

# Glossary

Abduction:	A form of inference in which the best hypothesis is chosen to account for the evidence.
Absolutism:	The principle that there are universal or objective standards by which to assess or judge propositions, especially moral propositions.
Aesthetics:	The philosophical study of the nature of beauty.
Altruism:	The virtue of selfless concern and behavior for another's welfare, even if detrimental to one's own.
A posteriori:	Reasoning from observed facts or evidence; knowledge based on experience.
A priori:	Reasoning from self-evident principles; knowledge that is innate or based not on experience.
Autonomy:	The ethical principle of self-rule or self-determination, involving often uncoerced and informed decisions.
Axiology:	The philosophical study of the nature of value.
Beneficence:	The ethical principle that involves the moral duty to benefit or to do good for another.
Casualty:	An ethical theory involving case-based instead of principle-based reasoning or deliberation.
Causation:	The notion that phenomena are the result of antecedent events and forces.
Coherentism:	The doctrine that a proposition's truth depends upon its coherence with other well known true propositions.
Consequentialism:	An ethical theory stating that the consequences of an action are the bases for deliberating about its moral nature.
Constructivism:	The idea that knowledge is produced and accepted through social means.
Dasein:	Heidegger's term for a being constituted by temporality, who interprets the meaning of Being temporally.

Deduction:	A form of inference from general principles to particulars.
Deontology:	An ethical theory stating that actions, rather than their consequences, are the bases for moral deliberation.
Determinism:	The notion that actions, especially the actions of people, are not free but necessarily governed by antecedent causes or events.
Dualism:	The philosophical doctrine that there are two components to everything, such as mind and body or good and bad.
Egoism:	An ethical theory stating that individual self-interest is the basis for one's behavior and morality.
Emergentism:	The idea that entities or their properties arise from lower levels but are substantively apart from them.
Emotivism:	An ethical theory in which morality is based on one's personal feelings and desires.
Empathy:	The ability to intuit the feelings of another and to comprehend them.
Empiricism:	The notion that the origin of knowledge is in sense perception and experience.
Epistemology:	The philosophical study of knowledge, both in terms of its discovery and justification.
Ethics:	The philosophical study of morals, principles, and duties associated with human behavior and actions.
Ethos:	The Greek notion for character of a person or community.
Existentialism:	The philosophical study of phenomena from one's personal experience or perspective, such that meaning is constructed or created rather than discovered or imposed authoritatively.
Folk psychology:	A theory in which behavior is analyzed and defined in terms of the commonsense or everyday understanding of mental states.
Foundationalism:	The idea that knowledge is established or justified with respect to a set of basic beliefs.
Holism:	The notion introduced by J.C. Smuts in the early twentieth century that wholes are the predominant units in nature.
Humanism:	The philosophical position that asserts the dignity of people and that truth is obtainable through human means.
Idealism:	The doctrine that reality is simply a mental construct or an idea and has no independent existence apart from the mind.
Induction:	A form of inference from the particular to the general.
Innate:	The notion that individuals have knowledge, whether positive or moral, from birth.

Instrumentalism:	The pragmatic idea that knowledge is not necessarily true or false but useful or instrumental.
Intuitive:	The notion that knowledge, whether positive or moral, is directly apprehended from one's perceptions.
Justice:	The ethical principle to act fairly, especially in the distribution of benefits and burdens or risks (distributive justice).
Lifeworld:	A concept introduced by Edmund Husserl that refers to the world of experience prior to theoretical analysis.
Logos:	The Greek term for word or reason and is used traditionally by philosophers to denote rationality.
Materialism:	The philosophical doctrine that reality is composed only of matter.
Mechanism:	The structure of various, sequential parts that compose the operation of a system.
Metaphysics:	The philosophical study of first principles that underlay notions such as substance, time, being, and causation.
Monism:	The idea that there is only a single substance, reality, idea, force, or principle that is responsible for phenomena.
Naturalism:	The doctrine that only the natural world exists and that only natural forces and entities are responsible for phenomena.
Naturalistic fallacy:	A formal fallacy that infers ethical obligations from natural facts or considers what is natural to be good.
Nonmaleficence:	The ethical principle not to inflict intentional harm or injury on another.
Normative:	The ethical notion that there are norms or standards for regulating actions or behavior.
Objectivity:	The state of being factual or mind-independent and not biased by desires or feelings.
Ontology:	The metaphysical analysis of being or the nature of existence.
Organicism:	The idea that natural phenomena have a basic organic structure.
Pathos:	The state of being that grounds all possible wise and loving action.
Phenomenology:	The concrete rather than theoretical study of phenomena.
Physicalism:	The notion that all phenomena are explicable in physical terms.
Platonism:	The philosophical position which holds that abstract entities exist.

Pluralism:	The philosophical doctrine that there are multiple substances, ideas, forces, or principles responsible for phenomena.
Positivism:	An approach to epistemology in which knowledge is established through experience and not through metaphysical speculation.
Presupposition:	An assumption or a background belief made in order to investigate phenomena.
Rationalism:	The notion that knowledge originates through the exercise of reason alone, without the aid of sense-experience.
Realism:	The doctrine that entities and forces exist that are independent of human perception or thought.
Reductionism:	The idea that complex phenomena are explainable in terms of primitive or basic phenomena.
Relativism:	The principle that judgments of propositions, especially moral ones, are relative to cultural and social standards.
Situationism:	An ethical theory stating that moral judgments are context dependent.
Subjectivity:	The state of being governed by one's own feelings or personal orientation.
Supervenience:	A relationship in which change in a higher level property depends upon change in a lower level property.
Sympathy:	The capacity to share the feelings of another.
Teleology:	The philosophical doctrine that natural processes unfold towards some end or goal ( <i>telos</i> ).
Utilitarianism:	An ethical theory stating that an action is moral if it brings about the greatest amount of utility (or happiness) for the greatest number of people.
Value:	The intrinsic or extrinsic worth of something.
Virtue:	A moral or intellectual quality of a person.
Vitalism:	The notion that biological life is due to special vital, apart from physical or chemical, forces.
Worldview:	A general philosophical perspective from which the world is understood or viewed.