

Technical Term for Philosophy



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Introduction to the Five Branches of Philosophy

Philosophy can be divided into five branches which address the following questions :

Metaphysics

Study of Existence

What's out there?

Epistemology

Study of Knowledge

How do I know about it?

Ethics

Study of Action

What should I do?

Politics

Study of Force

What actions are permissible?

Esthetics

Study of Art

What can life be like?



There is a hierarchical relationship between these branches as can be seen in the Concept Chart. At the root is Metaphysics, the study of existence and the nature of existence. Closely related is Epistemology, the study of knowledge and how we know about reality and existence. Dependent on Epistemology is Ethics, the study of how man should act. Ethics is dependent on Epistemology because it is impossible to make choices without knowledge. A subset of Ethics is Politics: the study of how men should interact in a proper society and what constitutes proper. Esthetics, the study of art and sense of life is slightly separate, but depends on Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Ethics.

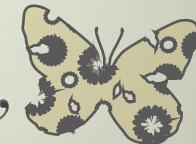


Ethics as a branch of Philosophy

* Ethics is the branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man. It answers the question, "What do I do?" It is the study of right and wrong in human endeavors.



* At a more fundamental level, it is the method by which we categorize our values and pursue them. Do we pursue our own happiness, or do we sacrifice ourselves to a greater cause? Is that foundation of ethics based on the Bible, or on the very nature of man himself, or neither?



Why is Ethics important?

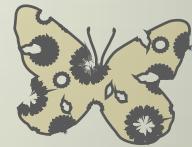
Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal because there would be no way to pick between a limitless number of goals.





Even with an ethical standard, we may be unable to pursue our goals with the possibility of success. To the degree which a rational ethical standard is taken, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most important values. Any flaw in our ethics will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavors.

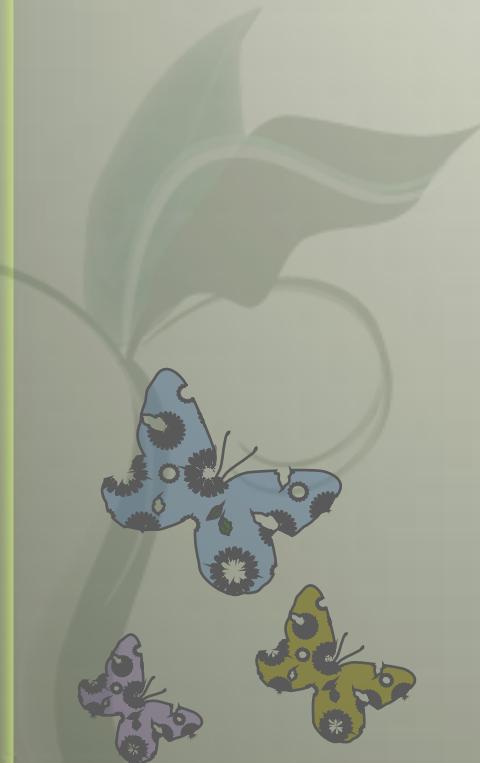
What are the key elements of a proper Ethics?



- ★ A proper foundation of ethics requires a standard of value to which all goals and actions can be compared to. This standard is our own lives, and the happiness which makes them livable. This is our ultimate standard of value, the goal in which an ethical man must always aim. It is arrived at by an examination of man's nature, and recognizing his peculiar needs



★ A system of ethics must further consist of not only emergency situations, but the day to day choices we make constantly. It must include our relations to others, and recognize their importance not only to our physical survival, but to our well-being and happiness. It must recognize that our lives are an end in themselves, and that sacrifice is not only not necessary, but destructive.



THANK YOU

