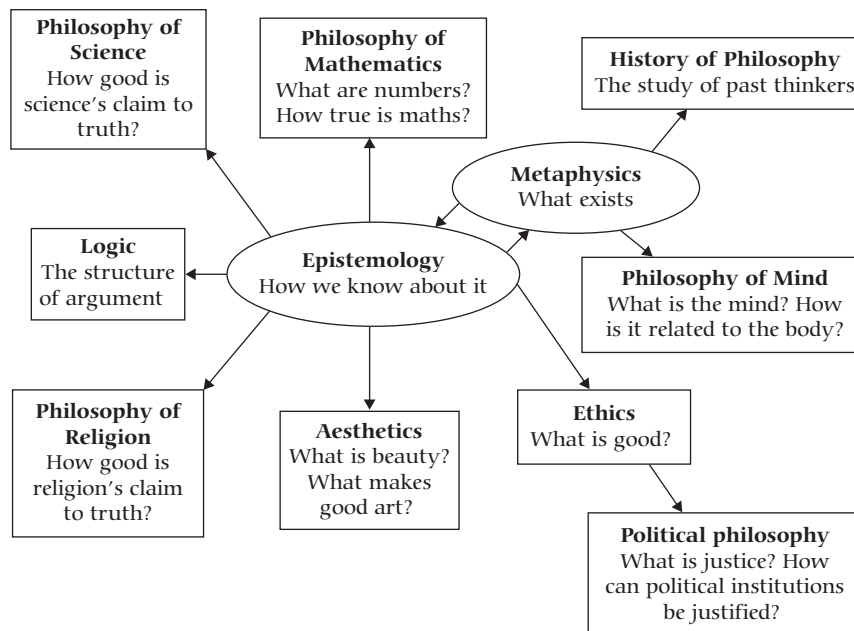
Whether a landscape can be more beautiful than a painting

Whether $2 + 2 = 4$

What Kant said

Whether a pink kangaroo is a pink kangaroo

What must be true if all wlivgs are gruks and gruks always flub



In the AS Philosophy course we will be studying one area from **metaphysics** (freewill and determinism), one area from political philosophy (tolerance), one area from philosophy of mind (persons), and one area of **epistemology** (reason and experience). In the A2 we go on to study ethics, political philosophy, and a text from the history of philosophy (*Plato's Republic*).

You will find, though, that each of these areas overlaps with others, and that it is impossible to discuss anything much in philosophy without some reference to the core issues of epistemology and metaphysics. For example, one cannot talk about what is good (**ethics**) without also asking what *is* (metaphysics) and *how we know* what is good (epistemology).

Skills in Philosophy

Argument

The most important skill in philosophy is the skill of **argument**. Philosophy is not the only subject where you will need to argue, but it is the one in which argument is vital: there is really nothing else in philosophy but a lot of arguments!

There is now an alternative AS/A Level course available which looks solely at arguments: Critical Thinking. If you have the opportunity to study Critical Thinking alongside Philosophy do take it, as the two subjects go together very well. However, for the moment we will have to assume that you do not have any experience of Critical Thinking.

What is an argument?

The sense in which we mean argument here can be taken as a *train of reasoning given in support of a conclusion*. It does not mean a row where two people shout at each other!

So the key elements which must be present in an argument are

- One or more **premises** (assumptions made at the beginning)
- A **conclusion** which is different from those premises
- Some kind of linking which shows that the conclusion is claimed to be true because the premises are claimed to be true.

Premises

The premises are often given at the beginning of an argument, but not always. For example:

Martha never goes out without her coat, and her coat isn't in the hall, so she must have gone out.

Here the premises are (1) Martha never goes out without her coat, and (2) Her coat isn't in the hall. This is relatively easy to spot.

However, premises are also often given as reasons backing up a conclusion which has already been offered. You can usually spot this by the use of the words 'because' or 'since'.

Martha must have gone out, because her coat isn't in the hall and she never goes out without it.

Premises may be in the form of straightforward statements like those above, statements about the relationship between the categories of two types of thing (all As are Bs, some As are Bs, or no As are Bs), theoretical statements (if A, then B) or statements of what is true. All of the following could be examples of premises:

If it rains today, it won't last very long.

Everyone studying for AS Levels fulfils the GCSE qualifications.

Some bears are brown.

It is raining today.

Of course, whenever you encounter such statements it does not mean that they are premises: they must be linked to a *conclusion* in order to become premises.

Conclusions

A conclusion is distinguished from an ordinary statement because it is linked to one or more premises. Usually you can spot when a conclusion is about to appear by the presence of certain words or phrases: *therefore, hence, thus, so, consequently, which proves that, it follows that, etc.* There is not always a conclusion present when these words are used, but if you find them and you can also identify a premise or premises, then there is likely to be a conclusion present.

Identifying arguments

If you can identify both premises and a conclusion, then you have an argument. The simplest form of argument is called a *syllogism*. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle identified syllogisms and produced the famous example:

All men are mortal.

Socrates is a man.

Therefore Socrates is mortal.

Very few arguments are as clear as this, however. There are arguments all around us hidden in the midst of a lot of other information. The following is an example from George Orwell's book *Down and Out in Paris and London* where he is reflecting on the life of the *plongeur* (a washer-up in hotels or restaurants: in his time a very menial and badly-paid job where excessive hours were often worked):

Is a plongeur's work really necessary to civilisation? ... He is the slave of a hotel or a restaurant, and his slavery is more or less useless. For, after all, where is the real need of big hotels and smart restaurants? They are supposed to provide luxury, but in reality they provide only a cheap, shoddy imitation of it. Nearly everyone hates hotels. Some restaurants are better than others, but it is impossible to get as good a meal in a restaurant as one can get, for the same expense, in a private house. No doubt hotels and restaurants must exist, but there is no need that they should enslave hundreds of people. What makes the work in them is not the essentials; it is the shams that are supposed to represent luxury. Smartness, as it is called, means, in effect, that the staff work more and the customers pay more; no one benefits except the proprietor, who will presently buy himself a striped villa in Deauville. Essentially, a 'smart' hotel is a place

where a hundred people toil like devils in order that two hundred may pay through the nose for things they do not really want. If the nonsense were cut out of hotels and restaurants, and the work done with simple efficiency, plongeurs might work six or eight hours a day instead of ten or fifteen².

Here Orwell provides lots of factual information to back up his case, but the essential argument can be reduced to the following:

- Premise 1: Plongeurs are overworked by hotels and restaurants.
- Premise 2: Much of the work done in hotels and restaurants is unnecessary.
- Conclusion: Therefore it is unnecessary to overwork plongeurs.

To see the essential argument in a passage of writing, it is often necessary to ignore a lot of detail and summarise confidently. Try reading the text through, then noting down the essentials of the argument without looking at the text. You are sometimes more likely to get confused if you look for the premises and conclusion in the text when you are more likely to find it in your overall impression of the text.

Judging arguments

Once you are clear about the argument in front of you, then it is much easier to criticise it when it is not a good argument. Let's go back to the basic 'all men are mortal' argument. Suppose that instead of the form given above, it read:

Many Greeks like bouzouki music.
Socrates was Greek.
So Socrates must have liked bouzouki music.

This *not* a sound argument. There is a fault in the reasoning. Just because *many* Greeks like bouzouki music it does not follow that all Greeks do (especially ones that lived more than 2000 years ago!). So it's impossible to conclude that just because Socrates was Greek that he necessarily liked bouzouki music.

Or take this example:

Cats like eating mice.
Socrates was a cat.
So Socrates must have liked eating mice.

This is perfectly good reasoning, but it's based on untrue premises. If Socrates was a cat he would have liked eating mice, but Socrates was not a cat, he was a human philosopher. If the argument is about the Greek philosopher, and not your pet cat whom you've just named 'Socrates', it is a bad argument because based on false premises.

So, arguments can be criticised either because the reasoning is false (the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises) or because the premises are false.

Activity 6



First, rewrite the arguments which follow in a way which makes it clear which are the premises and which the conclusions.

Then try to decide whether (a) the premises, and (b) the reasoning is good or bad in each of these examples. The reasoning will only be good if the conclusion must follow from the premises (i.e. the conclusion must be true if the premises are true), and it will only be bad if the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises, for example because there are other possibilities. You might also want to question whether the premises are true, but keep this separate from faults in the reasoning.

- 1 'Gordon Brown is a member of the Labour Party and everyone knows that Labour Party members are all hypocrites. All his policies are based on hypocritical motives.'

- 2 'Look, you can't be a member of the club unless you know Andy, and if you know Andy, you must know he's got red hair. Everyone in the club knows Andy's got red hair.'

- 3 'When I heard you speaking French I assumed you were a Frenchman. Frenchmen speak French, after all. It was a natural mistake.'

- 4 'She can't be married: she's only fifteen. In this country you've got to be sixteen to be married, haven't you, and she's English.'

- 5 'I know there are lots of gays in Cambridge. If you come from Cambridge, you must be gay.'

- 6 'She's not a very good manager so they won't have given her the job. If she was good, of course she'd get it.'

- 7 'She must have said no; I saw him there on his own. If she didn't come either she turned him down or he didn't have the courage to ask her.'

- 8 'People who go to university have to be fairly bright. If he didn't go to university ... Well, he must be stupid!'



Discussion

A lot of philosophy teaching is based on discussion, and discussion can be a very effective way of learning philosophy. However, there are effective and ineffective ways to hold a discussion. An effective discussion will be one which achieves the goal of helping the people involved in it learn or understand more about the topic, or to develop their reasoning about it. An ineffective discussion is one that will not help anyone to understand more; and if it only helps some of the participants and not others, it will have been less effective than it might have been.

Activity 7



Below is a list of ways of behaving in a discussion. Fill in below whether you think that way of behaving is likely to help the discussion to be effective or ineffective, and why. Also reflect on when you last had a discussion and note which of these things (whether helpful or unhelpful) you did: you do not have to confess the unhelpful ones in the tutorial! The goal of the exercise is just to get you reflecting for yourself on how you discuss, and perhaps how you could improve your discussion skills.

Ways of behaving during discussion	Helpful or unhelpful in making discussion effective?	Why is it helpful or unhelpful?	Do you do it? In what way?
Listening to other people's contributions			
Taking notes on what others are saying to make sure you remember it correctly			
Explaining your idea in great detail			
Interrupting someone else because your idea is more important			
Pausing to make sure that no-one else wants to contribute at that point			
Talking loudly over someone else on the other side of the room			
Encouraging someone else to contribute and making space for them			
Getting deeply involved in a discussion with one other person, ignoring the rest			
Raising your hand when you want to contribute but can't get a word in			
Saying the first thing that comes into your head when it's quiet			
Not saying anything because it may not be right			
Summarising the point the discussion has reached from time to time			
Letting someone else make your point for you because they can say it better			

Unit 1.1: Review

You should now be able to:

- Explain the general nature of philosophy, and some of the main differing views about its scope and purpose.
- Identify the main areas of study within philosophy
- Identify simple examples of faulty reasoning
- Evaluate the best ways of making a philosophical discussion productive

Test yourself: key terms

- Philosophy
- Wisdom
- Analytical philosophy
- Necessary conditions
- Sufficient conditions
- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Logic
- Argument
- Premise
- Conclusion

Topic 1 Tolerance

Unit 2 What is Tolerance?

We now start the first topic: tolerance. This is one aspect of the area of Philosophy known as Political Philosophy, which will be explored in more depth in the A2.

When and why should we tolerate the actions of others even when we disagree with them? In this first unit we will introduce the concept of tolerance, explore the ways in which tolerance forms an important part of the modern world, and the wide range of issues that are connected with it.

Learning objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Give a definition of the concept of tolerance
- Explain the relationship between tolerance and liberal democracy
- Explain the relationship between the concepts of tolerance and those of moral neutrality, civility and respect.

Key terms:

- Tolerance
- Liberalism
- Democracy
- Rights
- Pluralism
- Moral neutrality
- Utilitarianism
- Civility
- Respect

Reading:

There is no reading required for this unit apart from what is included in these course notes. However, you may find it helpful to begin reading chapter 6 of Atherton *et al.*

What is tolerance?

- A mother looks on with a grimace as a small child violently kicks his teddy bear, thinking that this is a much better outlet for his frustration than kicking his younger sister.
- A disapproving older female teacher, close to retirement and brought up in a less permissive age, keeps her thoughts to herself as she observes a female student in crop top, mini-skirt and too much make-up.
- A middle-aged heterosexual couple are shopping in the city centre when they find themselves watching a gay pride march, with men in outrageous pink costumes: one turns to the other and says, “Well, it may not be to our taste, but they’ve got a right to do it.”
- A Labour MP on election night who has just lost his constituency after 15 years representing it, deliberately goes up to his victorious Conservative opponent (whose policies he has been heatedly attacking all through the campaign), shakes her hand and congratulates her.

All these people are exhibiting **tolerance**. Although they disapprove of another person’s actions in some respect, they nevertheless acknowledge that the other people should be allowed to behave in the disapproved-of way if they wish. In each case they are distinguishing between their own most direct wishes and the rights and viewpoints of others, and acknowledging that there are important reasons for letting others do what they like without interference, and for accepting the consequences.

The other thing that these four examples seem to have in common is that they are all manifesting distinctly modern, Western attitudes. It is difficult to imagine the first three taking place in the Victorian Age, or in a more traditional society today—the disapproved-of behaviour would have been denounced as morally offensive and stopped pretty quickly. The final example, of congratulating a political opponent, might have happened in Victorian times, but could hardly be imagined in the Middle Ages or in countries today where violent dictatorship still rules. Tolerance is closely associated with modern *liberal democracy*. In discussing tolerance we are discussing one of the things that is most distinctive about our society, and asking whether it is justified—and if so why. It is also worth noting that it is only because of tolerance that we are even able to study this subject and discuss whether tolerance is right!

So what is tolerance? In the useful analysis of Rainer Forst (discussed in more detail in Atherton *et al.*, pp. 175–176), tolerance has three components:

1. *Objection*: the tolerant person objects in some way to what he/she is tolerating. This may be a moral, political, or religious objection, or it may be just a matter of taste. There is no need to tolerate something one approves or likes!
2. *Acceptance*: the tolerant person nevertheless accepts what he/she is tolerating because of some further or higher reflection. It may be better for everyone to allow it in the end, or it may be recognised as harmless and allowed by law.
3. *Rejection*: the tolerant person also needs a fairly clear idea of why he/she is tolerating what is disapproved, and thus of in what circumstances he/she would *not* tolerate it and would attempt to stop it. Tolerance needs to have boundaries. The mother might well say to herself that she *would* interfere if the little sister rather than the teddy bear was the target; the teacher *would* make her disapproval known if the student was wandering round the college with no clothes at all; the heterosexual couple would tolerate a gay pride march with harmless men dressed in fluffy pink tutus, but not a march of sadists torturing children on their floats; and the Labour politician might congratulate a Conservative opponent, but he would draw the line at congratulating a Fascist if he were victorious. To be tolerant, Forst says, we need an idea in the background of when we would not be.

Tolerance also requires that we have some power to do something about what we are tolerating, either because we are in a position of authority or because

we at least have a say and could make our feelings known and influence others about it. The mother and the teacher in the above examples are in positions of authority, and the heterosexual couple and the politician could probably influence others if they let intolerant feelings be known. The couple could write to their local newspaper and their councillor protesting against the gay pride march, and if the politician had coldly refused to congratulate his opponent the media would probably notice. Someone who is in a position of having to suffer another's behaviour whilst being powerless or passive is not being tolerant: a defenceless victim of violence who does not attempt to fight back is not being tolerant, nor is an indifferent teenager who doesn't care about what is happening in her local community.

Activity 1



Read the following examples, and decide whether you think they are examples of tolerance. If so, identify the elements of objection and acceptance and of what would be rejected. If they are not examples of tolerance, say why not.

- 1 A prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp during the Second World War is asked to 'volunteer' to take part in medical experiments. Nazi doctors used Jewish prisoners as the subjects of harmful experiments, which they would consider unethical if done on 'Aryan' Germans. Feeling that she is likely to die anyway of starvation and overwork, and thinking that perhaps the experiments might at least bring relief from enforced hard labour in freezing winter conditions, she agrees.
- 2 A spoilt five-year-old boy stays with his doting grandparents for a weekend. During this time he refuses to eat anything but jam sandwiches, uses the sandpit as a toilet and sets fire to the cat's tail, but the grandparents raise no objections whatever he does.
- 3 A conservative man in the United States votes for a Republican candidate because he pledges to uphold the continued right of gun ownership. 'I don't own a gun myself: it's too dangerous if the children get hold of it,' he tells a neighbour, 'But the right to bear arms is in the constitution, and I'll fight for that.'
- 4 A woman lives in a flat right above a professional concert pianist, who has a grand piano in his flat and practises for about 8 hours a day. She finds the continued noise irritating, but does not complain. 'As long as he doesn't do it at night and disturb my sleep,' she tells a friend, 'I can put up with it. It is his job and he needs to earn a living like the rest of us.'

- 5 A local man tells off two white boys who are shouting racist abuse and throwing stones at a Muslim boy from a Pakistani family. 'How would you like it,' he says, 'if you went to Pakistan and his relatives threw stones at you? You may not like his religion, but he's not doing you any harm. Live and let live is what I say.'

Liberal democracy

Why democracy requires tolerance

The word **democracy** is often used loosely, but it means government by the people. Strictly speaking the system we have in the UK and in most of Europe is *representative democracy*, where the people elect MPs, local councillors, etc, who then represent their interests when decisions are being made in parliament or in the local council chamber. Whatever the limitations of this system, it has many advantages over the more primitive system where different groups make war against each other to seize power. Instead of having to assert our opinion through violence, or being unable to do so if we lack power, democracy allows all interests to be peacefully represented. Instead of being resolved through physical conflict, differences are settled through voting.

There is a close relationship between democracy and tolerance, because in order to settle your differences in this peaceful way with people you strongly disagree with, you have to tolerate them and allow them to express their view. If things are put to a vote and you lose, you also have to abide by the outcome. Democracy starts to break down if those who strongly disagree with those in power start to 'take the law into their own hands' and abandon the peaceful procedures of democracy for violent resistance. It also breaks down if those in power will not hand over power when they are defeated in an election. Whatever your disagreements, you need to play by the rules and tolerate your opponents' activities.

So, democracy involves the three elements of Forst's definition of tolerance in this way:

1. *Objection*: Opposing political groups object to each others' views and policies. For example, the Labour party objects to the Conservative party's policies, and peace groups had major demonstrations in 2003 to voice their objection to the Iraq war.
2. *Acceptance*: Nevertheless, different political groups in a democracy accept the outcome of elections and right of an elected government to rule, however much they disagree with it. The elected government also accepts the right of others to criticise it. The Labour party (as I write in 2008) are in power in the UK, but they tolerate Conservative criticism rather than employing the police to round up all the Tories and throw them into prison! In the UK we take this kind of political tolerance for granted, but there are other countries (for example Burma) where it does not exist.
3. *Rejection*: Nevertheless there are circumstances where the government would not accept opposition: for example if it became violent, as in the case of terrorist groups. There are also circumstances where the opposition would no longer tolerate the government, but might try to use force to overthrow it. For example, if the Prime Minister suspended all elections and declared himself dictator for life.

What makes democracy liberal?

Democracy in the Western world has also been accompanied by advancing **liberalism**. Liberalism in this general sense must not be confused with the policies of parties that specifically call themselves 'liberal', for example the Liberal Democrat Party. Liberalism is a broad philosophy which has influenced all the

major democracies of the Western world, whether Liberals, Social Democrats or Conservatives are in power. Basically liberalism is the belief that harmless activities should be tolerated, that the power of governments should be limited, and that individuals should have rights that they can assert against governments as well as anyone else who tries to oppress them.

Liberalism has particularly involved the development of two kinds of practices in Western democracy: those of individual **rights** and of **pluralism**. Both of these have encouraged the spread of tolerance.

Individual rights are legal guarantees that as individuals we will be allowed to have or do certain things without interference (or sometimes that we will receive certain benefits that we are entitled to). In a Western democracy, we have a right to life, to property ownership, to freedom of movement and association, and freedom of religious observance. In other words, if anyone interferes with our right to life by killing us, or our right to property by stealing from us, or our right to freedom of movement by obstructing or falsely imprisoning us, they should be punished by law. We can also follow whatever religious practices we wish (so long as they don't involve harming others) without being interfered with by the police or by anyone else.

We also have a right to legal representation if we are arrested, to education in childhood, and to healthcare if we are ill. These are just some of the many rights that we tend to take for granted in a liberal democracy.

Individual rights often involve tolerance, because they involve both the state not interfering with individuals even when it disapproves, and individuals not interfering with each other when they disapprove. I may deeply dislike Fred Bloggs, but that doesn't justify me in killing him. I may find the excessive Christmas lights all round his house in the worst possible taste, but that doesn't justify my stealing or vandalising them. I may think his religion is wrong, but that doesn't justify my blocking his way to church, or even storming in and disrupting the service by heckling. The local police may feel similarly about Fred Bloggs, but as long as he doesn't commit any crimes, they can't arrest him for his tasteless Christmas lights or his mistaken religion.

Pluralism involves the recognition that there are different groups of people with different points of view, which should all be tolerated. There is not one single correct viewpoint which should be imposed. These different groups may be racial, religious, political, cultural, economic, or just social, but their differences from the majority, or differences from the values of those who run the government, should be tolerated.

One particularly important cause of the development of pluralism in European history has been the **Reformation** which started the Protestant churches from the 16th century. From this point there was no longer one single Christian church in Western Europe, but many. This did cause conflicts, but gradually the different churches learned to tolerate each other. Tolerance between different groups of Christians then made it easier for religious tolerance to be extended to other religions (such as Islam or Buddhism), and also for other kinds of disagreement to be tolerated.

During the 20th century, increasingly easy **international travel**, **communications** such as the internet, and **migration** also greatly increased people's awareness of different cultures and religions. Different racial groups have managed to live together on the basis of tolerance in many different places. Every traveller on a foreign holiday, and all those with neighbours of a different culture or religion, are obliged to exercise tolerance of varying customs and attitudes.

Activity 2



- 1 Why has the development of democracy in the Western world been associated with tolerance?
- 2 Use the internet to research the situation in a country of the world that does not have democracy (Burma, China and Saudi Arabia are good examples). What examples of intolerance have you found in this country related to their lack of democracy?
- 3 Give your own example of an individual right, and explain what kinds of tolerance are associated with this right.
- 4 Give your own example of a way that pluralism has led to increasing tolerance in the UK.

Tolerance and moral neutrality

Moral neutrality to avoid conflict

One of the major sources of intolerance is moral disagreement. We may object so strongly to the morality of someone else that we try to interfere with their actions, or even use violence against them.

One recent extreme example of this in the United States is the shooting of doctors who perform abortions by extreme anti-abortion activists. For these activists, the killing of human foetuses in abortion was believed to be equivalent to murder, and therefore these doctors deserved death as a capital punishment for murder. The activists' sense of outrage presumably prevented them from considering whether there were any alternative ways of looking at the issue that might be valid. Should killing a foetus really be ranked with killing a person, and even if the doctors were murderers, would that justify murdering them?

The anti-abortionists might try to justify their intolerant actions by appealing to a source of moral authority; for example, the Bible could be quoted to support the idea that even foetuses before birth have the full moral status of other human beings (because they are made in God's image—see Genesis 1:27) and that a murderer should be executed (see Exodus 21:12). The doctors, for their part, could justify performing abortions on the grounds that an abortion can remove future suffering for a woman with an unwanted pregnancy, perhaps pregnant as a result of rape or with a severely disabled foetus. For them the overall reduction of suffering is the moral standard to be used, not an appeal to one particular interpretation of certain passages of the Bible.

Where people have completely different moral standards, starting from different starting-points, like this, it seems that the only way for the government to avoid conflict is to adopt a position of **moral neutrality**. The law allows abortion in certain carefully-defined circumstances. If doctors are following the law they are allowed (but not compelled) to perform abortions, and protesters are not allowed to interfere at all, let alone shoot the doctors. The law tolerates abortion amongst those who seek it and believe it is justified, despite the fact that others strenuously object to it. The objectors, for their part, are allowed to protest and to campaign on the subject. The law does not say that abortion is right or wrong, but tries to keep the peace by tolerating it so long as it fulfils certain strict requirements.

Another example is the practice of sado-masochism. Sado-masochists are people who get sexual pleasure out of having pain inflicted on them. Those who object to sado-masochism are likely to do so on (probably religious) moral grounds. For example, they might believe that it goes against natural sexuality as designed by God. Sado-masochists, on the other hand, will simply say that they get pleasure from the practice, and ask what is wrong with pleasure gained from having pain inflicted on one with full consent. An attitude of tolerant moral neutrality will not attempt to decide if the practice is morally right or wrong, but merely take into account that there is one group of people who perform the practice and another group that disapprove of it. That disapproval by itself is not enough to justify any interference with the practice.

Does tolerance necessarily involve moral neutrality?

In both these examples, there are clear limits to the moral tolerance involved. Sado-masochism which was not inflicted with the full consent of all involved would not be permissible. Similarly, in the UK unnecessary abortion for trivial reasons, without the consent of two doctors who have judged it to be necessary, would not be tolerated. The boundaries in both cases are based on the ideas of **harm** and **consent**. Harm done without consent in the case of sado-masochism would justify the interference of the law. In the case of abortion, harm done to the foetus unnecessarily, without the justification of avoiding greater harm to the mother, is also unjustified.

The *acceptance* element of tolerance in these kind of cases means suspending moral judgement, but now when we get to the boundaries of tolerance we find that moral judgements are reappearing. Why is it wrong to inflict harm on someone against their consent? Tolerance here does not seem to involve moral neutrality any more.

There are several possible answers to this:

1. Morality is not involved at all. It can be argued that avoiding harm is not really a moral issue, just a matter of common agreement. The government and the law in a democracy only exist to serve the people. While different groups

of people may disagree on some moral issues, they are pretty much agreed in wanting the state to stop harm to people. We expect the police to protect victims of violence that is inflicted on people without consent, and the police are just following that expectation and desire on the part of 99% of the public.

This approach, however, has the drawback that it doesn't seem to reflect the moral concern with which people often do view harm. Most of us would probably say that criminals *should not* do harm to others, and in saying that we are already thinking in a moral way. Morality is a very basic part of the way we think.

2. Morality should only apply to issues of harm. Alternatively it can be argued that morality does apply to issues of harm, but not to other kinds of issues. Harm is a moral issue (and not just because people agree about it) but practices such as sado-masochism are not.

But why should we draw the line here? And what are the grounds of morality? If morality is to justify stopping people from suffering harm, and it is not just a matter of common agreement, then there must be some other justification for it. But people are not likely to agree on that justification or about how far it goes.

3. Morality justifies tolerance. The other possible approach is to argue that the correct form of morality is sophisticated enough to justify tolerance of different moral practices up to a certain point, as well as interference beyond that point. It is not necessary to be morally neutral to practise tolerance, just to have a sufficiently sophisticated account of morality which takes into account the complexity of modern society. For example, one could argue that one should act so as to bring about more pleasure and less suffering (a **Utilitarian** approach). Where direct harm is involved, that justifies one in interfering to prevent harm. On the other hand, where practices just bring about more pleasure in the end and do not cause harm (like sado-masochism) it brings about more pleasure and less pain to tolerate such practices.

The criticisms of this approach are likely to centre around whether it is accepted by everyone. Does everyone who practises tolerance need to have such a sophisticated moral view, or might they just be suspending their morality in order to be tolerant?

Activity 3



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- 1 Why can it be argued that tolerance requires moral neutrality?

- 2 Give your own example of a moral disagreement in which the government and the law are morally neutral and different practices are tolerated.

Tolerance and respect

Respect involves the recognition that another person is a self-conscious human being as I am myself. I would like to be recognised as a self-conscious human being by others, so if I am to be consistent I should also show a recognition of others as people. The key idea here is **reciprocity**: treating others as I would like to be treated myself, and recognising that I am just one amongst them. According to the great 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant, this is the main basis of morality.

Treating someone else with respect might overlap quite a lot with treating them with civility. I can be polite to them, because that is part of what it means to recognise them as another person, and that is how I would like to be treated myself. But respect also means that, for example, I would also take their ideas seriously, consider their welfare and their interests, and include them in whatever discussion is going on whenever possible. I would recognise them as having human rights and as having a legitimate voice, whatever their background and whatever their views. This does not necessarily mean that I will agree, or that I will help them in their cause: but it does mean that I will listen.

Respect might also mean concern for basic physical welfare. The confinement of Africans on slave ships in the 18th century, for example, chained up in horrendously cramped conditions, could be said to lack the basic respect due to other human beings. Similarly a neglected child whose basic needs for food, love and stimulus are not met is not being treated with respect. There is a close relationship between respect for people and recognition of their human rights.

Tolerance involves maintaining a respect for other people even when you disagree with them. The recognition that they are also people seems to form an important part of the impulse towards tolerance. However, it may not be the whole of tolerance. It may be possible to be respectful and yet intolerant at the same time, by showing a full recognition of another person and yet not permitting them to do something which might reasonably be tolerated. Imagine a skilled diplomat from a great power addressing the president of a new small nation seeking international recognition, not just with civility but with great respect, taking into account the president's point of view and explaining the reasons for everything. However, in the end the diplomat still has to deliver the intolerant message of his government: we cannot recognise your country as a nation. For tolerance to be present perhaps the content of the message has to be more in harmony with the way in which it is delivered.

Should a culture that encourages tolerance, civility and respect for others be nurtured? So far we have really just been considering what such a culture consists in and why it is an important aspect of our society. The philosophical arguments which support it need to be considered more fully in the next unit.

Activity 4

- 1 In what ways does civility seem to form an aspect of tolerance?



2 What are the differences between the concepts of civility, respect, and tolerance?

3 In what ways does respect seem to form an aspect of tolerance?

4 How important do you think civility and respect are? Give reasons for your answer.



Unit 1.2: Review

You should now be able to:

- Give a definition of the concept of tolerance
- Explain the relationship between tolerance and liberal democracy
- Explain the relationship between the concepts of tolerance and those of moral neutrality, civility and respect.

Test yourself: key terms

- Tolerance
- Liberalism
- Democracy
- Rights
- Pluralism
- Moral neutrality
- Utilitarianism
- Civility
- Respect