

Philosophy
AP English/English 12

Definition:

Three aims of critical thinking:

1.

2.

3.

Sophists & Socrates:

1. universal—

2. relative---

Main ideas of Sophists:

1. Skepticism:

2. Success:

3. Ethical Relativism:

Protagoras (famous Sophist) “Man is the measure of all things” (All standards of value are man-made or conventional.)

Value: Anything that is worthwhile.

Greek “trinity of values”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Socrates: “The Gadfly of Athens” (died by execution-- hemlock 399 BC)

1. Moral objectivism:

2. Dialectic:

3. Soul:

4. Ethics:

Most debated Socratic idea: “Knowledge is Virtue” --to know the good is to do the good

Socrates: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Plato: (427-347 BCE: Informal Student of Socrates)

1. Knowledge= true belief+ reasons

Genuine knowledge

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

A. The Good:

B. The Allegory of the Cave:

C. Moral Theory:

D. Justice:

E. Four Cardinal Virtues:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Aristotle: (384-322 BCE: Pupil of Plato) “Wisdom is knowing the first causes of things.”

1. Metaphysics:

2. Ethics:

a. instrumental end—

b. intrinsic end---

Aristotle's definition of man: "Man is a rational animal."

3. Doctrine of the Mean:

Philosophical Proofs for the Existence of God

Transcendent: existing outside of the universe

Immanent: existing within nature or the universe

Three views of the nature of God:

1. Deism:

2. Pantheism:

3. Theism:

Proofs:

1. Cosmological:

2. Teleological:

3. Moral Arguments:

Dostoevsky: “If God does not exist, then all things are permitted.”

Thomas Aquinas: (1224-1274: Follower of Aristotle’s teaching)

A. Reason & Religion can co-exist

B. “Great Chain of Being” –hierarchy

God »» Angels »» Man »» Animals
»» Plant »» Minerals

C. Three factors determine moral worth of an act

1. The act itself
2. Circumstances
3. Motive

D. Conscience

Rene Descartes: (1596-1650 --Mathematician) Cogito ergo sum= “I think therefore I am.”

2 Positions:

1. Theory of Knowledge: Rationalism—

2. Metaphysics: Dualism---

A. Theory of Knowledge--Rationalism
Quest for Certainty

1. intuition:

2. deduction:

B. Metaphysics—Dualism (tries to reconcile science with free will)

Dualism argues that there are two basic substances.

1. Mind (Free Will)
2. Matter (Science)

John Locke (1632-1704)

Political Theory

1. State of Nature:

2. Social Contract Theory:

Three views of the State of Nature:

A. Hobbes: “War of All Against All”

B. Rousseau: “Noble Savage”

C. Locke:

1. bad
2. good

Locke's view of law

Natural Rights:

Basic Natural Rights:

-life, liberty, possessions

Basis of civil gov't is consent.

a.

b.

Purpose of Gov't.: to protect our natural rights.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804: Great Modern Philosopher)

A. Theory of Knowledge:

--two things fill the mind with awe

1. The starry heavens above (the order, laws of nature)
2. The moral law within (the sense of moral obligation)

B. Morality emphasizes

1. duties
2. motives
3. dignity
4. Morality is absolute and unchanging.

Nothing can be conceived of as good without qualification except a good will.

** Good Will: one who chooses to do what is right because it is right. (How do I know what is right?)

Moral principles are characterized by their universality—they apply to all people at all times.

A. Hypothetical Imperative: (are not moral imperatives)

B. Categorical Imperative: (moral imperatives are categorical)

Kant's Golden Rule: Ask yourself "What if everybody did it?"

Existentialism: (most influential in 20th century—concerned with existence, the philosophy of the individual)

Two types

1. Religious existentialism: (Kierkegaard)
2. Secular existentialism: (Sartre, Nietzsche)

Pascal's Gamble:

Kierkegaard (1813- 1855) : “Leap of Faith”

A. Definition of Existence:

True choice means weighing.

You make your life through your personal choices. Don't let circumstances push you around. Life is a risk.

B. Stages on Life's Way:

1. Aesthetic: level of the sense

2. Ethical:

3. Religious:

Nietzsche: (1844-1900) “God is dead” “Übermensch: Superman”

Nihilism—

Influenced by Darwin: believed in mechanistic view (a. random variations b. survival of the fittest)

“Each individual sees reality from his own perspective.”

The Will to Power: the drive to dominate

- a) others
- b) environment
- c) self

Two criteria for interpretations of the world:

a) pragmatic value

b) aesthetic value

“Metaphysics and religion grow out of weakness.”

Negative results of “God is dead” :

Positive results:

Master & Slave Morality:

Superman:

Apollo vs. Dionysius:

Jean-Paul Sartre: (1905-1980) Secular Existentialism “Man is condemned to be free”

Sartre’s existentialism begins with the premise that there is no God and that the Universe is therefore “absurd.”

Man is condemned to be free. Why?

1. Universe is absurd.
2. Freedom implies responsibility for your choice.

Sartre’s one value: Authenticity

--take responsibility for your past and present and self-consciously choose your future.

1. The way to come to terms with an absurd world---

Camus: (1913-1960): “The Myth of Sisyphus”

“The value of life is in the struggle to reach the goal.”

Bentham: (1748-1832) “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain and pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do.”

Utilitarianism:

Hedonism: seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are the sole motives of human behavior

