



NINTH EDITION

PHILOSOPHY

THE POWER OF IDEAS

BROOKE NOEL MOORE | KENNETH BRUDER

Philosophy

The Power of Ideas

NINTH EDITION

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PHILOSOPHY: THE POWER OF IDEAS, NINTH EDITION

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To Marianne Moore, Kathryn Dupier Bruder, and Albert Bruder

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Preface

This is a straightforward un gimmicky introduction to philosophy written especially for first- and second-year university students. It contains separate historical overviews of the main subjects of Western philosophy and includes both the analytic and the Continental traditions. It also covers Eastern philosophy, postcolonial philosophy, and feminist philosophy; and contains a chapter devoted to major philosophical problems. We hope readers will learn that thinking deeply about almost anything can lead them into philosophy.

The following are important changes in the ninth edition:

- A new chapter (Chapter 17) on philosophical problems, which includes the problem of free will, the problem of consciousness, the problem of the gift (ethics of generosity), and problems in aesthetics
- A new section on Judith Butler
- A new section on philosophical issues in quantum mechanics
- A new section comparing philosophy East and West
- Expanded coverage of the objectivism of Ayn Rand
- A new section on zombies
- A brief cultural overview of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in connection to philosophy
- New material on Gandhi, the Satyagraha Movement, and Hinduism
- Streamlined coverage of Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Jorgen Habermas, and Martin Heidegger
- A revised and updated first chapter making reference to the case of Trayvon Martin
- Updated visuals
- Updated list of suggested readings (list now online)
- New reading selection from Sam Harris

Philosophy—Powerful Ideas

We concluded years ago that most people like philosophy if they understand it and that most understand it if it isn't presented to them in exhausting prose. In this text we strive to make philosophy understandable while not oversimplifying.

We also concluded years ago that some people just aren't moved by the subject. Worse, we learned that those who aren't moved include a few who are sane, intelligent, well informed, and reasonable and who generally have sound ideas about the world, vote for the right people, and are even worth having as friends. Philosophy is just not for everyone, and no text and no instructor can make it so.

So we do not expect every student, or even every bright student, who comes in contact with philosophy to love the field. But we do hope that every student who has had an introductory course in philosophy will learn that philosophy is more than inconsequential mental flexing. Philosophy contains powerful ideas, and it affects the lives of real people. Consequently, it must be handled with due care. The text makes this point clear.

Philosophy: A Worldwide Search for Wisdom and Understanding

Until the middle of the twentieth century, most philosophers and historians of ideas in American and European universities thought philosophical reflection occurred only within the tradition of disciplined discourse that began with the ancient Greeks and has continued into the present. This conception of philosophy has been changing, however, first through the interest in Eastern thought, especially Zen Buddhism, in the fifties, then through the increasingly widespread publication of high-quality translations and commentaries of texts from outside the Western tradition in the following decades. Of course, the availability of such texts does not mean that unfamiliar ideas will receive a careful hearing or even that they will receive any hearing at all.

Among the most challenging threads of the worldwide philosophical conversation is what has come to be known in recent years as postcolonial thought. The lines defining this way of thinking are not always easy to draw—but the same could be said for existentialism, phenomenology, and a number of other schools of thought in philosophy. In any event, in many cultures and subcultures around the world, thinkers are asking searching questions about methodology and fundamental beliefs that are intended to have practical, political consequences. Because these thinkers frequently intend their work to be revolutionary, their ideas run a higher-than-usual risk of being lost to philosophy's traditional venues. We include in this book a small sample from such writers.

Women in the History of Philosophy

Histories of philosophy make scant mention of women philosophers prior to the latter half of the twentieth century. For a long time it was assumed that lack of mention was due to a deficit of influential women philosophers. Scholarship such as

that by Mary Ellen Waithe (*A History of Women Philosophers*) suggests that women have been more important in the history of philosophy than is often assumed. To date, we lack full-length translations and modern editions of the works of many women philosophers. Until this situation changes, Waithe argues, it is difficult to reconstruct the history of the discipline with accuracy.

This text acknowledges the contributions of at least some women to the history of philosophy. We include women philosophers throughout the text in their historical contexts, and we also present a substantially revised chapter on feminist philosophy.

Features

Among what we think are the nicer attributes of this book are these:

- Separate histories of metaphysics and epistemology; the Continental, pragmatic, and analytic traditions; moral and political philosophy; feminist philosophy; and the philosophy of religion
- Coverage of postmodernism and multiculturalism
- A section titled “Other Voices,” which contains chapters on Eastern influences, feminist philosophy, and postcolonial thought
- Recognition of specific contributions of women to philosophy
- A generous supply of easy, original readings that don’t overwhelm beginning students
- Boxes highlighting important concepts, principles, and distinctions or containing interesting anecdotes or historical asides
- Biographical profiles of many of the great philosophers
- Online checklists of key philosophers, with mini-summaries of the philosophers’ leading ideas
- End-of-chapter questions for review and reflection and online lists of additional sources
- A pronunciation guide to the names of philosophers
- A brief subsection on American constitutional theory
- A glossary/index that defines important concepts on the spot
- Teachable four-part organization: (1) Metaphysics and Epistemology, (2) Moral and Political Philosophy, (3) Philosophy of Religion, and (4) Other Voices
- A section on arguments and fallacies
- For instructors, online detailed lecture ideas for each chapter

Online Learning Center

- The password-protected Online Learning Center is available at www.mhhe.com/moore9e. Please ask your McGraw-Hill representative for access information.

- The Student Guide contains chapter main points, lists of key philosophers, self-assessment quizzes, and suggestions for further readings.
- The Instructor’s Manual contains chapter main points, detailed lecture suggestions, Power Point slides, and lists of philosophers’ main works.



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Powerful Ideas



Philosophers have a delicate task: squeezing the tacit assumptions and unnoticed implications out of every ill-considered dogma without lapsing into nitpicking or caricature. —Daniel Dennett

On the night of February 26, 2012, volunteer George Zimmerman, 28, drove his SUV through The Retreat At Twin Lakes, a gated community near Orlando, Florida. Upon seeing an individual he didn't know walking around inside the gates, Zimmerman called the local police department. The individual, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, who was visiting someone in the community with his father, was on his way back from the local 7-Eleven. Martin was wearing a hoodie and was carrying a bag of Skittles, a can of iced-tea, and his cell phone. Zimmerman observed Martin “cutting between houses,” and walking too slowly for the inclement weather.

While still on the phone with the police dispatcher, Zimmerman left his car. There was a fight. When it was over, Trayvon Martin lay dead on the ground, having been shot by Zimmerman once in the chest, at close range.

Although Martin had not been armed, Zimmerman told the police that Martin had attacked him and that he shot Martin in self-defense. The police detained Zimmerman, who was bleeding from the nose and from lacerations on the back of his head, and questioned him for several hours. Then they released him.

The incident received national attention, in part because racist motives for the slaying and police investigation were raised. Zimmerman is a Hispanic American, of a multi-racial background, and Martin was an African American.

A Special Prosecutor was appointed to take over the investigation, and eventually she charged Zimmerman with murder in the second degree. Zimmerman turned himself in, and was placed in custody.

As we write this, Zimmerman has not been brought to trial. When he is, various kinds of questions will be examined. Some of these questions are factual—What exactly happened when Zimmerman left his car? Did Zimmerman accost Martin? Did Martin attack Zimmerman? Cries of help were heard: whose cries were they?

Other questions are legal: did Zimmerman break any laws? The legal questions depend for their answer on the facts, and which facts matter is determined by what laws pertain.

There is a third kind of question, that we want to focus on here. The Zimmerman case will apparently involve Florida’s Stand Your Ground law, a controversial law that states that a person may use force to defend himself without an obligation to retreat, where there is a reasonable belief of a threat.

Is this a good or just law? This is a philosophical question. It probably won’t be discussed at George Zimmerman’s trial, but it has been and will continue to be debated widely and heatedly. And there is a sense in which it is just as important as the other questions. If the Stand Your Ground law enables George Zimmerman to avoid being unjustly convicted of murder, that is a good thing. But if it makes it possible for him to get away with murder, that isn’t.

Philosophical questions, like this one, are among the more fundamental you can ask. That of course does not necessarily mean they are pressing questions. “How can I get this computer to run right?”—*that* is an example of a question that can be pressing in a way in which philosophical questions rarely are. You rarely have to drop what you are doing to answer philosophical questions.

But let’s look more carefully at this question, how can I get my computer to run right. Notice that the question relates to the *quality* of your life. Not knowing how to get your computer working diminishes your ability to function efficiently. It impacts your life unfavorably.

But *what kind of life should you live in the first place?* This is another philosophical question. And there is a sense in which it is more fundamental than the question about how to get your computer to run right, because there are lives you might live in which you might not own a computer.

Notice now that this question (what kind of life should you live?) implies that the life you live is *up to you*. However, is this really correct? Is it true that the life you live is up to you?

“Excuse me,” you may be saying. “What do you mean, is the life I lead up to me? Obviously it is up to me. Whatever I do is up to me. Nobody is making me read this book, for example. I’m reading it because I want to read it.”

No doubt most people think our voluntary actions are up to us. That’s sort of what it means to say that an action is voluntary. But what about our *desires and values*? Are these up to us? After all, our voluntary actions stem from our desires and values. This question—*are our desires and values really up to us*—is deeply philosophical. As an experiment, you might try to change a desire or a value by an act of will. Will yourself to believe, for example, that it is actually right or good to hurt kittens. Can you do it? No? Well then think of something you desire. Can you make yourself *not* desire it by an act of will? If you try such an experiment, it may not be so clear after all that your desires, values, actions, or the life you lead really is up to you.

If you pay attention to politics or listen to talk radio, you will know that we are venturing into an area that is charged politically. Many believe that people are responsible for their own situation. They take the view that if someone is poor or sick or out of work, it is (with certain exceptions) his or her own fault. They may then subscribe to the idea that it would be wrong to take money from those who have lots of it and give it to people who are in need. Are they correct? How do you know that? These too are philosophical questions.

So you can see that philosophical questions, though not pressing in the sense in which the need to fix your computer might be pressing, are nevertheless important and divisive and arise quite easily in everyday contexts.

DEPARTMENT OF EXPLOSIVES

Some philosophical beliefs are so deeply held that people are ready to die for them. Just before dawn, on March 20, 2003, the United States unleashed an all-out missile and bomb attack on targets in Iraq. U.S. President George W. Bush then appeared on television before the world to state that the attack would free Iraqis from a terrible outlaw regime that threatened the world with weapons of mass murder. An important part of the rationale offered by George W. Bush for attacking Iraq was that Iraqis should be liberated from totalitarianism and should have freedom and democracy. At the time, most Americans assumed, without giving it much thought, that people universally want these things. Many Americans were surprised when supporters of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi premier at the time, other Iraqi insurgents, and various religious leaders from the region actually denounced democracy, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion and referred to them as “Western perversions.” Could it really be, some Americans wondered, that some people actually think totalitarianism is not evil and freedom and democracy are not good? Unfortunately, it became all too clear such “extremists” would stop at nothing to resist having what most Americans assumed all people want and should have.

The American Civil War, which was fought over the institution of slavery, is another example of a clash in values that ended in indescribable bloodshed. Although the Cold War remained cold, it, too, pitted different belief systems—capitalism and communism—against each other. Wars often are fought for ideas. Philosophies matter.

When we are confronted with a stark clash of values such as happened in the Iraq war, the American Civil War, or the Cold War, we might well wonder whether there are objective standards or criteria by which the opposed philosophies might be evaluated. Is democracy *really* a good? Does the United States do the right and proper thing in trying to spread freedom throughout the world? Well, of course, we think so. George W. Bush referred to freedom as “almighty God’s gift to each man and woman in this world,” which fact, in his opinion, morally required America to spread it.¹

¹ See, for example, Bush’s speech on April 4, 2004, in Buffalo, New York.

But those fighting America believe they are commanded by God to resist. Saddam Hussein appeared on television a few hours after the attack on Iraq began and declared that the invasion would be repelled through the grace of God. Both sides cannot be right, and if it is the other side that is mistaken, how do we know that? We might try to settle things by polling the world to see what most people think, but those who regard democracy as a “perversion” won’t accept the democratic assumption on which that solution depends.

It is to the philosophy department you must turn for answers to questions like these. As you will discover when you read this book, many philosophical questions are abstract and theoretical, and few would resort to physical methods to defend them. Yet even abstract and theoretical issues can connect to ideas that people will go to extremes to enforce, defend, or spread. The philosophy department, as philosopher Van Meter Ames once said, works with explosive material, dangerous stuff.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

The word **philosophy** comes from the Greek *philein*, which means “to love,” and *sophia*, which means “knowledge” or “wisdom.” Because knowledge can be discovered in many fields, the Greeks (who invented philosophy) thought of any person who sought knowledge in any area as a philosopher. Thus, philosophy once encompassed nearly everything that counted as knowledge.

This view of philosophy persisted for more than two thousand years. The full title of Sir Isaac Newton’s *Principles*, in which in 1729 Newton set forth his famous theories of mechanics, mathematics, and astronomy, is *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. At that time, physics was still thought of as a variety of philosophy. In fact, at some point nearly every subject currently listed in your university’s catalog would have been considered philosophy. If you continue your studies and obtain the highest degree in psychology, mathematics, economics, sociology, history, biology, political science, or practically any other subject, you will be awarded a PhD, the doctorate of philosophy.

However, philosophy can no longer claim those subject areas that have grown up and moved out of it. What, then, is philosophy today? In 2012 the Republican Party of Texas adopted a platform that opposed the teaching of skills that “have the purpose of challenging the student’s fixed beliefs and undermining parental authority.”² The Republican Party of Texas was not targeting philosophy per se, and philosophy has nothing to do with undermining parental authority. But philosophy has everything to do with challenging fixed beliefs. In fact, philosophy *is* the challenging of fixed beliefs, by means of careful thinking and logic. This indeed is as good a definition of contemporary philosophy as one could come up with.

² http://s3.amazonaws.com/texasgop_pre/assets/original/2012Platform_Final.pdf.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

To understand a subject, we should look at the questions it tries to answer. Is it good to spread freedom? How do we know that? And, by the way, what is freedom? These are questions of philosophy. As you can see, these questions are quite unlike those asked by economists, physicists, historians, communication studies experts, and so forth.

Here are a few other examples of philosophical questions.

- To what extent do we have a moral obligation to people we don't know? For that matter, to what extent do we have a moral obligation to nonhuman living things? How about the environment: do we have a moral obligation to it?
- What are the ethically legitimate functions and scope of government? What form of government is best? What is the proper connection between religion and the state? Questions like these separate Democrats from Republicans, conservatives from liberals, communists from capitalists, and theocrats from democrats.
- Do people have natural rights? If so, how do we know that? Where do they come from? What makes one person's list of rights superior to another person's?
- Is there a God? Perhaps just as important, does it make any difference whether there is or isn't a God?
- Do ends justify means?
- What, if anything, is the self? Is a person more than a physical body? Do people really have free will?
- What is truth? Beauty? Art?
- Is it possible to know anything with absolute certainty?
- Does the universe have a purpose? Does life? Is there order in the cosmos independent of what the mind puts there?
- What is time?
- Could anything have happened before the Big Bang?

Clearly, it is *possible* to go through life without spending a moment wondering about such questions, but most of us have at least occasional moments of reflection about one or another of them. In fact, it is pretty difficult not to think philosophically from time to time. Whenever we think about a topic long enough, if our thinking is the least bit organized we may end up engaged in philosophy. Real-life ethical dilemmas provide an excellent illustration. For example, situations arise in which we must balance our own needs against the needs of others we care about—an aging parent might require care, for instance. Of course, we will try to determine the extent of our obligation. But we may go beyond this and ask what *makes* this our obligation, or even more generally, what makes *anything* our obligation. Is it simply that it strikes us that way? Or is there some feature of situations that requires a certain response? If we are led to questions like these, the rest of the university curriculum will be of little help. Other subjects tell us how things are or how they work or how they came about, but not what we should do or why we

should do it. Unfortunately, when most people reach this point in their reflections, they really don't know what to think next.

Of course, ethical dilemmas are not the only questions that lead one into philosophy. For instance, these days a controversy exists as to whether Intelligent Design is a scientific theory on all fours with evolution. Although many scientists are prepared (and qualified) to answer this question, in fact it is *not* a scientific question; you aren't likely to find an article about it in a scientific journal. It is, rather, a question in the *philosophy* of science.

To take quite a different example of how philosophical questions crop up in everyday contexts, sci-fi movies often portray robots that think like people. Will it someday be possible to build a robot that can actually think? The question requires a philosophical response. Of course you might just wait and see what they come up with, but will that help? You can't just go observe whether robots are thinking. Even if scientists succeed in building a robot that walks and talks and acts like Metro in *Real Steel*, one still might reasonably deny that the robot actually thinks. "It isn't made out of flesh and blood," you might say. But then beings from other galaxies might think even though they are not made out of flesh and blood, so why must computers be made out of flesh and blood to think? Is it perhaps because computers don't have "souls" or aren't alive? Well, what is a soul, anyway? Why aren't computers alive? What is it to be alive? These are philosophical questions. Philosophers have spent a great deal of time analyzing and trying to answer them.

As can be gathered from what we have said so far, an important feature of philosophical questions is that they cannot be answered in any straightforward way by the experimental method. For example, in a recent experiment scientists implanted a tiny chip in a paralyzed woman's brain that transmits electrical signals from her brain neurons to a computer. The computer decodes the signals and transmits them to a robotic arm. The woman, whose name is Cathy, cannot move her own arm, but can make the robotic arm move with her thoughts.³ The question then arises: the computer chip is a physical thing, and so is electrical activity within Cathy's brain; but is Cathy's thought something different or separate from the electrical activity? This is none other than the age old philosophical question about the relation between thought and the brain, and the experiment does not resolve it.

Often, too, philosophers ask questions about things that seem so obvious we might not wonder about them—for example, the nature of change. That things change is obvious, and we might not see anything puzzling in the fact. If something changes, it becomes different; so what?

For one thing, if we have a *different* thing, then we seem to be considering *two* things, the original thing and the new, different thing. Therefore, strictly speaking, shouldn't we say not that something changed but rather that it was *replaced*? If, over the course of years, you replaced every part in the Prius you bought—every part, the engine block, all door panels, each nut, bolt, and piece of steel, glass, rubber, vinyl, battery, or whatever—would you still have the same Prius? If you gathered up all the original pieces and put them together again, would that be the original Prius?

³ http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/340728/title/Paralyzed_woman_grips%2C_sips_coffee_with_robot_arm.

Perhaps these questions seem to be questions of nomenclature or semantics and of no practical interest. But over the course of a lifetime every molecule in a person's body may possibly (or probably!) be replaced. Thus, we might wonder, say, whether an old man who has been in prison for forty years for a murder he committed as a young man is really the same person as the young man. Since (let us assume) not a single molecule of the young man is in the old man, wasn't the young man in fact replaced? If so, can his guilt possibly pertain to the old man, who is in fact a different man? What is at stake here is whether the old man did in fact commit murder, and it is hard to see how this might be simply a matter of semantics.

Other times, philosophical questions come up when beliefs don't fit together the way we would like. We believe, for example, that anything that happens was caused to happen. We also believe that a cause *makes* its effect happen—if spoiled meat caused you to get sick, it *made* you sick. But we also believe that when we voluntarily decide to do something, nothing made us decide. And that belief seems to imply that our decision wasn't caused. So, which is it? Is every happening caused? Or are some happenings uncaused? Or is it perhaps that decisions aren't actually “happenings”? Do you see a way out of this dilemma? If so, congratulations. You are philosophizing.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PHILOSOPHY

Incorrect ideas people have about philosophy ought to be discussed here at the outset.

First is the idea that *one person's philosophy is as correct as the next person's* and that *any philosophical position is as good, valid, or correct as any other opinion*. This idea is especially widespread when it comes to values. If one person thinks that one should contribute a major part of one's income to help support an aging parent, and another person thinks a much lower limit is called for, you might say something like, “Well, the first person's view is correct for that person, and the second person's view is correct for the second person.” Or let's say you think there is nothing wrong with same-sex marriage, and your roommate doesn't agree. You might be tempted to say something like, “Well, my view is correct for me, and my roommate's view is correct for my roommate.”

“My view is correct for me, and my roommate's view is correct for my roommate.” What this means is far from clear. Does it mean it would be okay for you to marry someone of the same sex but wrong for your roommate to do so? That proposal probably would not be acceptable either to you or to your roommate. If your roommate thinks gay marriage is wrong, he or she probably thinks it is wrong for *you* as well as for him or her. He or she probably thinks gay marriage is wrong, period. And someone who believes there is nothing wrong with gay marriage probably doesn't think there is anything wrong with either you or your roommate marrying someone of the same sex.

In other words, if you and your roommate disagree as to whether there is anything wrong with two people of the same sex getting married, you cannot

both be correct. You and your hypothetical roommate have contradictory opinions that *cannot* both be correct. So much, then, for thinking that one person's philosophy is as correct as the next person's or that any philosophical position is as good, valid, or correct as any other opinion. This may hold true for such matters as whether chocolate ice cream tastes good, but it does not hold true for a philosophical thesis.

Another misconception about philosophy is that it is *nothing but* opinion. In fact, we should distance ourselves from this notion, or at least from the "nothing but" part. This is because philosophy *requires opinions to be supported by good reasoning*. If you express your opinion without providing supporting reasoning, your philosophy teacher is apt to say something like, "Well, that is an interesting opinion," but he or she won't say that you have produced good philosophy. Philosophy requires supporting your opinions—which, by the way, can be hard work.

Another idea people sometimes have when they first enter into philosophy is that "truth is relative." Now, there are numerous things a person might mean by that statement. If he or she means merely that people's beliefs are relative to their perspectives or cultures, then there is no problem. If, however, the person means that the same sentence might be both true and not true depending on one's perspective or culture, then he or she is mistaken. The same sentence cannot be both true and not true, and whatever a person wishes to convey by the remark, "Truth is relative," it cannot be that. Of course, two different people from two different



Does a tree falling in the forest make a sound when nobody is around to hear it? Never mind that! Is there even a forest if there is nobody to observe it?

cultures or perspectives might *mean* something different by the same words, but that is a separate issue.

A different sort of misconception people have about philosophy is that it is light reading, something you relax with in the evening after all the serious work of the day is done. In reality, philosophical writing generally takes time and effort to understand. Often it seems to be written in familiar, everyday language, but that can be deceiving. It is best to approach a work in philosophy with the kind of mental preparedness and alertness appropriate for a textbook in mathematics or science. You should expect to be able to read *an entire novel* in the time it takes to understand just a *few pages* of philosophy! To understand philosophy, you have to reread a passage several times and think about it a lot. If your instructor assigns what seem to be short readings, don't celebrate. It takes much time to understand philosophy.

A PHILOSOPHICAL TOOL KIT

Philosophy isn't light reading, and it isn't mere expression of opinion. Philosophers support their positions with arguments, which (ideally) make it plain why the reasonable person will accept what they say.

Argument

When you support a position by giving a reason for accepting it, you are making an **argument**.⁴ Giving and rebutting arguments (itself a form of argument) is the most basic philosophical activity; it distinguishes philosophy from mere opinion. **Logic**, the study of correct inference, is concerned with whether and to what extent a reason truly does support a conclusion.

To illustrate, if you tell someone you believe that God exists, that's not philosophy. That's just you saying something about yourself. Even if you add, "I believe in God because I was raised a Catholic," that's still just biography, not philosophy. If, however, you say, "God must exist because the universe couldn't have caused itself," then you have given an *argument* that God exists (or existed). This remark counts as philosophy.

But if you want to be good at philosophy, you must also consider challenges to and criticisms of your arguments. Such challenges are known as **counterarguments**. Suppose, for example, someone challenges your argument with "Well, if God can be self-caused, then why can't the universe?" You are now being called upon to *defend* your assumption that the universe could not be self-caused. Good philosophizing requires the ability to reason correctly, to defend assumptions, and to anticipate and rebut rebuttals.

⁴ When you see a word or phrase in bold print in this book, it is defined in the index/glossary at the back of the book.