



## What is Philosophy?

- Greeks defined Philosophy as the “love of wisdom” & philosophers as “lovers of wisdom”
- But just what do philosophers do?
  - Stop & think: What do you consider philosophers to do?

## What is Philosophy?

- Though everyone may be a philosopher to some degree philosophy DOES have a point...
- “Philosophic argument attempts to clarify matters by ridding everyday language of ambiguity and vagueness” (Holowchak 2002, p.1).
- The payoff?: A better understanding of the issues and perhaps even a solution to stubborn problems.

## So, why is it important?

- Most of us recognize the importance of various arts and sciences.
- Art in its various forms (including sport?) add fullness, variety, beauty, and flavor to our lives.
- Science makes discoveries that contribute to our health and comfort.
- While we often take these things for granted, have you ever thought of what life would be like with out them?
  - Stop & Think: Life without science or art. What gives meaning to these things?

## Philosophers in the making!

- If you ever have considered what makes our human existence (including art, science...and sport) so worthwhile or troubling – then you have expressed a rudimentary interest in matters of philosophy!
- If you have ever wrestled with an important decision or faced a “moral dilemma” you are likely using philosophical frameworks to guide your choices and behaviors

## How does philosophy work?

- Philosophy takes what seems plain, true and obvious and subjects it to a deeper understanding.
- Gives us the analytical tools to dissect what people do and open it to critical examination.
- Not *just* opinion. Philosophy demands rigorous arguments and clear definitions.
- Logical argumentation used to make cogent points.

## How does philosophy work?

- Takes our most fundamental beliefs and principles and demands a justification!
- Invites us to ask questions...
  - How ought we to live our lives?
  - What is the best form of political life for humans?
  - Does God exist?
  - Are there universal truths?
  - How should I treat clients/patients?
  - What is beauty?

## Some examples from the world of logic

- One branch of philosophy is logic.
- Logical systems of explanation have developed throughout history and in many different civilizations: Greek, Chinese, Indian, Medieval...
- Western “formal” propositional logic is mostly derived from Aristotle. (syllogistic logic – inference that something has to follow from “x” proposition)

## Some examples from the world of logic (cont.)

- However, a modern interpretation deals with “natural language” or informal logic.
  - Politicians are masters at this form of rhetorical argumentation
  - Yet, many arguments in natural language contain “fallacies”
  - A fallacy is, roughly speaking, an error of reasoning

## Some examples from the world of logic (cont)

- Three categories of natural language fallacies: Relevance, Ambiguity, Presumption
- Relevance - Arguments that commit fallacies of relevance rely on premises that aren't relevant to the truth of the conclusion.
  - EX: Ad hominem (personal attack)
- Ambiguity - Arguments that commit fallacies of ambiguity manipulate language in misleading ways.
  - EX: Straw man (misrepresent a position to make it seem weaker)
- Presumption - Arguments that commit fallacies of presumption contain false premises, and so fail to establish their conclusion.
  - EX: False dilemma (the either/or fallacy –only presented with limited options)

## So how does this relate to sport?

- Since many of you are athletes or fans of sport, questions like “What is sport” or “Which team is the best team” might seem absurd to be considered philosophy at all.
- Upon further consideration – such questions are often not so easily answered...
  - **Stop & Think:** What counts as a sport in the first place? Why?
  - Is there a true “nature” of sport? Play? Games?
  - How ought sport be practiced? (Should players pull out cell phones or *sharpies* in the end-zone?)
  - Is the best team always the team that wins the championship?

## What is the Philosophy of Sport?

- Philosophy has been historically been divided up into five sub-disciplines:
  - Metaphysics - study of what is real
  - Epistemology - study of the theory of knowledge
  - Aesthetics – study of beauty
  - Ethics – study of how we ought to live
  - Logic – study of argument analysis

### Philosophy of sport (cont.)

- Today, sport philosophers approach a wide range of issues, with a wide range of methods (based on the five branches)
- Questions up for discussion
  - What is sport?
  - Are female athletes of the same rank as male athletes?
  - Does sport affect or reflect social notions of right and wrong? Values? (both in individuals and in society)?

### Philosophy of sport (cont.)

- Should certain drugs be banned from sport?
- Is sport an “art form”?
- What place does winning have in sport?
- Can sport help to frame a meaningful life?
- Can I come to know myself better in and through sport participation?

### Are you ready? Take the PRQ

- R. Scott Kretchmar's (2005)  
Philosophical Readiness Quotient (PRQ)  
Take a few moments to take the PRQ:  
Based on three categories:  
Curiosity: Do philosophical ?'s deserve our attention?  
Confidence: Do philosophical methods work?  
Commitment: Do philosophical answers matter?