#### Philosophy course textbooks

You will need to get these books:





Excellent textbook containing all the content you need to learn to prepare for Paper 1: Epistemology & Moral Philosophy. All the content you need for Paper 2: Metaphysics of God & Metaphysics of Mind.





#### Philosophy pre-course reading list

To prepare for the course you may wish to read some of the following:





This is a book of 25 separate chapters, each exploring a different issue or problem in Philosophy. Very good for getting you thinking like a philosopher but still accessible for people who don't have any philosophical training.

A book of modern ethical dilemmas to get you thinking about Moral Philosophy. Provides insight and interesting conundrums for you to consider.



This is a short book that covers all the basic ideas in Philosophy. A good

A very readable 'coffee table" style book, well-presented, that covers all the main ideas from the last 2500 years of Philosophy.

"holiday read". It will set you up with all the background ideas you need to understand what the subject is abou

# PHALLACY OF GENERALISATION IN STANDARD FORM

"All generalisations are dangerous - even this one!"

We all make generalisations.

"Philosophy teachers are all ace" – generalisation.

"Mr Fenby is Hall Park Academy's best Philosophy teacher" – specific and true.

### Assumptions

We all operate our normal lives with a certain level of assumption based, on a mix of experience and logic. Sometimes our assumptions are wrong and sometimes the unusual happens. Eg I assume my dog would like to go for a walk in the morning, but that the cat would prefer not to. I don't need to have tried to drag a cat on a walk behind me to know that cats don't go for cat walks. What assumptions might someone make about the following person?



What are her interests and hobbies?

How good is she at driving?

What is her level of intelligence?



# Think about what the typical maths teacher looks like.

Did you come up with this?



#### How true is this?

How many Maths teachers do you know who look like this?

Do Maths teachers do their laundry or vacuum out the car wearing a suit?

#### Generalisations

These are examples of *stereotypes*, which represent one form of *generalisation*.

A *generalisation* is when you ascribe particular characteristics to a *group* based on observations of one or more *individuals* in that group.

Making generalisations is an important human skill, and comes naturally to us. However, we need to be very careful about the generalisations we make. Have you ever been watched closely in a shop by a security guard? It is probably because you are a teenager. Do all teenagers shoplift?

#### Example of generalisation

We take a small sip of soup cooking on the stove to test its taste, and conclude that the rest of the pot tastes the same.

This is a generalisation, but one that is likely to be useful in the cooking process. It may be that the sip of soup is slightly different from the rest of the pot, but I can live with this as it gives me a rough idea of what the soup tastes of. However, it could still be wrong – I could by chance get a spoonful of one ingredient that isn't representative.

### Structure of an argument using generalisation

A typical inductive argument using generalisation looks like this:

1. All observed X are Y C. Therefore, all X are Y

For example: 1. Every teenager I have met is rude and lazy C. Therefore, all teenagers are rude and lazy

This is a non sequitur argument. "Non sequitur" is latin for "it does not follow". The conclusion does not follow logically from the premise. (Pronounced "non-sek-wi-tuh")

**Universal generalisation**: claim that **all, every** or **no members** of a group have a certain characteristic.

All X are Y or No X are Y

These are the most powerful kinds of generalisation statements, but they are also very dangerous (and often relatively easy to disprove).

Can you think of a universal generalisation that is actually true?

Consider the statement: *All swans are white.* 

What is the easiest way of disproving this statement? – you only have to find one black swan to disprove it.

However, consider the statement:

No Philosophy students are nasty.

How could you disprove this? What is the difference?

Consider the statement:

All Philosophy students are above averagely good looking.

Philosophy teachers are nerdy.

Where are these assumptions coming from?

**Statistical generalisation**: claim that a proportion or percentage of a group has a certain characteristic.

Over 90% of the population can read.

One in three Australians approve of the Prime Minister's policy.

Need to be based on non-biased, statistically valid data collection procedures.

# Task 1: Find the phallacy of assumption in the following SF arguments:

1) P1 I like eating cake. P2 My best friend likes cake. C1 Everyone likes cake.

2)
P1 I love my wife and am happily married.
P2 The man across the street is happily married.
C Therefore he must love his wife.

3)
P1 The binmen empty my bin on Wednesdays.
P2 Tomorrow is Wednesday.
C Therefore my bin will be emptied tomorrow.

4) P1 90% of Philosophy students are good looking and successful people. P2 I am a Philosophy student. C I am good looking and successful. 5) P1 Existence is a more perfect state than non existence. P2 God is perfection. C Therefore God exists.

6)

P1 Mr Fenby said logic is important. P2 Mr Fenby has studied Philosophy at university. CTherefore logic is important.

7) P1 My clock has always kept good time. P2 My clock shows 3.18pm. C Therefore it is 3.18pm.

8)

P1 The winner will have 10 coins in his pocket. P2 Jones has 10 coins in his pocket. C Therefore Smith will not win.

# Task 2: Write the SF argument for the following conclusions, avoiding assumptions:

- 1) My car runs on petrol.
- 2) Violent films should be banned.
- 3) Water contains oxygen.
- 4) It is raining.
- 5) Maths is useful.
- 6) My dad has cut the lawn.
- 7) I am a good friend.
- 8) Fire is hot.
- 9) Puppies cheer people up when they are sad.
- 10) Toothpaste is a good invention.

## Send me your answers.

#### Some logical mistakes to look out for





# Standard Form arguments

Philosophers usually present their arguments to us in prose (full sentences and paragraphs).

It is often helpful to take an argument from its original prose statement and lay out its premise(s) and conclusion(s).

This is called 'standard form', because then its reasoning can be seen more clearly.

#### **Rules for Standard Form**

Each step contains only one proposition (either a premise or a conclusion)

Premises come before the conclusions they are supposed to support

Conclusions are signaled by three dots in a triangle: ...

#### Example

I. Humans are mortal

2. Mr Fenby is human

∴ Mr Fenby is mortal

### **Identifying Premises and Conclusions**

Most of the time, you will need to convert an argument from prose form into standard form

Here are the steps to follow:

- I. Read the written argument carefully
- 2. Highlight the conclusion first
- 3. Identify the premises provided that prove this conclusion
- 4. Construct the standard form of the argument
- 5. Include any tacit premises

#### For example

#### Step 1: Read the argument carefully

#### Step 2: Highlight the conclusion

#### **Step 3: Identify the premises**

#### Step 4: Construct the standard form

- I. We should not inflict unnecessary pain on any animal with consciousness
- 2. Cows and pigs are animals with consciousness
- $\therefore$  We should not inflict unnecessary pain on cows and pigs

#### Step 5: Include any tacit premises

We should not inflict unnecessary pain on cows and pigs. After all, we should not inflict unnecessary pain on any animal with consciousness, and cows and pigs are animals with consciousness.

I.We should not inflict unnecessary pain on any animal with consciousness

- 2. Cows and pigs are animals with consciousness
- $\therefore$  We should not inflict unnecessary pain on cows and pigs

#### **Additional Notes**

When in prose form, the conclusion is often stated first, before the premises

There are some cases when there is a tacit conclusion, in which case, you will need to write it yourself

Not all words, sentences or information in prose format are needed for standard form: only use the premises required to prove the conclusion

#### **Activities**

Re-write each of the following 7 arguments in Standard Form, then read the last 3 SF arguments and tell me what is wrong with them.

You need to submit these 10 answers to me by the end of this week!

If this liquid is acidic, the litmus paper would have turned red. But it hasn't, so the liquid is not acidic.

How can you believe that corruption is acceptable? It is neither fair nor legal!

He is either in Hong Kong or Macau. John says that he is not in Hong Kong. So, he must be in Macau.

If the Government wants to build an incinerator here, they should compensate those who live in the area. Incinerators are known to cause health problems to people living nearby. These people did not choose to live there in the first place.

The Tasmanian Tiger is thought to have been extinct for decades, so it is difficult to believe Mr. Smythe when he claims to have seen on last Wednesday while on a hike. Close friends of Mr. Smythe claim that he is a well-respected member of the community who has never made an outrageous claim like this in the past. How should the general public respond to such claims?

It is a mistake to think that medical problems can be treated solely by medication. That's because medication does not address psychological and lifestyle issues. Medical problems are not purely biochemical. They involve issues of attitude and way of life.

Haven't we had enough letters to the editorial page of the Spectator every day and from cry-baby steel workers talking about how the Stelco strike is killing them? I am sure there are hundreds of pro-union letters going into the Spectator office, but only the anti-union ones get printed. I would not be a bit surprised if Stelco and the Spectator were working together to lower the morale of the steel workers who chose to strike for higher wages.

What is wrong with this standard form argument?

- I. Mr Fenby teaches Philosophy.
- 2. Mr Fenby has a cat.
- ∴ Philosophy teachers have cats.

What is wrong with this standard form argument?

I. Dogs have 4 paws.

9

- 2. Mr Fenby's cat has 4 paws.
- $\therefore$  Mr Fenby's cat is actually a dog.

What is wrong with this standard form argument?

- I. Cars need fuel to make them go.
- 2. My car won't go.
- $\therefore$  My car needs fuel.

## **Epistemology: Rationalism Vs. Empiricism**

**Readings:** 'Rationalism and Empiricism' available at <u>http://www.philosophyideas.com/files/epistemology/Rationalism%20and%20Empiricism.pdf</u> and 'Philosophical Battles: Empiricism versus Rationalism' available at <u>https://www.dummies.com/education/philosophy/philosophical-battles-empiricism-versus-rationalism/</u>

**Specialist Vocabulary:** Epistemology, metaphysics, rationalism, empiricism, scepticism, idealism, a Priori, a Posteriori, sense data, 'tabula rasa,' empirical, rational, doubt, 'cogito ergo sum', subjective, objective, innate knowledge.

Key Philosophers: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke.

What is this?	
What do you	
know about this	
object?	
	l
How do you know	
this?	
Are you sure you	
know this?	
What are the im-	
plications of this?	
If the chiect (A) is	
greater than R	
and B is greater	
than C then the	
object (A) is great-	
er than C. Is this	
true? How do you	
know this?	
SUMMARY: What	
is this?	
	1

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What is this?	This is a chair. Explore the contributions of students; encourage creative thought. Perhaps consider the idea of purpose etc. e.g. is this a hat? Try not to refer to the object as a chair to aid creative exploration.
What do you know about this object?	I know that you can sit on it. I know that it is in the room. I know that it is made of plastic and metal. I know that it was manufactured or man made. I know that it has four legs. I know that it is blue/black etc. I know that it feels rough Explore by asking students to thoroughly examine the object. Encourage them to use all of their senses (although perhaps not taste!). Ask students to mind-map ideas, perhaps use a 'snowball effect' to build up observation. Encourage students to define 'knowledge'. What is knowledge?
How do you know this?	I know this through my senses, observation etc. Use questioning to explore the origin of this knowledge. Introduce to terms such as sense data, a Posteriori and explore the idea of Locke's 'tabula rasa' by pre- senting the following thought experiment: imagine an alien stumbled across the chair. Q. Would they know what it was? Would they have any prior knowledge of this object? How would they gain knowledge of it? What 'tools' might they use to gain this knowledge etc.
Are you sure you know this?	Introduce the idea of illusion, dreaming, hallucinations, tricks of the senses/mind, evil demon, matrix etc. Ask students if they can be sure of their knowledge of the object. Apply to a wider variety of knowledge gained through the senses e.g. scientific observation. Ask students if they can be sure of their knowledge. Ask students if they can be sure that others in the group are experiencing/gaining the same knowledge. Explore the problem of other minds etc. Introduce 'subjectivity'. Perhaps explore idealism.
What are the im- plications of this?	Explore scepticism and perhaps dabble with solipisism. Perhaps explore questions such as 'what is the value of knowledge gained through the sciences?' and 'what knowledge gained through school might we question?' Etc.
If the object (A) is greater than B, and B is greater than C, then the object (A) is great- er than C. Is this true? How do you know this?	Introducing rationalism: ask students to consider this in groups. Ask the same questions e.g. what can you know? How do you know this? Are you sure you know this? Draw out the differences in the acquisition of knowledge e.g. I know this through thinking/reasoning. This is different because Ask students which theory of knowledge they believe will lead to 'true knowledge'. Refer to early discussion of what constitutes knowledge. Draw out key terms e.g. subjective/objective. Introduce students to a Priori/innate knowledge. Ask students what C might be. Q. What 'tools' did you use to gain this knowledge?
SUMMARY: What is this?	Individual reflection time.