



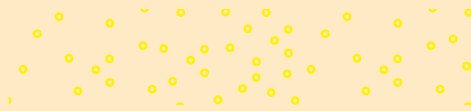
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# The Philosophical Journey

*An Interactive Approach*

William F. Lawhead

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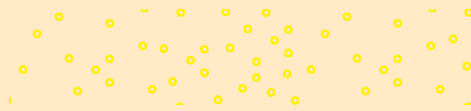


**THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
JOURNEY**  
*An Interactive Approach*

*Seventh Edition*

**William F. Lawhead**

*University of Mississippi*





## THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY: AN INTERACTIVE APPROACH, SEVENTH EDITION

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# Preface

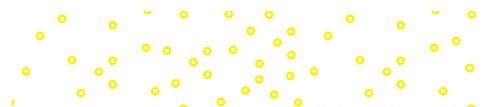
Socrates once complained in the *Protagoras* that eloquent orators and books are alike in that they provide massive amounts of information, “but if one asks any of them an additional question . . . they cannot either answer or ask a question on their own account.” As I wrote this book, my challenge was to see to what degree I could provide a counterexample to Socrates’ claim. Of course, Socrates is correct: There is no substitute for live philosophical conversations and debates. However, as you get acquainted with this book, you will find that it does ask you questions and provokes you to ask questions in turn. Instead of simply presenting information for you to passively absorb, its many exercises require your active involvement, and some will even provide the opportunity for you to dialogue with your friends about the philosophical issues discussed. For this reason, I chose the title *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach*.

Rather than being like a slide show of landscapes you have never visited, this book is a guided, exploratory journey in which you will have to scout the terrain yourself. I hope that the journey will be fun, but there is also much to be done en route. This philosophy text is as interactive as is possible within the medium of paper and ink. Students taking courses in philosophy are often asked, “What can you do with philosophy?” After taking this philosophical journey I have planned for you, I hope that you will realize that the really important question is, “What can philosophy do with you?” You will certainly not agree with everything you will read in these pages, but do anticipate the fact that engaging with these ideas will not leave you unchanged.

## ORGANIZATION

This book presents philosophy by introducing the major philosophical topics, questions, positions, and philosophers. The different chapters are independent enough that they could be read in a different order if one so desired. However, you should start with the overview (section 1.0) in chapter 1, which will prepare you for the journey. The remaining five chapters then lead into each of the major areas of philosophy. The first section of each chapter, as well as each subtopic, has the following features:

- *Scouting the Territory*—a scenario that raises engaging, philosophical questions.
- *Charting the Terrain*—a more precise presentation of the topic and its significance.
- *Choosing a Path*—a presentation of the opposing alternatives to help you clarify your own thinking on the issue.
- *Conceptual Tools*—an occasional feature that introduces important distinctions, definitions, or terminology as helpful tools for understanding the topic.
- *What Do I Think?*—a questionnaire that will help you identify your current stand on the issue. An answer key will show you how philosophers label your own position and which answers are incompatible.



The opening section of each topic will be followed by sections that present and analyze the different alternatives that can be taken on the issue. Each of these sections has the following format:

- *Leading Questions*—a series of questions asked from the standpoint of the position in question that will get you thinking about the philosophy and its merits.
- *Surveying the Case for . . .*—a presentation of the position under consideration and the arguments supporting it.
- *A Reading from . . .*—several brief readings that will provide you with practice in analyzing philosophical passages and arguments. As always, you will be provided with guidelines for getting the most out of the passage.
- *Looking through X's Lens*—an exercise in which you will be asked to draw out the implications of the philosopher's position and apply the theory to novel situations.
- *Examining the Strengths and Weaknesses of X*—a series of considerations and questions that will guide you in forming your own response to the position.

Finally, there is a new feature that has been added to this edition. Each chapter will end with the exercise *Making Philosophy Personal*. This will consist of a series of very personal questions that require you to think deeply about how the issues in the chapter relate to your personal life.

Throughout the book will be a number of exercises that require you to interact philosophically with the issues. These include:

- *Philosophy in the Marketplace*—a question, survey, or scenario that will allow you to apply the Socratic method of doing philosophy through structured conversations with friends outside of class.
- *Thought Experiments*—exercises that will give you the opportunity to make your own philosophical discoveries and to compare your conclusions with those of the great philosophers as well as those of your classmates.
- *Stop and Think boxes*—a brief pause in your reading to form some tentative conclusions about an issue.
- *Spotlight on . . .*—additional information that helps illuminate the topic.

(For a more detailed explanation of these unique features of *The Philosophical Journey*, turn to pages 11–15.)

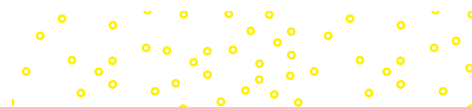
Both students and teachers will find that these features provide a great deal to think about and talk about. In my attempts to make philosophy an activity and not just a course, I began developing this approach to introducing philosophy more than 25 years ago. The activities I have experimented with that have made it into the book have been the ones that my students most enjoyed and that have made my task as a teacher easier. I hope that both the students and teachers using this book will find this to be true for them as well.



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## TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

The seventh edition of *The Philosophical Journey: An Interactive Approach* is now available online with Connect, McGraw-Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's website and ancillary content is also available through Connect, including the following:



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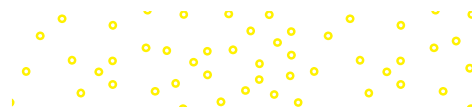
- *Instructor's Manual*: Written by myself, this manual begins with an overall introduction to *The Philosophical Journey* and a general discussion of how to use the sundry pedagogical features to advantage in the classroom. This discussion is followed by a chapter-by-chapter, section-bisection series of lecture and discussion tips, including how to use some of the specific “Thought Experiments” and other interactive activities in the text. Finally, the manual contains a series of objective and essay test questions tailored to each chapter and section. Carefully crafted as a true teaching tool, the various elements of this instructor’s manual provide an excellent resource for both first-time and experienced philosophy teachers.
- *Testbank*: Significantly revised and expanded, the Test Bank offers true/false, multiple choice, and essay questions for each chapter. The Test Bank can be downloaded as a Word file from Connect or used in EZ Test Online, which allows you to create and deliver an online test.
- *Power Point Lecture Slides*

## Student Resources:

- *Flash Cards* to assist students master the key terms.
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- *Multiple Choice, True/False, and Fill-in-the-Blank Quizzes* help students assess their comprehension of chapter material.

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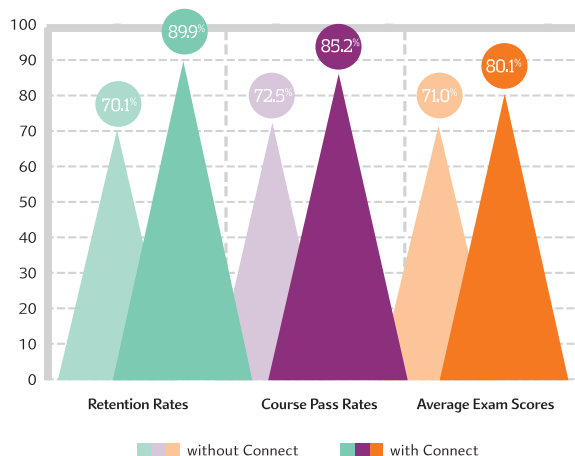


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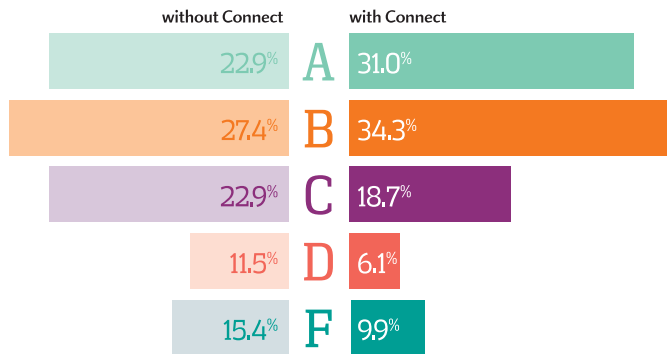
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## ABOUT THE SEVENTH EDITION

The fact that *The Philosophical Journey* is now in its seventh edition is very rewarding. From the responses I have received, it is clear that professors are finding that this textbook takes students who are passive learners and transforms them into active learners who are engaged with the ideas, thus enriching what they bring to the classroom. Likewise, students report that the thought experiments and activities provided in this book make philosophy intriguing, relevant, and fun. Finally, I am delighted that a number of readers have picked up the book on their own and have found it to be an enjoyable source of personal enrichment.

The newest and most unique addition to this edition is the feature *Making Philosophy Personal*, which occurs at the end of each of the seven chapters. While this book provides interesting intellectual ideas to think about, this particular feature will give the readers something practical to carry away from the book. It will ask thought-provoking and personal questions and provide conceptual exercises that will help the readers apply some of the ideas and issues in the chapter to their personal lives. Additionally, throughout the book, a number of passages have been rewritten for the sake of greater clarity.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From the first rough outline to the final chapter revisions I have had the help of numerous reviewers who read this text with an eye to its suitability for the classroom as well as its philosophical clarity and accuracy. I appreciate the comments of the following reviewers on the first six editions: Judy Barad, Indiana State University; Chris Blakey, College of the Canyons; David Carlson, Madison Area Technical College; Anne DeWindt, Wayne County Community College; Reinaldo Elugardo, University of Oklahoma; Louise Excell, Dixie State College; Kevin Galvin, East Los Angeles College; Eric Gampel, California State University at Chico; Garth Gillan, Southern Illinois University; Robert A. Hill, Pikes Peak Community College; Achim Kodderman, State University of New York College; Pat Matthews, Florida State University; Brian L. Merrill, Brigham Young University-Idaho; Mark A. Michael, Austin Peay State University; Benjamin A. Petty, Southern Methodist University; Michael Panches, Oklahoma City Community College; John F. Sallstrem, Georgia College; Nancy Shaffer, University of Nebraska-Omaha; Kathleen Wider, University of Michigan, Dearborn; Gene Witmer, University of Florida; Jay Wood, Wheaton College; Michael J. Booker, Jefferson College; Michael Boring, University of Colorado, Denver; Michael J. Cundall, Jr., Arkansas State University; Hye-Kyung Kim, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay; Joseph Michael Pergola, Lewis-Clark State College; Robert Reuter, Saint Joseph's College; Alan Schwerin, Monmouth University; Tully Borland, Ouachita Baptist University; Catherine Mary Driscoll, North Carolina State University; David Bishop, Pima Community College; Marcia Andrejevich, Ivy Tech Community College; Miriam Newton Byrd, University of Texas, Arlington; Christina Mary Tomczak, Cedar Valley College; Peter Celello, Ohio State University at Newark; Rocco Gangle, Endicott College; Carlos Bovell, Gloucester County College; Marcos Arandia, North Lake College; Jerry Cherrington, Pima Community College; Heather Coletti, Cabrini College.

I am particularly grateful to both my current and former colleagues for sharing their expertise with me throughout all the editions of this book. The reviewers of this seventh edition were: Ronald Glass, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; James E. Taylor, Westmont College; James A. Dunson III, Xavier University of Louisiana; Diane Gaston, Cuyahoga Community College; Angela Cotner, Oklahoma City Community College; Doug Fishel, Maple Woods Community College; Craig Payne,



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I have been fortunate to work with one of the best editorial teams in the business. Ken King, my first editor, immediately grasped my vision for this book and energetically made it a reality. Jon-David Hague worked on the second and third editions, and helped make it the book that it is today. For this current edition, Erika Lo, my Product Developer, helped oversee all the phases of this edition. I particularly appreciated the assistance of my Development Editors, Dionne Soares Palmer and Amy Oline of Lumina Datamatics, who handled so many of the details.

Whether you are a student or a teacher, I hope that you will enjoy interacting with my book as much as I enjoyed writing it. I would be glad to hear about your experiences with the book and its exercises as well as any suggestions you have for future improvements. You may e-mail me at [wlawhead@olemiss.edu](mailto:wlawhead@olemiss.edu).

William F. Lawhead



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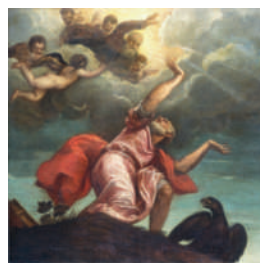
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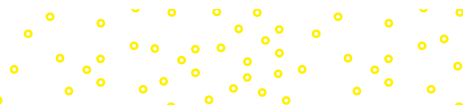
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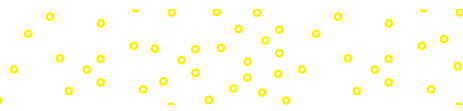
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*To my daughters-in-law,  
Julie Lawhead and Christin Lawhead  
Our lives are richer because  
you joined our family.*



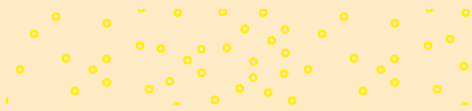


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Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)*, 1873-1876

Philosophy is a journey which, like the sailing of a ship, requires constant engagement to stay on our chosen course.



## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNEY

*Where Are We Going and  
How Will We Get There?*



### CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

On completion of this chapter, you should be able to

1. Explain several approaches to what philosophy is all about.
2. Identify various areas of thought traditionally investigated by philosophers.
3. Discuss how philosophy is a journey.
4. Relate the story of Socrates' life and death.
5. Explain the Socratic method.
6. Discuss three central theses about living well held by Socrates.
7. Interpret various levels of meaning in Plato's Allegory of the Cave.
8. Apply six criteria for evaluating philosophical claims and theories.
9. Define an argument in the philosophical sense.
10. Distinguish the three kinds of arguments: deductive, inductive, inference to the best explanation.

## 1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE JOURNEY

In a 19th-century work, the Danish philosopher and literary genius Søren Kierkegaard depicted one of his fictional characters sitting in a café worrying about the fact that he has no mission or purpose in life.\* He despairs over the fact that many in his age have served humanity and have achieved fame and admiration by making life easier and easier for people. He mentions the convenience and ease that have been brought by the invention of railways, buses, steamboats, the telegraph, and easily accessible encyclopedias. With a sense of failure he asks himself, “And what are you doing?” It seems clear to him that he could not compete with other people in making life easier. Searching for his mission in life, he finally comes up with this idea:

Suddenly this thought flashed through my mind: “You must do something, but inasmuch as with your limited capacities it will be impossible to make anything easier than it has become, you must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others, undertake to make something harder.” This notion pleased me immensely, and at the same time it flattered me to think that I, like the rest of them, would be loved and esteemed by the whole community. For when all combine in every way to make everything easier, there remains only one possible danger, namely, that the ease becomes so great that it becomes altogether too great; then there is only one want left, though it is not yet a felt want, when people will want difficulty. Out of love for mankind, and out of despair at my embarrassing situation, seeing that I had accomplished nothing and was unable to make anything easier than it had already been made, and moved by a genuine interest in those who make everything easy, I conceived it as my task to create difficulties everywhere.<sup>1</sup>



### STOP AND THINK

Why would someone want to make life more difficult? In what ways could a philosopher such as Kierkegaard make life more difficult for his readers? Even more important, why would we want to read an author who took this as his mission in life?

## PHILOSOPHY AND AEROBICS

You might get some perspective on the questions in the box if you notice that those things that are cheap and come easiest in life are usually those things that are worth little in the long run. A quarter will get you a gum ball from a machine. A gum ball is cheap and easy to obtain, but its only value is a few minutes of pleasure. On the other hand, the mother’s labor pains bring forth new life, the musician’s long hours of practice produce musical perfection, the athlete’s pain and determination are rewarded with self-mastery and athletic records, and the writer’s creative struggles in the face of dozens of rejection slips may produce a great novel. In each case, something of value was gained, but only as the result of great difficulty and persistent effort.

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\*Although it is not always safe to assume that the words of Kierkegaard’s fictional characters reflect his own sentiments, in this case they repeat what Kierkegaard says many times over about himself.

Perhaps Kierkegaard's point is that only by facing the really difficult issues in life will we gain something that is truly valuable. His mission was to coax us, to irritate us, and to provoke us into making the effort necessary to overcome our reticence to face one of life's most difficult but rewarding tasks: honest, personal reflection. For Kierkegaard, this activity was the heart and soul of philosophy. Like many other strenuous but valuable activities, becoming a philosopher can involve intellectual labor pains, practice, determination, and creative struggling. But philosophy obviously does not produce the tangible rewards of the sort enjoyed by the mother, musician, athlete, or novelist. What, then, is the reward of doing philosophy? According to Kierkegaard, what philosophy can give us is *self-understanding*. Self-understanding involves knowing who I really am apart from the masks I present to others, the social roles I fulfill, or the labels and descriptions imposed on me by my society and my peers. It also involves understanding my beliefs and values and being aware of why I act the way I do, including knowing whether my actions result from my own authentic choices or from taken-for-granted, unexamined assumptions, or the influences of my culture.

At first glance, it would seem that self-understanding is something that everyone would desire. But Kierkegaard thought that it was not only the most important goal in life, but also the most difficult one. Furthermore, he claimed that it is something that we are often tempted to avoid. It is much easier to be complacent, to be self-satisfied, and to stick with beliefs that are comfortable and familiar than to be painfully and fully honest with ourselves and to subject our deepest convictions to examination. Fitness centers promote the saying, "No pain, no gain." The same is true with our struggles to become fully realized and actualized persons. In fact, philosophy could be viewed as "aerobics for the human mind." In Kierkegaard's day, everyone was claiming to provide the answers to everyone else's problems. Kierkegaard, however, thought that his greatest contribution to society would be to provide the problems to everyone's answers. Only in this way, he thought, would we be goaded into searching for those answers that are worthy of our belief. Kierkegaard has provided us with our first definition of philosophy: *Philosophy is the search for self-understanding*.

## PHILOSOPHY AND LOVE

The term *philosophy* literally means "the love of wisdom." It is said that the first one to call himself a philosopher was Pythagoras, a Greek who lived somewhere between 570 and 495 B.C. and spent most of his life in southern Italy. He is, of course, best known for his famous mathematical theorem. When once asked if he was wise, he replied that no one could be wise but a God, but that he was a lover of wisdom. To love something does not mean to possess it but to focus our life on it. Whereas Pythagoras introduced the term *philosopher*, it was Socrates who made it famous. He said that the philosopher was one who had a passion for wisdom and who was intoxicated by this love. This description makes quite a contrast with the image of the philosopher as being cold and analytical—sort of a walking and talking computer. On the contrary, the cognitive and the emotional are combined in philosophy, for we do not rationally deliberate about those issues in life that are deeply trivial. When I pick up my copy of the daily campus newspaper, for example, I don't stand there and reason about which copy to grab. On the other hand, those issues that are most important to us are such things as our religious commitments (or lack of them), our moral values, our political commitments, our career, or (perhaps) who we will share our lives with. Unlike the trivial task of choosing a newspaper, such issues as our deepest loves, convictions, and commitments demand our deepest thought and most thorough rational reflection. Philosophy, in part, is the search for that kind of wisdom that will inform the beliefs and values that enter into these crucial decisions. Thanks to Pythagoras and Socrates, we now have a second definition: *Philosophy is the love and pursuit of wisdom*.

## PHILOSOPHY AND PEANUT BUTTER

Everyone knows that philosophy deals with questions, with very basic questions such as, “Is there a God?” “Does life have meaning?” “Do I have freedom or am I determined by forces beyond my control?” “How do I decide what is morally right?” What makes these questions *philosophical* questions? One answer is that philosophical questions deal with our most basic concepts such as God, meaning, freedom, moral rightness. To get a better grasp on the nature of philosophical questions, try the following thought experiment.<sup>2</sup>



### THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

1. Consider the following two questions.  
Where can I find the peanut butter?  
Where can I find happiness?

In what ways are these two questions similar? In what ways are they different? Which question is the easiest to answer? Which question is the most important one?

2. Look at what is represented on the cover of this book and answer this question:  
Is this a flimdoggal?

Are you having difficulty answering the question? Why?

3. Suppose that someone slipped you a drug that made it impossible for you to answer the following questions: Is this a hat or an ice cream sundae? Is this belief true or false? Is this real or an illusion? Is this action morally good or evil? Now ask yourself: What would be some practical problems created by these confusions?

The questions about where to find the peanut butter or happiness seem very similar, yet there is a world of difference between them. We have a tendency to suppose that the “real” issues are ones that are concrete and have verifiable and certain answers. If we believe that tendency, then we never ask any questions more profound than, “Where is the peanut butter?” The answer is concrete (“On the top shelf behind the mustard”), and we can be sure when we have found the answer (“Yep, this tastes like peanut butter”). On the other hand, we have many conflicting opinions about where to find happiness (religion, sensual pleasure, wealth, fame, a meaningful career, service to others, and on and on). We may think we have found happiness, but we can spend the rest of our lives trying to make sure that what we found is really it. Clearly, happiness is much more abstract and elusive than peanut butter. But maybe the goals in life that are the most abstract and elusive are the ones that are the most important to pursue.

Obviously, you could not decide if the cover of this book represented a flimdoggal because you did not know what such a thing is. What you would need in order to answer the question are the criteria for determining whether something is a flimdoggal, or a precise definition of the word *flimdoggal*. We have the same problem with words such as *God*, *meaning*, *freedom*, or *moral goodness*. However, because these words are so familiar (unlike *flimdoggal*), we often assume that we understand the corresponding concepts. Yet the concepts that philosophy analyzes are those that we dare not leave unclarified. If you could not distinguish a hat from an ice cream sundae, it could lead to some

embarrassing moments as you tried to put a sundae on your head. But most of your life would be unaffected. On the other hand, if you were confused about the concepts of “true,” “false,” “real,” “illusion,” “good,” or “evil,” your life would be deeply impaired.

George Orwell, in his novel *1984*, depicts a totalitarian society that controls its citizens’ minds by controlling their language. The society’s official language of “Newspeak” does not have a word for freedom. Without the word *freedom*, people do not have the concept of freedom; without the concept they cannot think about freedom; and if they cannot think about freedom they cannot aspire toward it. The citizens feel a vague sense of discomfort with their society, but the government has robbed them of the ability to speak and think about the causes of this dissatisfaction. This novel illustrates why the meanings of words are so very important to philosophy. Sometimes philosophy is accused of simply being “arguments about words.” It is true that some verbal disputes are fruitless, but not all. Words give us a grasp of our fundamental concepts, which govern our thinking, and our thinking in turn guides the way we deal with reality, the actions we perform, and the decisions we make. This discussion gives us our third definition of philosophy: *Philosophy is the asking of questions about the meaning of our most basic concepts.*

## PHILOSOPHY AND COLDS

The topic of examining our lives and examining our beliefs introduces an important point about philosophy. In one sense, everyone is a philosopher. Everyone has some beliefs (no matter how tentative) about the existence of God, about how to determine if a statement is true or false, and about what is morally right and wrong (among other things). Whether you realize it or not, philosophical conclusions are woven into the conduct of your daily life. As you go through this book, you will find that many of your beliefs have been shared by some of the great philosophers in history. You will also find philosophical labels for many of your beliefs as well as arguments supporting them or arguments opposing them. With respect to philosophy, you are not like a spectator sitting in the stands, watching the professionals engage in a game of tennis. Instead, you are down on the court, already a participant in the activity of philosophy.

Whereas in a certain sense everyone is a philosopher, in another sense philosophy as a way of looking at things has to be learned and practiced. The problem is that too often we acquire our ideas, beliefs, and values the way we catch a cold. Like the cold virus, these ideas, beliefs, and values are floating around in our environment and we breathe them in without realizing it. The cold belonged to someone else, and now it is our cold. The beliefs and values were those of our culture, but now they are our own. It could be that they are true beliefs and excellent values, but how are we to know if we have internalized them unthinkingly? In examining our own and other people’s fundamental beliefs, we must ask: Are these beliefs justified? What reasons do we have to suppose that they are true? What evidence counts against them? Thus, while everyone has philosophical beliefs, the philosophical journey takes us one step further. This acknowledgment gives us the fourth aspect of philosophy: *Philosophy is the search for fundamental beliefs that are rationally justified.*

If we summarize the discussion thus far, we have a multidimensional, working definition of philosophy. As you read through this book, note how each philosopher or philosopher addresses these four points. Philosophy is the

1. Search for self-understanding.
2. Love and pursuit of wisdom.
3. Asking of questions about the meaning of our basic concepts.
4. Search for fundamental beliefs that are rationally justified.

## WHAT DO PHILOSOPHERS STUDY?

Many people have no idea what philosophy is all about. The term *philosophy* often conjures up the image of a vague, fuzzy realm of irreducibly subjective opinions. A common question is, “What do philosophers study?” No one seems to have this problem with other disciplines. For example (to put it glibly), biologists study frogs, geologists study rocks, historians study wars, and astronomers study stars. But what part of the universe or human experience do philosophers examine? The short answer, as one philosopher put it, is that “philosophy’s center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere.”<sup>3</sup> But someone could raise the objection that this definition makes it seem as though philosophy covers the same territory that the other disciplines do. The answer to this objection is that philosophy is unique in comparison to other areas of study *not* because it thinks about different things, but because it thinks about things differently. This feature of philosophy can be made clear by comparing the sorts of questions asked by different disciplines with the sorts of questions asked by the philosopher in six different areas: logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, ethics, and political philosophy.

### Logic

The psychologist studies *how* people think and the *causes* of people’s beliefs, whether their thinking is rational or irrational. But the philosopher studies how we *ought* to think if we are to be rational and seeks to clarify the good *reasons* for holding a belief. The study of the principles for distinguishing correct from incorrect reasoning is the area of philosophy known as logic, which is discussed at the end of this chapter under the heading “1.3: Argument and Evidence: How Do I Decide What to Believe?”

### Metaphysics

The physicist studies the ultimate constituents of physical reality such as atoms, quarks, or neutrinos. On the other hand, the philosopher asks, Is physical reality all that there is? The neurobiologist studies the activity of the brain, but the philosopher asks, Are all mental events really brain events, or is the mind something separate from the brain? The psychologist attempts to find causal correlations between criminal behavior and the individual’s genetic inheritance or social influences. The philosopher, on the other hand, asks, Is all behavior (good or bad) causally determined, or do we have some degree of genuine freedom that cannot be scientifically explained? Is there necessarily a conflict between the scientific attempt to explain and predict behavior and our belief in human freedom? Metaphysics is the area of philosophy concerned with fundamental questions about the nature of reality. In chapter 2, “The Search for Ultimate Reality,” you encounter different models of what reality is like as well as questions concerning *human* reality such as, What is the relationship between the mind and the body? and Are we free or are our lives predetermined?

### Epistemology

The historian seeks to increase our knowledge of the Civil War by gathering facts and determining which accounts of the events are the most true. The philosopher asks, What is knowledge? What is a fact? What is truth? How could we know that something is true or not? Is there objective truth, or are all opinions relative? Fundamental questions about

the nature and source of knowledge, the concept of truth, and the objectivity or relativity of our beliefs are the concern of the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which you encounter in chapter 3, “The Search for Knowledge.”

## **Philosophy of Religion**

The astronomer studies the laws that govern the heavenly bodies such as the stars. However, the philosopher asks these questions: Is the existence and nature of the universe self-explanatory, or does it need an explanation or a divine creator that lies outside it? How do we account for the order in the world that makes science possible? Is the evidence of design sufficient to prove a designer?

The meteorologist asks, What causes hurricanes? and the medical researcher asks, What causes childhood leukemia? On the other hand, the philosopher asks, Is there any rational way to believe in a good, all-powerful God who permits the undeserved destruction by hurricanes or the suffering of innocent children? Or is the evidence of undeserved suffering an argument against such a God?

The sociologist studies the religious beliefs of various groups and the social needs that these beliefs fulfill without making any judgments about the truth or rationality of these beliefs. However, the philosopher asks, Is faith opposed to reason, compatible with reason, or supported by reason, or is faith something that necessarily goes beyond reason? These sorts of questions about the existence of God, the problem of evil, and the relationship of faith and reason constitute the area of philosophy known as philosophy of religion, and it is discussed in chapter 4, “The Search for God.”

## **Ethics**

The anthropologist studies the moral codes of various societies and describes both their similarities and differences, but does not decide which ones are best. On the other hand, the philosopher asks, Are there any objectively correct ethical values, or are they all relative? Which ethical principles (if any) are the correct ones? How do we decide what is right or wrong? These questions are the concern of ethics, which is the topic of chapter 5, “The Search for Ethical Values.”

## **Political Philosophy**

The political scientist studies various forms of government, but the philosopher asks, What makes a government legitimate? What is justice? What is the proper extent of individual freedom? What are the limits of governmental authority? Is disobeying the law ever morally justified? These questions fall under the heading of political philosophy and are discussed in chapter 6, “The Search for the Just Society.”

## **The Philosophical Foundations of Other Disciplines**

In addition to these six topics that will be covered in this book, other areas in philosophy raise philosophical questions about specific disciplines. These additional areas of philosophy include philosophy of art (aesthetics), philosophy of education, philosophy of history, philosophy of language, philosophy of law, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of psychology, philosophy of science, and so on.