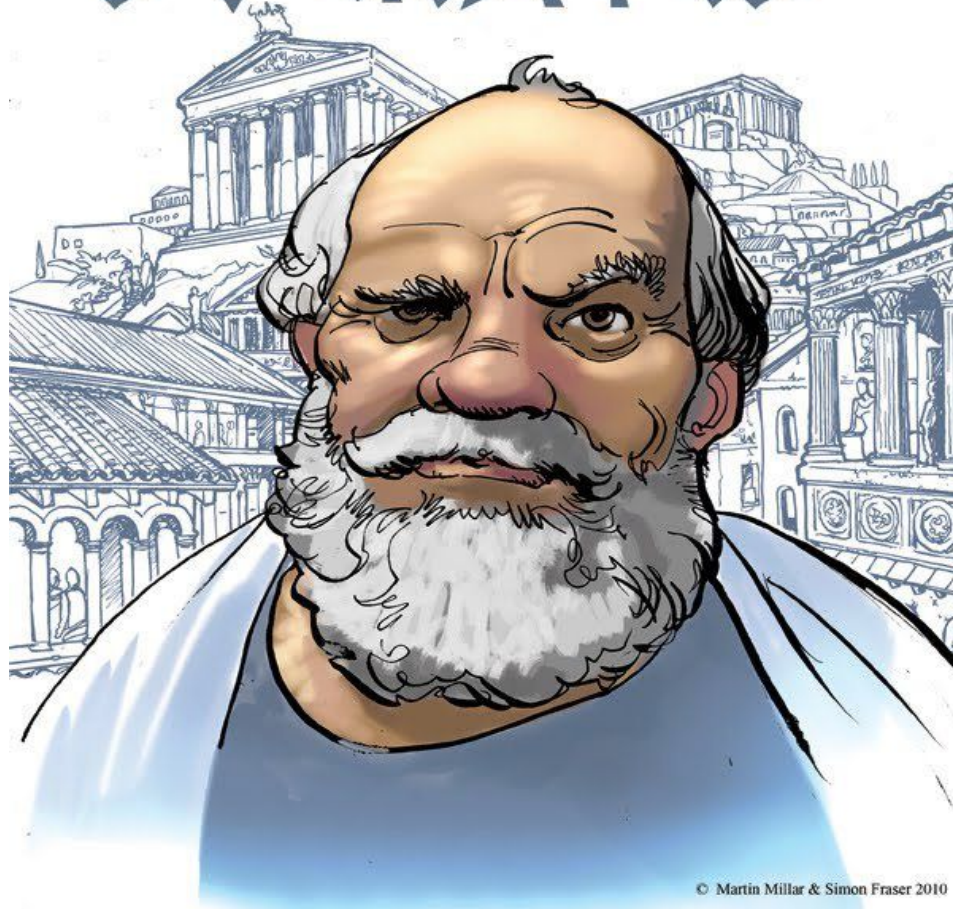


A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION

Edward Craig

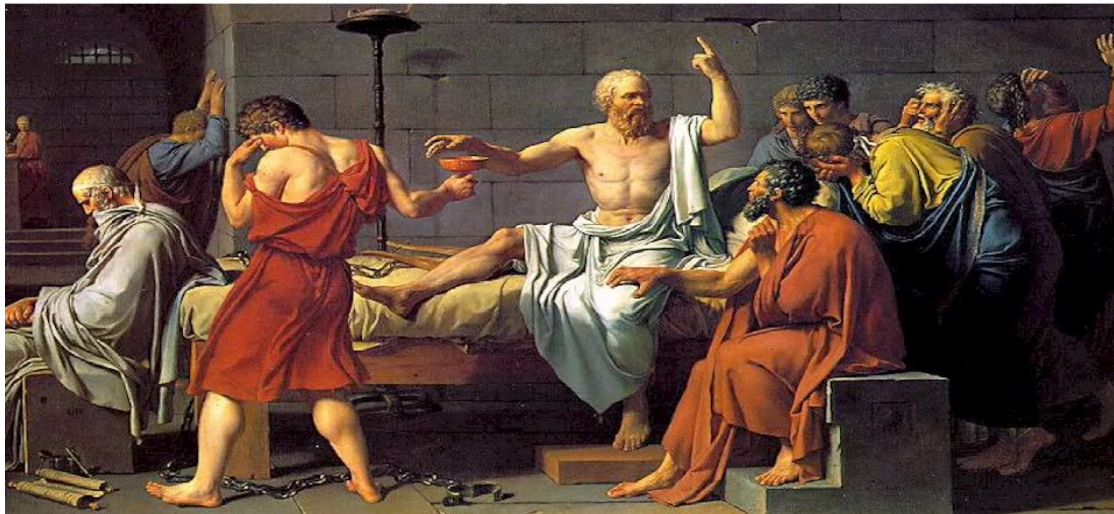
The great Philosopher

SOCRATES



Everyone is already a Philosopher

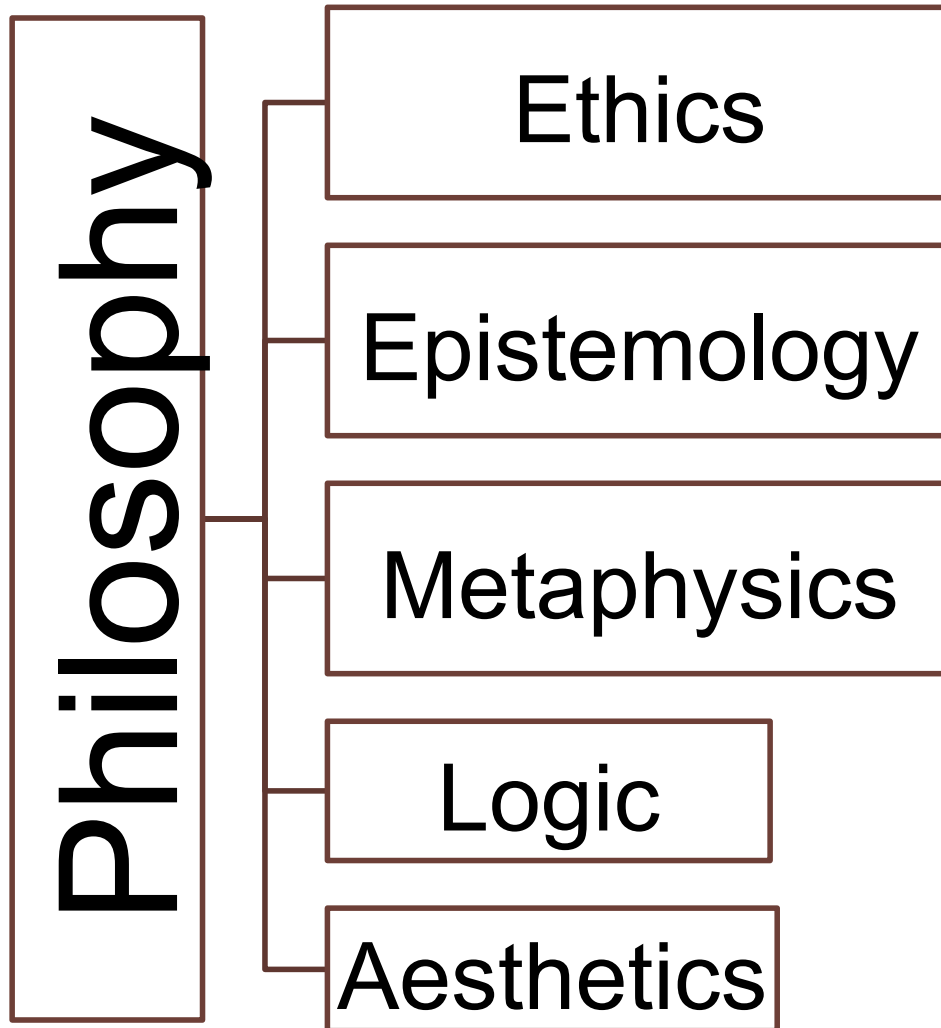
- We have answers to many questions before we take philosophy courses or read philosophy
- Recall: Socrates – Why do we follow rules?
- Loaded Questions
 - These are the ones Philosophers are most interested in



What are these questions?

- Philosophy was not the academic institution it is today.
- The first traditional school of Philosophy was founded by Aristotle.
 - The Lyceum: Greek for “gymnasium” – roughly a gymnasium of the mind
 - There were no “divisions” or “areas” of Philosophy.
- These “loaded” questions help us branch into the main areas of philosophy
 - 3 Main Branches of Philosophy (The Branches we are focused on)
 - 2 Smaller Branches

5 Branches of Philosophy



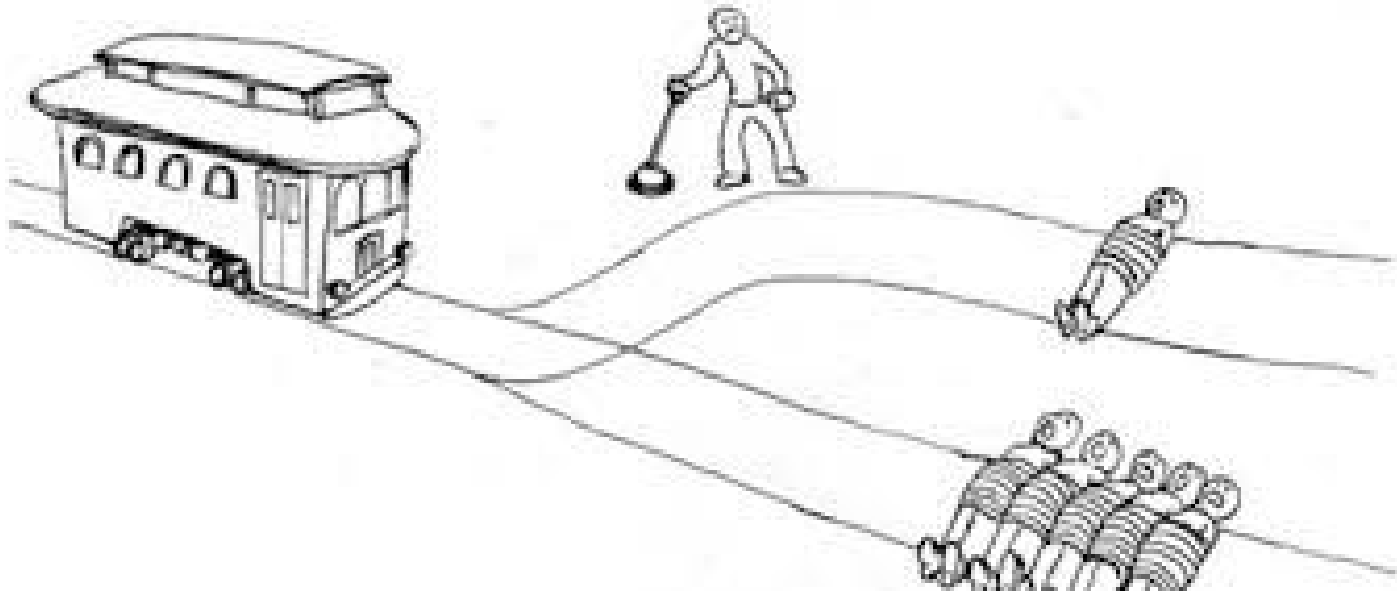
Ethics

- Before attending a philosophy class, I already hold a set of values
- Values come from a variety of different places:
 - Our feelings
 - Information we have about the world
 - A sense of what is “right”
 - Sometimes this is called “Intuition”
 - 1. I have an intuition that stealing is wrong
 - 2. have an intuition that stealing may be permissible under certain circumstances
 - Perhaps 2 is not actually stealing then?

Ethics

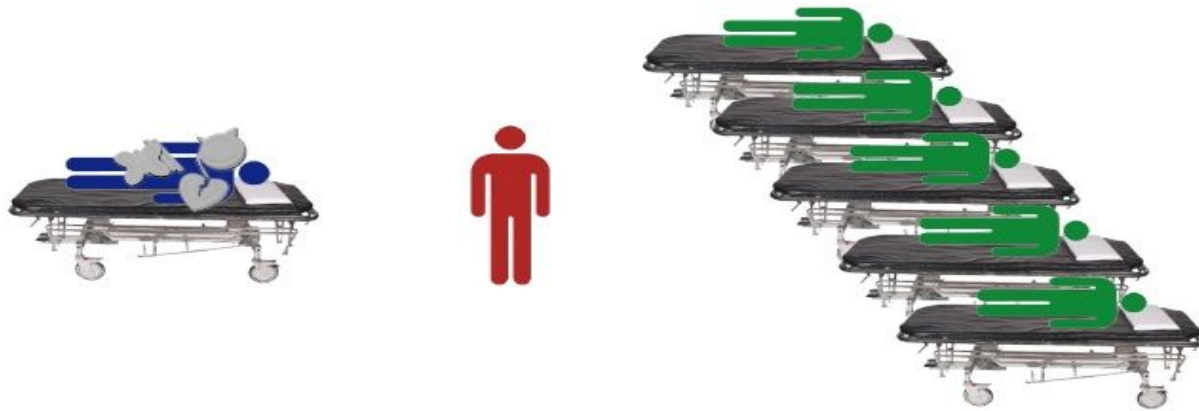
- The loaded question here:
- *What should I do??*

The Trolley Problem



What should I do?

Trolley Problem B: "Transplant"



What should I do?

“Why is it that the **bystander** may turn his trolley, though the **surgeon** may not remove the young man’s lungs, kidneys and heart?”
(1401)



[Basic Trolley Scenario](#),
Flickr photo shared by
[John Holbo](#), licensed [CC](#)
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What should I do?

- Within the branch of Ethics, there are several popular theories (and thousands of variations) which help us answer this question:
 - Consequentialism (Based upon consequences)
 - Epicurus, JS Mill, Peter Singer
 - Deontology (Based upon intentions)
 - Immanuel Kant, Thomas Nagel, Frances Kamm
 - Virtue Ethics (Based upon character)
 - Aristotle, Elizabeth Anscombe
 - Divine Command (Based upon divine authority)
 - Plato, Occam, Descartes
 - Pluralism (Rejects a single method for answering the question)
 - Elizabeth Anderson, Maria Lugones, Martha Nussbaum
 - Nihilism (There is no answer, Ethics is a fiction)
 - Nietzsche, John Mackie

Epistemology

- Beliefs and knowledge
- I can have beliefs about many different things.
 - I can believe it is Wednesday
 - I can believe $2+2 = 4$
 - I can believe there is a red cup sitting on the table
- My beliefs about the world come in two flavors:
 - Empirical - Flows from senses
 - A Priori - Doesn't flow from senses
- Often, knowledge flows right behind belief
 - Knowledge = belief + something else
 - Knowledge = believing P + P being true
 - Knowledge = believing P + P being true + having a good reason to believe P

Belief and Knowledge

- It would be difficult for us to say we know something without also believing it.
- Loaded Question:
- How do I know?
 - If I do know, then how do I know that I know?



How do I know?

- Just like in Ethics, there are various theories in Epistemology
 - Definitional - Knowledge can be defined using conditions
 - Knowledge = Belief + Truth + Justification
 - Knowledge = Belief + Justification
 - Knowledge = Belief + Truth
 - Conceptual - Knowledge is based upon our concepts of a thing
 - I know I am looking at a tree because I understand what the concept of a tree is. I don't need to see the entire tree to understand what it is.
 - Coherentism - Knowledge is based upon systems of belief
 - Authority - Knowledge is based upon finding a qualified authority
 - Nihilism - Knowledge is, at best, fictional.
 - There is no way to absolutely prove the earth revolves around the sun.

Metaphysics

- Loaded question:
- What is there?

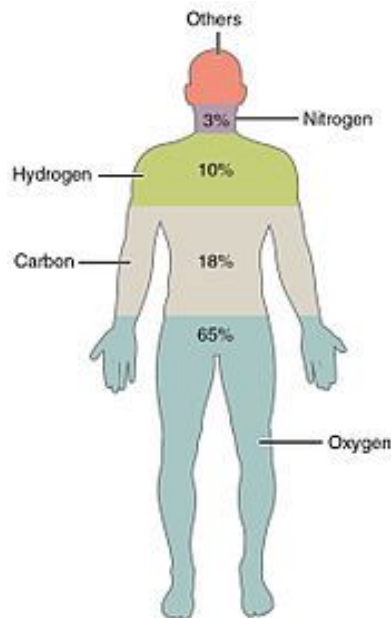


What is there?

- Metaphysics is translated as “beyond physics”
- It is roughly concerned with the existence of reality.
- Popular Theories:
 - Materialism - Everything which exists is a physical object.
 - Denies the existence of the mental or abstract realms
 - Idealism - Everything which exists is a mental object.
 - “Physical reality” only exists in our imagination.
 - Denies the existence of a “real” physical realm.
 - Dualism - Everything is either physical or mental
 - Descartes is a dualist, this is where we get “Cartesian Dualism”
 - Platonism - Things only exist insofar as they are attached to some abstract object.
 - Nihilism - Nothing exists

What is there? What am I?

- By exploring this question, we are also exploring questions concerning ourselves.
- If there are only physical things, then I am an entirely physical being.
- So metaphysics also helps us understand who we are.



Element	Symbol	Percentage in Body
Oxygen	O	65.0
Carbon	C	18.5
Hydrogen	H	9.5
Nitrogen	N	3.2
Calcium	Ca	1.5
Phosphorus	P	1.0
Potassium	K	0.4
Sulfur	S	0.3
Sodium	Na	0.2
Chlorine	Cl	0.2
Magnesium	Mg	0.1
Trace elements include boron (B), chromium (Cr), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), fluorine (F), iodine (I), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo), selenium (Se), silicon (Si), tin (Sn), vanadium (V), and zinc (Zn).		less than 1.0

Nihilism - Skepticism

- A common thread we find in the three main branches is that some of us believe these questions have no answer.
 - Nihilism - the belief that philosophical questions don't have "real" answers. At best, answers are a type of useful fiction we employ in our everyday life.
- The skeptic will say that answering these questions is useless
 - *Trying* to answer these questions is also useless
- Some of us might believe that humans are incapable of answering these questions
 - But then this is just adding another voice to philosophy, since it is staking a claim concerning humanity.

Nihilism - Skepticism

- “...they may also be implying that making the discovery that human beings just can’t cope with certain kinds of questions, and making that discovery for *yourself* - and actually *making it*, rather than just lazily assuming that you know it already - isn’t a valuable experience, or is an experience without effects.” - Craig
- Imagine what it would be like if humans believed they were incapable of answering questions about nature and the existence of God.

The scope of Philosophy

- Some philosophies are more focused on actions rather than conceptual musings about ethics, reality, and knowledge.
 - Zen Buddhism - focused on thoughtlessness
- Someone who doesn't wish to "philosophize" still has a philosophy.
 - Recall what we just said about skepticism and nihilism
- Craig mentions a quote from Nietzsche: "A more sensible objection to philosophy than that it is ineffectual is pretty much the opposite: that it is too dangerous"
 - Nietzsche is a known nihilist

The scope of Philosophy

- Much of what occurs in Philosophy, the views and beliefs of the authors we read, will be challenging to entertain.
 - Philosophy tries to capture a picture of the world.
 - When this picture doesn't agree with us, we might be opposed to it.
 - What would Socrates say?



The scope of Philosophy

- So Philosophy should be somewhat alien - it tells us we are intellectually interesting beings.
 - Some philosophies will not seem alien to us at all.
 - We all find ourselves in different areas of the pool

Why try to swim?

- Too general of a question for Craig to answer (Why do philosophy?)
- One potential answer - Salvation. Salvation from what?
 - A buddhist will tell you the purpose of philosophy is to find enlightenment - to break the chain of rebirth.
 - An epicurean will tell you the purpose of philosophy is to maximize pleasure and minimize suffering.
- Not all Philosophy is about living and dying.
- Philosophers have tried to make practical impacts:
 - Thomas Hobbes - Lessons from War.
 - Descartes - How can we make room for Science?
 - Marx - Liberating the working class from poverty.
 - Judith Jarvis Thomson - Improve the lives and status of women.

Why try to Swim?

- Some issues with our picture:
 - Craig: Philosophy doesn't only exist in Universities (although academics may claim otherwise). Nearly every commercial organization speaks of itself as having a philosophy.
 - Craig: On the other hand, the type of philosophy done at the University level is often too specific, too esoteric. What the hell is Immanuel Kant talking about in his "Critique of Pure Reason" when he mentions the term "a priori synthetic cognition"???

Discarded Branches

- The truth is that academic philosophy has become narrow due to the fact that older branches have fallen off and sprouted into their own disciplines:
 - Medicine
 - Mathematics
 - Psychology
 - Biology
 - Physics
 - Chemistry
 - Astronomy
 - Etc...
- All of these disciplines were studied by Aristotle and considered Philosophy at one point in time.

Incomplete Picture



- Craig: This might be the best we can do:
 - Philosophy is both too wide and too narrow
 - We are all *already* philosophers
 - Philosophizing is different from having a philosophy
- Craig: Complacency leads to saying “everyone has a right to their opinion”
 - Acquiring rights isn’t that simple.

End

“Few men think, yet all will have opinions”

-George Berkeley

