GLOSSARY

**Abrahamic religions** The Western monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (they all trace their roots from the prophet Abraham).

**absolute space** and **absolute time** The view that space and time exist independently of objects and events “in” them, a view defended by Newton. In general, absolute, as used in philosophy, means “independent and nonrelative, unqualified and all-inclusive.”

**absolutism** The thesis that there is but one correct view of reality. Opposed to relativism (see relations of ideas).

**abstract** Overly general, not concrete, independent of particular concerns or objects. For example, a philosopher may attempt to ascertain the nature of justice without particular reference to any concrete practical case.

**action-at-a-distance** The idea that one object can have a causal effect on another from a distance, as in Newton’s laws of gravitational attraction. Leibniz’s rejection of this idea as “absurd” led him to develop a noncausal interpretation of the same phenomena.

**ad hominem argument** An argument against the person instead of the position; for example, attacking a philosopher’s living habits instead of asking whether or not his theories are true.

**agnosticism** The refusal to believe either that God exists or that He does not exist, usually on the grounds that there can be no sufficient evidence for either belief.

**Ahura Mazda** The God of Zoroastrianism.

**alienation** In Marx, the unnatural separation of a person from the products he or she makes, from other people, or from oneself.

**altruism** The thesis that one ought to act for the sake of the interests of others.

**Analects, The** One of the major works of Confucius.

**analytic (of a sentence or truth)** Demonstrably true (and necessarily true) by virtue of the logical form or the meanings of the component words. The concept was introduced by Kant, who defined it in terms of a sentence (he called it a “judgment”) in which the “predicate was contained in the subject” and “added nothing to it.” For example, in “a horse is an animal,” he would say that the concept of “horse” already includes the concept of being an animal; we would say that horse means “an animal that . . .” and thus that “is an animal” adds nothing to what we already know just from horse. Kant also says that the criterion or test for analytic sentences (or analyticity) is the principle of contradiction; an analytic sentence is one for which denial yields a self-contradiction.

**analytic philosophy** The movement in twentieth-century philosophy, particularly in the United States and Britain, that focuses its primary attention on language and linguistic analysis. Also called linguistic philosophy.

**anarchism** The view that no government has the legitimate authority to coerce people and that the public interest and individual rights can be served only without a state of any kind.

**Angra Mainyush** The evil spirit of Zoroastrianism.

**animism** The view that things (or, at the extreme, all things) are alive. It may also be the view that the universe as a whole is a gigantic organism.

**antecedent conditions** Those circumstances, states of affairs, or events that regularly precede and can be said to cause an event. The antecedent conditions of boiling water, for example, are the application of heat to water under normal atmospheric pressure, etc. A determinist would say that the antecedent conditions of a human action would be the state of his or her nervous system, a developed character (with personality traits), certain desires and beliefs, and the circumstances (or “stimulus”) in which the action takes place.

**anthropomorphic** Humanlike. An anthropomorphic conception of God ascribes human attributes to Him.

**a posteriori (knowledge)** “After experience,” or empirical. (See empirical.)
a priori (knowledge) “Before experience,” or, more accurately, independent of all experience. A priori knowledge is always necessary because there can be no imaginable instances that would refute it and no intelligible doubting of it. One might come to know something a priori through experience (for example, you might find out that no parallel lines ever touch each other by drawing tens of thousands of parallel lines), but what is essential to a priori knowledge is that no such experience is needed. Knowledge is a priori if it can be proven independently of experience. The most obvious examples of a priori knowledge are analytic sentences, such as “a horse is an animal,” and “if all men are mammals and Socrates is a man, then Socrates is a mammal.”

aperture In Anaximander, “the unlimited,” the basic stuff of the universe.
aphorism A short, striking general observation, usually just a sentence or two.
appearance The way something seems to us, through our senses. Usually philosophers worry about something’s being a mere appearance, such that it bears no faithful resemblance to the reality of which it is the appearance.
argument The process of reasoning from one claim to another. An argument may, but need not, be directed against an explicit alternative. A philosophical argument does not require an opponent or a disagreement.
argument from design See teleological argument.
asceticism A life of self-denial and material simplicity, often to further philosophical or religious goals.
Asha Immortal spirit or “righteousness” in Zoroastrianism.
assertion A statement or declaration, taking a position. Mere assertion, when presented as an argument, is a fallacy; arguments consist not only of assertions but also of reasons for them.
association of ideas A central idea of empiricist philosophy, according to which all knowledge is composed of separate ideas that are connected by their resemblance to one another (e.g., “this one looks exactly like that one”), by their contiguity in space and time (e.g., “every time I see this, I see that as well”), and by their causality (e.g., “every time a thing of that sort happens it is followed by something of this sort”). (The three different “associations” here are Hume’s.)
assumption A principle taken for granted, without argument or proof.
atheism The belief that there is no God. A person who believes that there is no God is an atheist.
attribute In Spinoza, an essential property of God; for example, having a physical nature, having thoughts. In general, an attribute is a property (as in Aristotle).
authority That which controls; usually, that which has the right to control. (For example, the government has the authority to tax your income.)
autonomy Intellectual independence and freedom from authority. Moral autonomy is the ability of every rational person to reach his or her own moral conclusions about what is right and what is wrong. (This does not mean that they will therefore come to different conclusions.)
axiom A principle that is generally accepted from the beginning and so may be used without further debate as a starting point of argument.
bad faith Sartre’s characterization of a person’s refusal to accept himself or herself; this sometimes means not accepting the facts that are true about you. More often it means accepting the facts about you as conclusive about your identity, as in the statement “Oh, I couldn’t do that, I’m too shy.”

Becoming (in Plato) The “world of Becoming” is the changing world of our daily experience, in which things and people come into being and pass away.
begging the question Merely restating as the conclusion of an argument one of its premises. For example, “Why do oysters give me indigestion? Because they upset my stomach.”
behaviorism In psychology, the radical methodological thesis that insists that only what is publicly observable can be used as subject matter or as evidence in scientific research regarding human beings. In particular, all talk of “minds” and “mental events,” “desires,” “purposes,” “ideas,” “perceptions,” and “experiences” is to be given up in favor of terms that refer only to the experimental situation or the behavior of the creature (or person) in question (for example,
“stimulus,” “response,” “reinforcements”). In philosophy and metaphysics, behaviorism is the logical thesis that there are no “covert” or “private” mental events, only patterns of behavior and psychological ways of talking about behavior as “intelligent,” “deceitful,” “calculating,” or “inattentive.” All of these must be understood not in terms of some process (“intelligence,” “deceitful thinking,” “calculating,” or “lack of attending”) going on “in the mind” but rather as ways of interpreting, predicting, and otherwise describing and evaluating behavior.

**Being (in Plato)** The “world of Being” is the realm of eternal Forms, in which nothing ever changes. It is, for Plato, reality, and, in general, Being is used by philosophers to refer to whatever they consider ultimately real (substance, God).

**Best of all possible worlds** Leibniz’s view that God demands a perfect universe and makes it “the best possible,” all things considered.

**Bhagavadgītā (“Gītā”)** The “Song of God” of ancient Hinduism; the epic poem of Krishna, who is God incarnate.

**Brahma (“Brahman”)** Precursor of God in Hindu theism; the idea of the One, the unity underlying all things.

**Buddha** “The awakened one”; the historical founder of Buddhism.

**Cartesianism** Concerning Descartes. In particular, concerning his philosophical method. (Descartes’ followers are generally called “Cartesians” and their method “Cartesianism.”) The Cartesian method is essentially a deductive method, as in geometry, starting with self-evident axioms and deducing the rest.

**Categorical imperative** In Kant’s philosophy, a moral law, a command that is unqualified and not dependent on any conditions or qualifications. In particular, that rule that tells us to act in such a way that we would want everyone else to act.

**Categories** Kant’s word (borrowed from Aristotle) for those most basic and a priori concepts of human knowledge, for example, “causality,” and “substance.”

**Causal interactionism** The theory that mind and body causally interact, that mental events (for example, an “act of will”) can cause a bodily consequence (for example, raising one’s arm), and that a bodily change (for example, a puncture of the skin) can cause a mental consequence (for example, a pain).

**Causal theory of perception** The view that our experiences (our sensations and ideas) are the effects of physical objects acting upon our sense organs (which are thereby the causes).

**Causation** The relation of cause and effect, one event’s bringing about another according to natural law. In Hume, (1) one event’s following another necessarily (or so it seems to us); (2) one type of event regularly following another (see association of ideas).

**Cause** That which brings something about. On the hard determinist interpretation, a cause is an antecedent condition that, together with other antecedent conditions, is sufficient to make the occurrence of some event necessary, according to the laws of nature. On a weaker interpretation, a cause may simply be an event (or condition) that regularly precedes another event and thus can be used to predict when the latter will occur. (For example, if we say “a cause of forest fires is lightning,” we mean “whenever lightning strikes a sufficiently dry forest, fire will occur.”) In Aristotle, cause means something like “reason,” and he distinguishes four different kinds of “causes” of a change: (1) the formal cause, the principle or the essential idea according to which a change comes about (think of a blueprint for a building or the plans for a project); (2) the material cause, the matter that undergoes the change (think of the raw materials for building a house—lumber, bricks, cement); (3) the efficient cause, that which initiates the change (the construction workers and their tools); (4) the final cause, or the purpose of the change (to build a place where Socrates and his family can live, for example).

**Cause-of-itself (causa sui)** That which explains its own existence, often said of God. It also follows from the usual definitions of substance.

**Certainty** Beyond doubt. But it is important to insist that certainty in the philosophical sense is more than the common psychological use of certain (“feeling certain”). One can feel certain and
yet be wrong or foolish. One can be certain, in this philosophical sense, only if one can prove that
the matter is beyond doubt, that no reasons for doubt could be raised.

civil rights Those rights that are determined by a particular state and its laws; constitutional
rights, for example, are civil rights in this sense, guaranteed by the law of the land.
cogito, ergo sum or “I think, therefore I am” is Descartes’ only principle that he finds “beyond
doubt” and “perfectly certain.” (Think here refers to any kind of idea or experience in the mind,
not just what we would call “thinking.”) It is the premise of his entire philosophy.
coherence Logical connection. A statement by a witness in a courtroom coheres with other
testimony and evidence when it fits in and follows from that other testimony and evidence. To say
that a philosophy must be coherent is to say that its various principles must fit together in an
orderly and logically agreeable fashion.

cohere, coherence theory of truth A statement or a belief is true if and only if it “coheres” with a system
of statements or beliefs. A truth of mathematics is “true” because it forms part of the nexus in the
complex of mathematical truths. A geometrical theorem is “true” because it can be proven from
other theorems (axioms, definitions) of the geometrical system. A “factual” statement is “true”
insofar as other “factual” statements, including general statements about experience that are
logically relevant to the original statement, support it. Because we can never get “outside” our
experience, the only sense in saying that a belief is true (according to this theory) is that it
“coheres” with the rest of our experience.

commitment To form a binding obligation voluntarily. In Sartre’s moral philosophy, a
commitment is a freely chosen adoption of a moral principle or project that one thereby vows to
defend and practice, even in the absence of any other reasons for doing so. Because, according to
Sartre, there are never conclusive reasons for adopting any particular moral position, one must
always defend his or her position through commitment and nothing else.

compatabilism The thesis that both determinism (on some interpretations) and free action can be
true. Determinism does not rule out free action, and the possibility of free action does not require
that determinism be false. They are compatible positions.

compulsion “Being forced to do something.” One acts from compulsion (or is compelled to act)
when he or she could not have done otherwise. Some philosophers distinguish between external
compulsions (for example, being pushed) and internal compulsions (for example, having a
neurotic obsession).

conception truth A statement that is true and that we can see to be true by virtue of the meanings
of the words (or we should say, the “concepts”) that compose it. For example, “a horse is an
animal” is a conceptual truth because anyone who speaks English and knows the meaning of the
words horse and animal knows that such a statement must be true; part of the definition of the
word horse is “an animal.” In Plato, a conceptual truth is a truth about Forms. In Aristotle, a
conceptual truth is a matter of describing the essence of a thing. (See essence, Form.)

conscience A sense or feeling about what is right and wrong, usually without argument. (It is like
intuition in matters of knowledge.) In Christian moral theory, it is a moral sense instilled in us by
God. In Freudian psychology, it is the internalization of the moral lessons given us as children by
our parents and teachers.

consistent Fitting together in an orderly, logical way. Two principles are consistent if they do not
contradict each other. A philosophy is consistent if none of its principles contradicts another.

constitute To put together, “set up,” or synthesize experience through categories or concepts.
First used by Kant, later by Husserl.

contemplation (the life of) According to Aristotle (and other philosophers), the happiest life, the
life of thought and philosophy.

contingent (truth) Dependent on the facts; neither logically necessary nor logically impossible.
A contingent state of affairs could have been otherwise. One test to see if a state of affairs is
contingent is to see if it is conceivable that it could be other than it is. It is contingent, for
example, that heavy objects fall toward the Earth because it is easily imaginable what it would be
like if they did not. This is so even though, in another sense, we say that it is (physically) necessary that heavy objects fall. The philosophical terms contingent and necessary refer to logical possibility, not to the factual question of whether a statement is true or not.

**continuity (spatiotemporal continuity)** The uninterrupted identifiability of an object over time in the same location or in a sequence of tangent locations.

**contradiction** The logical relation of two principles in which the truth of one requires the falsity of the other. A witness’s statement in court contradicts other testimony if both statements cannot be true.

**correspondence theory of truth** A statement or belief is true if and only if it “corresponds” with “the facts.” Even when restricting our attention to statements of fact, however, this commonsensical “theory” gets into trouble as soon as it tries to pick out what corresponds to what. How can we identify a “fact,” for example, apart from the language we use to identify it? And what does it mean to say that a statement “corresponds” to a fact?

**cosmogony** The study of the origins of the universe in its entirety.

**cosmological argument** An argument (or set of arguments) that undertakes to “prove” that God exists on the basis of the idea that there must have been a first cause or an ultimate reason for the existence of the universe (the cosmos).

**cosmology** The study of the universe in its entirety (from the Greek word for “universe”—cosmos).

**counter-example** An example that contradicts a generalization, such as “all elephants have tusks.” A counter-example would be an elephant without tusks.

**criterion** The test or standard according to which a judgment or an evaluation can be made. For example, a test for a substance’s being an acid is whether or not it turns litmus paper red. Or a sure mark or standard. In ancient skepticism, a sufficient guarantee of truth.

**critical** Thinking so as to be mindful of mistakes in reasoning; to be critical is not necessarily to be unpleasant.

**cultural relativism** The descriptive anthropological thesis that different societies have different moralities. It is important to stress that these moralities must be fundamentally different, not only different in details. Some societies consider an act as stealing, whereas others do not, but a society that does not have a conception of private property might be fundamentally different from one that does.

**Dao** The “Way”; in Confucianism, the “way” to be a gentleman, for example, following the rituals; in Daoism, the underlying and ineffable “way” of nature or reality.

**datum** Latin, literally, “what is given” (plural, data).

**declarative sentence** A sentence in which one takes a position, states a fact, asserts a proposition.

**deconstruction** Initiated by Jacques Derrida, a current school of philosophical thought (especially popular among some feminist and African-American thinkers) that encourages critical reading for “cultural bias” and that rejects the idea of the “unified self.”

**deduction (deductive argument)** A process of reasoning from one principle to another by means of accepted rules of inference. In a deductive argument, a conclusion follows necessarily from the premises, and so, if you are certain of the premises, you can be certain of the conclusion, too.

**deism** A variation of the Judeo-Christian religion that was extremely popular in the science-minded eighteenth century. Deism holds that God must have existed to create the universe with all of its laws (and thereby usually accepts some form of the cosmological argument) but also holds that there is no justification for our belief that God has any special concern for humankind, any concern for justice, or any of those anthropomorphic attributes for which we worship Him, pray to Him, and believe in biblical stories about Him.

**democracy** That form of government in which policies or at least the makers of policy are chosen by popular mandate.

**deontology** Ethics based on duty (Greek: dein). Kant’s ethic is deontological in that it stresses obedience to principle rather than attention to consequences (including happiness).
determinism The view that every event in the universe is dependent upon other events, which are its causes. On this view, all human actions and decisions, even those that we would normally describe as “free” and “undetermined,” are totally dependent on prior events that cause them.

dharma In Hinduism, righteousness, the way of the good.

dialectic Argument through dialogue, disagreement, and successive revisions, out of which comes agreement. Alternately, a “logic” developed by Hegel in which different forms or philosophies are arranged according to increasing sophistication and scope. The “logic” is a development from one form, whose inadequacies are demonstrated, to another, which corrects these inadequacies, and so on. Marx borrows this “dialectic” and gives it a social interpretation. (The “logic” need not be anything like the form “thesis-antithesis-synthesis.”)

distributive justice The ideal of everyone receiving his or her fair share. For example, concerns over ownership of land, just wages, and fair prices are all matters of distributive justice.

divine pre-ordination God’s knowledge of and power over all that will happen, including our own future actions.

doubt Lack of certainty; lacking reasons to believe and perhaps having reasons not to believe. It is important to distinguish doubt in this philosophical sense from doubt in the ordinary psychological sense. Mere personal uncertainty or distrust is not sufficient; there must be a demonstrable reason for doubt, that is, reasons for not accepting the beliefs in question.

dual aspect theory The theory (for example, in Spinoza) that mind and body are simply different aspects (or “attributes”) of one and the same substance, thus avoiding the problem of interaction between substances.

dualism In general, the distinction between mind and body as separate substances, or very different kinds of states and events with radically different properties.

duty What one is morally bound to do.

egalitarianism The view that all people are equal in rights and respect.

egoism The thesis that people act for their own interests. Psychological egoism is merely the thesis that they, in fact, act in their own interests; ethical egoism is the thesis that people ought to act in their own interests.

eliminative materialism The thesis that increasing knowledge of neurology eventually will allow us to give up our “folk-psychological” terminology of mental states.

empirical (knowledge) Derived from and to be defended by appeal to experience. Empirical knowledge can be only so derived and so defended (as opposed to a priori knowledge, which need not be).

empirical ego All those characteristics of a person that can be discovered through experience and that distinguish each of us from other persons qualitatively; that which makes each of us a particular man or woman and gives us a particular “character.” Compare transcendental ego.

empiricism The philosophy that demands that all knowledge, except for certain logical truths and principles of mathematics, comes from experience. British empiricism is often used to refer specifically to the three philosophers: Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. It is still very much alive, however, and includes Bertrand Russell in the twentieth century and a great many philosophers of the past fifty or so years who have called themselves “logical empiricists” (better known as logical positivists).

emptiness In Buddhism, in Na-ga-rjuna, being without substance: the proper understanding of being as without substance.

Enlightenment A cultural and philosophical movement in the eighteenth century in Europe defined by a new confidence in human reason and individual autonomy. Some of the major figures of this movement were René Descartes, the metaphysician Baron Henri d’Holbach, the political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the political reformer-writer Voltaire in France. In Great Britain, Enlightenment philosophers were John Locke and David Hume; in Germany, Immanuel Kant.

entitlement A right; for instance, a right to own property.
epiphenomenalism The thesis that mental events are epiphenomena, that is, side effects of various physical processes in the brain and nervous system but of little importance themselves. The model is a one-way causal model: Body states cause changes in the mind, but mental states have no effect in themselves on the body.

epistemology The study of human knowledge, its nature, its sources, its justification.

equality In political philosophy, the nondiscriminatory treatment of every person, regardless of sex, race, religion, physical or mental abilities, wealth, social status, etc.

essence (or an essential property) The necessary or defining characteristics or properties of a thing. The essence of a person is that without which we would not say one is that particular person (Fred rather than Mary, for example). In Husserl’s writings, essence or essential intuition refers to those ideal objects and laws that constitute necessary truths. The term essence is borrowed from Aristotle (and the medieval philosophers) and used in much the same way, except that Husserl’s notion of essence is always tied to “intuition” and consciousness.

ethical absolutism The thesis that there is one and only one correct morality.

ethical egoism The thesis that people ought to act in their own interests.

ethical relativism The thesis that different moralities should be considered equally correct even if they directly contradict each other. A morality is “correct,” by this thesis, merely if it is correct according to the particular society that accepts it.

ethics A system of general moral principles and a conception of morality and its foundation. Or the study of moral principles.

eudaimonia Aristotle’s word for “happiness” or, more literally, “living well.”

existentialism The modern movement in philosophy that puts great emphasis on individual choice and the voluntary acceptance of all values. In Sartre’s terms, existentialism is the philosophy that teaches that “man’s existence precedes his essence.” That is, people have no given self-identity; they have to choose their identities and work for them through their actions. (Neglect and omission, however, are also actions. One can be a certain type of person just by not bothering to do the appropriate activities.)

explanation An account—usually a causal account—of something; it is opposed to justification, which also defends. One can, for example, explain one’s action (say, by claiming that he or she was drunk) without thereby justifying it, that is, showing it to be right. Hume ultimately explains our knowledge but does not justify it.

extended Having spatial dimensions. Philosophers (for example, Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza) often define bodies as “extended,” minds and ideas as “unextended.”

extended (substance) Physical matter in space and time, material objects.

facticity Sartre’s term (borrowed from Heidegger) for the totality of facts that is true of a person at any given time.

faith In the popular sense, believing in something for which you have inadequate evidence or little good reason. In theology, faith usually refers to the trust that a believer should have in God’s ultimate grace and fairness. Sometimes, faith is defended as a rational belief in God (for example, in Kant). More often, faith is defended against rationality (as in Kierkegaard).

fallacy An apparently persuasive argument that is really an error in reasoning; an unsound or invalid argument.

fascism The view that the best government is the strongest and that the government has the right—and perhaps the duty—to control the lives of every citizen for the sake of the most efficient society.

fatalism The thesis that certain events (or perhaps all events) are going to happen inevitably, regardless of what efforts we take to prevent them.

first principles Those axioms and assumptions from which a philosophy begins. These must be solid and indisputable principles; they need not be those principles that one happens to first believe.
Form (in Plato) An independently existing entity in the world of Being, which determines the nature of the particular things of this world. In Aristotle, Forms have no independent existence.

formal logic A branch of logic that is concerned with the principles of reasoning as such, in which the relationships between symbols, and not their interpretation, are studied.

Four Noble Truths Among the most important teachings of the Buddha: “All is suffering (and transitory),” the need to eliminate desire, the way to eliminate desire, and the right path to the good.

free will Among philosophers, a somewhat antiquated expression (as in “he did it of his own free will”) that means that a person is capable of making decisions that are not determined by antecedent conditions. Of course, there may be antecedent considerations, such as what a person wants, what a person believes, but free will means that such considerations never determine a person’s decision. At most they “enter into the decision.”

freedom The idea that a human decision or action is a person’s own responsibility and that praise and blame may be appropriately ascribed. The most extreme interpretation of freedom is the absence of any causes or determinations. Thus, an indeterminist would say that an event was free if it had no causes; a libertarian would say that a human act was free if it was only self-caused but not determined by anything else (including a person’s character). Certain determinists (“soft determinists”), however, would say that an act was free if it is “in character” and based upon a person’s desire and personality. Most generally, we say that a person’s act was free whether or not it was the result of a conscious decision and whether or not certain causes may have been involved, if we would say that he or she could have done otherwise. (See also liberty.)

freedom of the will Actions undetermined by external causes, including the power of God (though how God can leave us this “indeterminacy” in spite of God’s power and knowledge over us is and must be incomprehensible to us).

functionalism The view that the mind is the product of a pattern in the brain, as in a computer, rather than a product of the matter of the brain as such.

generalization Usually, a proposition about all of a group or set of things on the basis of a limited acquaintance with some of its members. In logic, however, a generalization may be universal (“all x’s are y’s”) or existential (“some x’s are y’s”).

generalization from experience (or inductive generalization) Inference from observation, experience, and experiment to a generalization about all members of a certain class. For example, in a laboratory, a researcher finds that certain experiments on tobacco plants always have the same result. He or she generalizes, through induction, from experimental observations to a claim (or hypothesis) about all tobacco plants. But notice that this generalization is never certain (like the generalization in geometry from a proof of a theorem about this triangle to a theorem about all triangles). It might always turn out that there was a fluke in the experiment or that he/she chose a peculiar sample of plants.

God In traditional Judeo-Christian theology, that being who created the universe and exists independently of it, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere at once, and concerned with justice and the ultimate welfare of humankind. When spelled with a small g the word refers to any supernatural being worthy of worship or at least extraordinary respect.

Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

government The instrument of authority; that body that rules, passes and enforces laws, etc.

happiness The achievement of the good life. In Aristotle, the name we all agree to give to the good life, whatever it is. Happiness, in this sense, must not be confused with pleasure, which is but one (among many) concerns and conceptions of the good life.

happiness calculus (also felicity calculus) Bentham’s technique for quantifying and adding up pleasures and pains as a way of deciding what to do.

hedonism The conception of the good life that takes pleasure to be the ultimate good. Hedonism is the premise of most forms of utilitarianism. It is often the premise—though sometimes a
consequence—of ethical egoism. (These two are not the same: *hedonism* refers to the *end*; *egoism* refers to whose *ends.*)

**Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle** An important principle of recent physics that demonstrates that we cannot know both the position and the momentum of certain subatomic particles because in our attempts to know one, we make it impossible to know the other. This principle has been used to attack the very idea of “determinism” in its classical formulations because determinism requires just the “certainty” of possible prediction that the Heisenberg Principle rejects.

**hermeneutics** The discipline of interpretation of texts. Broadly conceived (as by Heidegger, Gadamer), it is the “uncovering” of meanings in everyday life, the attempt to understand the signs and symbols of one’s culture and tradition in juxtaposition with other cultures and traditions.

**historicism** A philosophy that localizes truth and different views of reality to particular times, places, and peoples in history. It is generally linked to a very strong relativist thesis, that there is no truth apart from these various historical commitments.

**human rights** Those rights that are considered to be universal, “unalienable,” and common to every person regardless of where or when he or she lives. For example, freedom from torture and degradation would be a human right.

**Hume’s fork** Hume’s insistence that every belief be justified either as a “relation between ideas” or as a “matter of fact.”

**hypothesis** A provisional conclusion, accepted as most probable in the light of the known facts or tentatively adopted as a basis for analysis.

**hypothetical imperative** In Kant, a command that is conditional, depending upon particular aims or inclinations. For example, “if you want to be a doctor, then go to medical school.” According to Kant, all other philosophers (Aristotle, Hume, Rousseau) took morality to be a hypothetical imperative. He does not.

**Idea** In epistemology, almost any mental phenomenon (not, as in Plato, with existence independent of individual minds). The terminology varies slightly; Locke uses *idea* to refer to virtually any “mental content”; Hume reserves *idea* for those mental atoms that are derived by the mind from impressions. In Plato, a *Form*.

**idealism** The metaphysical view that only minds and their ideas exist.

**Identity of Indiscernibles** A principle of Leibniz’s philosophy according to which no two things can possibly have all of the same properties or be absolutely identical in all respects.

**identity theory** The thesis that the mind and brain are ontologically one and the same or, more accurately, that mental states and events are, in fact, certain brain and nervous system processes. The theory is usually presented as a form of materialism, but it is important to emphasize that, unlike many materialistic theories, it does not deny the existence of mental events. It denies only that they have independent existence. Mental events are nothing other than certain bodily events.

**illusion** A false belief motivated by intense wishes. According to Marx, religion is an illusion that is intended to compensate for an intolerable social situation. According to Freud, religion is an illusion that attempts to hold onto our childhood desires for fatherly protection and security.

**immaterialism** The metaphysical view that accepts the existence of nonspatial, nonsensory entities such as numbers, minds, and ideas. The weak version asserts merely that there are such entities. The strong version asserts that there are only such entities (that is, there are no physical objects).

**immediate** For certain and without need for argument.

**immoralist** A person who rejects the ultimate claims of morality. An immoralist need not actually break the rules of morality; he or she does not consider them absolute rules and claims that other considerations (even personal considerations) may override them.

**immortality** The idea that the soul survives death (and, in some belief systems, precedes birth).

**imperative** A command.

**implication** One statement logically follows from another. Statements imply one another: We infer one from the other.
impression Hume’s word for sensations or sense-data, that which is given to the mind through the senses.
inclination Kant’s term for all personal considerations: desires, feelings, emotions, attitudes, moods, etc.
incoherent Not fitting together in an orderly or logically agreeable fashion. Using fancy jargon that has no precise meaning may be a source of incoherence. So is a mere list of random beliefs, without any order or logic to hold them together. (They may even contradict each other as well.) An incoherent philosophy may be insightful and true in parts, but because it never coheres into a single system, it may well appear to be nonsense or simply a jumble of words and phrases. In other cases, an incoherent philosophy may be one that makes no sense, whose terms are utter gibberish or whose principles are mere ramblings without intelligible connection or interpretation. (Opposite of coherent.)
inconsistent Not compatible; contradictory. One might also say that a person’s actions are inconsistent with his or her principles. People as well as other principles can be inconsistent with a principle.
incorrigeability Impossible to correct; cannot be mistaken. It has long been argued that our claims about our own mental states are incorrigible—we cannot be mistaken about them.
indeterminism The thesis that at least some events in the universe are not determined, are not caused by antecedent conditions, and may not be predictable.
induction; inductive reasoning; inductive generalization Induction is the process of inferring general conclusions (for example, “all swans are white”) from a sufficiently large sample of particular observations (“this swan is white, that swan is white, and that one, and that one, and that one . . .”). It is usually contrasted with deduction, in that, whereas deductive reasoning guarantees that the conclusion shall be as certain as the premises, induction never gives us a conclusion as certain as the premises. Its conclusions are, at most, merely probable. (“There might always be some black swan somewhere”; and there are, in western Australia.) (See A Brief Introduction to Logic, pp. 20–37.)
inductive argument A process of reasoning in which the characteristics of an entire class or set of things are inferred on the basis of an acquaintance with some of its members. In an inductive argument, although the conclusion is supported by the premises, it does not follow necessarily from the premises, and its truth is not guaranteed by them.
inference Indescribable.
inference Reasoning from one set of principles to another, as in an argument. Deductive inference is but a single kind of inference.
inference-ticket Ryle’s term for to the proper function of a mental state: talk, as a description of a pattern of behavior and, therefore, as an “inference-ticket” that allows us to infer what a person will do in the future. (To say “George wants an olive” is to give us an inference-ticket regarding his future behavior around olives.)
infinite regress A sequence going back endlessly. For example, “A is caused by B, and B by C, and C by D . . . and so on to infinity.” Aristotle believed such a regress to be an intellectual absurdity.
innate ideas Literally, ideas that are “born into the mind”; knowledge that is “programmed” into us from birth and need not be learned. Experience may be necessary to “trigger off” such ideas, but they are already “in” all of us. In Plato, the theory of innate ideas is part of a general theory of the immortality of the soul. Locke’s famous attack on such ideas took them to be literally ideas that all men share from birth. The rationalist philosophers he was supposedly attacking, however, held a much more sophisticated notion; they did not believe that ideas are literally “born into us,” but they did believe that we are born with certain “innate” capacities and dispositions, which will develop with proper education (and mental health). And these ideas, most importantly, can be defended or justified without appeal to any particular experiences or experiments. This is the claim that Locke ultimately rejected.
**intentionality** The “aboutness” of mental states (and other intentional states). A belief is always about something. A desire is always for something. An emotion is directed at someone or some situation. The importance of this concept in phenomenology is that it undercuts the metaphor of mental “contents” (as in a theater, an image explicitly used by Hume, for example). The concept was used by Husserl’s teacher, Franz Brentano, who borrowed it from some medieval philosophers before Husserl used it and made it famous. McGinn, on the other hand, treats intentionality as the content of consciousness.

**intuition** Immediate knowledge of the truth, without the aid of any reasoning and without appeal to experience. Intuition, as rational intuition (there are other kinds), is a central concern of the rationalist philosophers, who consider intuition to be one of the main functions of reason. But because of its very nature, intuition cannot be argued for, nor can it be defended by experience. Accordingly, many philosophers, especially empiricists, reject the notion of intuition and accept it only when absolutely unavoidable. In the twentieth century, Edmund Husserl defended the appeal to intuition in his phenomenology.

**invalid** Not correctly following agreed-upon rules of inference in an argument. Always applied to arguments, not to statements. (Opposite of valid.)

**justice** In the general sense, the virtues of an ideal society. In the more particular sense, the balance of public interest and individual rights, the fair sharing of the available goods of society, the proper punishment of criminals, and the fair restitution to victims of crime and misfortune within society.

**justification** An attempt to defend a position or an act, to show that it is correct (or at least reasonable). (Compare with explanation.)

**karma** In Hinduism, the tendency of any course of action to be repeated; the limitation of one’s free will by one’s own habits and dispositions (even into the next life).

**law** An objective rule that is binding on individuals whether they personally accept it or not. Contrasted to maxim.

**law of contradiction** That basic rule of logic that demands that a sentence and its denial cannot both be true. “Not (P and not P).” This law is used by many philosophers (Kant, Leibniz, and Hume, for example) as criterion for analyticitic or analytic truth.

**law of the excluded middle** That rule of logic that says that either a sentence or its denial must be true: “Either P or not P.” In formal logic, this law, together with the law of contradiction, forms the basis of a great many arguments (for example, that form of reductio ad absurdum argument in which the consequences of one premise are shown to be absurd, and therefore its denial is accepted). Many logicians are now reconsidering this law because it is becoming evident that not all sentences are either true or false. For example, consider Russell’s famous example, “the king of France is bald” (when there is no king of France); is that true or false? It surely isn’t true, but neither can it be false because there is no king of France who is not bald. Or what of “green ideas sleep furiously”? Many philosophers would say that these are neither true nor false, thus rejecting the law of the excluded middle.

**legitimacy** The right to have authority; sanctioned power (for example, through the grace of God, by means of legal succession, by appeal to justice, or by the general consent of the people governed).

**liberty (political freedom)** The ability to act without restraint or threat of punishment. For example, the ability to travel between states without a passport, the ability to speak one’s opinions without prosecution, or the ability to work for or choose one’s own profession or career. This ability, however, is not mere physical or mental ability; one might have the liberty to travel or to try to become a doctor without having the means to do so. It is also important to distinguish this political sense of liberty or freedom from the metaphysical or causal sense discussed previously. Whether our acts are really free in that sense must be distinguished from the question of whether we are constrained or free to act in this political sense. The first refers to the causes of human
behavior; the second refers only to the existence of legislation and political forces constraining our behavior.

**logic** The study of the rules of valid inference and “rational argument.” In general, a sense of order.

**logical truth** A sentence that can be shown to be true by virtue of its logical form alone (by virtue of the connectives “and,” “or,” etc.).

**masculinist** From the point of view of men’s interests and advantage, as opposed to those of women.

**master morality** In Nietzsche, a morality that takes personal self-realization as primary, so called because it was the morality of the “masters” in the slave states of the ancient world (including Greece).

**materialism** The metaphysical view that only physical matter and its properties exist. Such intangible entities as numbers, minds, and ideas are really properties of physical bodies. To talk about energy, for example, is, in a way, to talk about physical potential; to talk about minds is, as a kind of shorthand, to talk about behavior; to talk about ideas is, in a misleading way, to talk about the various structures and interrelationships between objects. Numbers have no existence of their own but only represent sets of sets of objects (the set of all sets of eight things is the number eight, for example). Materialism has always been a powerful worldview in modern scientific culture. It is also the most common view among the pre-Socratic philosophers.

**matter of fact (in Hume)** An empirical claim, to be confirmed or falsified through experience.

**maxim** In Kant, a personal rule or intention. Contrasted to law.

**mean (between the extremes)** In Aristotle, the middle course, not too much, not too little. Courage, for example, is a mean because a person with courage is neither too timid to fight nor so lacking in fear that he or she is rash or reckless in the face of danger.

**metaphysics** Most simply, the study of the most basic (or “first”) principles. Traditionally, the study of ultimate reality, or “Being as such.” Popularly, any kind of very abstract or obscure thinking. Most philosophers today would define metaphysics as the study of the most general concepts of science and human life, for example, “reality,” “existence,” “freedom,” “God,” “soul,” “action,” “mind.” In general, we can divide metaphysics into ontology, cosmology, and an ill-defined set of problems concerning God and the immortality of the human soul. (See ontology, cosmology.)

**method (sometimes, methodology)** An approach and strategy for resolving philosophical problems. For example, the appeal to experience, the appeal to divine revelation, the insistence upon mathematical logic, confidence in reason or trust in authority—all of these are aspects of philosophical methodology.

**method of doubt (or methodological doubt)** Descartes’ technique for discovering those principles of which we can be “perfectly certain”; namely, doubt everything until you discover those principles that cannot be doubted.

**modes (in Spinoza)** Inessential properties or modifications of attributes.

**monad (in Leibniz)** The simple immaterial substances that are the ultimate constituents of all reality. God, the one uncreated monad, created all of the others as self-enclosed (“windowless”), predetermined entities.

**monism** The metaphysical view that there is ultimately only one substance, that all reality is one. Less strictly, it may be applied to philosophers who believe in only one kind of substance.

**monotheism** Belief in one God.

**morality** In general, the rules for right action and prohibitions against wrong acts. Sometimes morality is that single set of absolute rules and prohibitions that is valid for all people at all times and all societies. More loosely, a morality can be any set of ultimate principles, and there might be any number of moralities in different societies.
mysticism The belief that one can come to grasp certain fundamental religious truths (the existence of God, the oneness of the universe) through direct experience, but of a very special kind, different from ordinary understanding and often at odds with reason.

naturalism The belief that ultimate reality is a natural property.

necessary (truth) Cannot be otherwise and cannot be imagined to be otherwise. In philosophy, it is not enough that something be “necessary” according to physical laws (for example, the law of gravity), or “necessary” according to custom or habit (for example, the “necessity” of laws against rape or the felt necessity of having a cigarette after dinner). Necessary allows for not even imaginary counter-examples; thus, it is a necessary truth that two plus two equals four. Not only do we believe thus with certainty and find ourselves incapable of intelligibly doubting it, but also we cannot even suggest what it might be for it to be false, no matter how wild our imaginations.

necessary and sufficient conditions A is necessary and sufficient for B when A is both logically required and enough to guarantee B (“A if and only if B”).

necessity In accordance with a necessary truth.

nihility “The Nothing,” “nothingness.”

obligation Bound by duty. For example, “you have an obligation to keep your promises.”

omnipotent All-powerful, usually said of God.

omnipresent Everywhere at once, usually said of God.

omniscient All-knowing, usually said of God.

ontological argument An argument (or set of arguments) that tries to “prove” the existence of God from the very concept of “God.” For example, “God,” by definition, is that being with all possible perfection; existence is a perfection; therefore, God exists.

ontology The study of being. That is, that part of metaphysics that asks such questions as, “What is there?” “What is it for something to exist?” “What is an individual thing?” “How do things interact?” Traditionally, these questions were formulated as questions about substance. Today, much of ontology is part of logic and linguistics and is the study of the concepts we use to discuss such matters. Sometimes ontology is used as a synonym for metaphysics, but usually the latter is the broader discipline.

ought The term most often used to express moral duty or obligation. Sometimes should is used, but this is ambiguously between ought and merely preferable. Sometimes must or have to is used, but this is ambiguously between ought to and forced to. In Hume’s ethics (and in many others as well), ought is contrasted to is as the hallmark of value (especially moral) judgment.

pantheism The belief that God is identical to the universe as a whole, that everything is divine, or that God is in everything. Spinoza, for example, was a pantheist. Hinduism is a form of pantheism in that it includes a conception of the divine in all things, rather than as a separate Creator.

paradox A self-contradictory conclusion drawn from seemingly acceptable premises. For example, suppose you try to help all and only those people who do not help themselves. That sounds reasonable enough. But then, do you help yourself? If you do help everyone, then you would also help yourself. But if you don’t help yourself, then you aren’t helping all who don’t help themselves. This is a paradox.

parallelism The thesis that mental events and bodily events parallel each other and occur in perfect coordination but do not interact.

participation Plato’s obscure and unexplained relationship between the things of this world and the Forms of which they are manifestations. He tells us that individual things “participate” in their Forms.

perception A kind of knowledge, sense experience.

phenomenology A contemporary European philosophy, founded by the German-Czech philosopher Edmund Husserl, that begins with a “pure description of consciousness.” Originally developed as an answer to certain questions of necessary truth in the foundations of arithmetic, it was later expanded to answer more general philosophical questions, and, in the hands of its later practitioners, it became a “philosophy of man” as well as a theory of knowledge.
pluralism The metaphysical view that there are many distinct substances in the universe and, perhaps, many different kinds of substances as well.

polytheism Belief in many gods.

pragmatic theory of truth A statement or a belief that is true if and only if it “works,” that is, if it allows us to predict certain results and function effectively in everyday life, and if it encourages further inquiry and helps us lead better lives.

pragmatism A distinctly American philosophical movement founded by Charles Sanders Peirce at the turn of the twentieth century and popularized by William James and John Dewey. Its central thesis is obvious in its name, that truth (etc.) is always to be determined by reference to practical (pragmatic) considerations. Only those metaphysical distinctions that make some difference in practice are worth considering, and the only ultimate defense of any belief is that “it works.”

predestination The thesis (usually in a theological context) that every event is destined to happen (as in fatalism) whatever efforts we make to prevent it. The usual version is that God knows and perhaps causes all things to happen, and therefore everything must happen precisely as He knows (and possibly causes) it to happen.

predicate That which is asserted or denied of a thing, which refers to a property of things. Some familiar predicates would be “is red,” “is an animal.”

prediction To say that some event will happen before it happens. Determinism normally includes the thesis that if we know enough about the antecedent conditions of an event, we can always predict that it will occur. But prediction does not require determinism. One might predict the outcome of some state of affairs on the basis of statistical probabilities without knowing any antecedent conditions and perhaps even without assuming that there are any such conditions (in quantum physics, for example). It is also possible that a person might predict the future on the basis of lucky guesses or ESP, again without necessarily accepting determinism.

pre-established harmony The belief that the order of the universe is prearranged by God. In Leibniz, this view allows him an alternative to Newton’s theory of causal relationships, namely that the coordination between our ideas and the physical events of the world and our bodies was set up by God in perfect order.

premise The principle or one of those principles upon which an argument is based. The starting point of an argument.

presupposition A principle that is assumed as a precondition for whatever else one believes, which itself may remain unexamined and uncriticized throughout the argument. For example, a lawyer presupposes that the court aims at justice and has some idea what is just. It is the philosopher, not the lawyer, who challenges those claims.

primary qualities In Locke, those properties (“qualities”) that inhere in the object.

prime mover (in Aristotle) The “cause-of-itself,” the first cause, which (Who) initiates all changes but is not itself (Himself) affected by anything prior. Aristotle believes there must be a prime mover if we are to avoid an infinite regress, which he considers an absurdity. Aristotle also refers to the prime mover as “God,” and medieval philosophers (for example, St. Thomas Aquinas) have developed these views into Christian theology.

principle of induction The belief that the laws of nature will continue to hold in the future as they have in the past. (Crudely, “the future will be like the past.”)

Principle of Sufficient Reason (in Leibniz) The insistence that all events must have a justification and that ultimately all events must be justified by God’s reasons. The principle is sometimes invoked to assert that everything must have some explanation, whether or not God is involved. (For example, scientists use such a principle in their work, as seen in Chapter 3.)

principle of universal causation The belief that every event has its cause (or causes). In scientific circles, it is usually added, “its sufficient natural cause,” in order to eliminate the possibility of miracles and divine intervention (which are allowed in Leibniz’s similar but broader Principle of Sufficient Reason).
**principle of utility** In Bentham, the principle that one ought to do what gives the greatest pleasure to the greatest number of people.

**privacy** The seeming inaccessibility of mental states and events to anyone other than the person who "has" them.

**private language argument** Wittgenstein’s argument that even if there were such “private objects” as mental states and events, it would be impossible for us to talk about them and impossible for us to identify them, even in our own case.

**privileged access** The technical term used by philosophers to refer to the curious fact that a person usually (if not always) can immediately know, simply by paying attention, what is going on in his own mind, whereas other people can find out what is going on—if they can at all—only by watching the person’s behavior, listening to what he or she says, or asking (and hoping they get a truthful answer). It is important to distinguish privileged access from incorrigibility. The first means that a person knows directly what is “in his mind” without having to observe his behavior; the second means that he knows for certain and beyond the possibility of error.

**probable** Likely or supported by the evidence (but not conclusively). The empiricist’s middle step between the extremities of certainty and doubt. (Probability is the measure of how probable something is.)

**problem of evil** The dilemma that emerges from trying to reconcile the belief that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and just with the suffering and evil in the world.

**proof** In a deductive argument, a proof is a sequence of steps, each according to an acceptable rule of inference, to the conclusion to be proved.

**property** Properties are generally distinguished from the substances in which they “inhere” by pointing to the fact that a property cannot exist without being a property of something; for example, there can be any number of red things but no redness that exists independently. (Many philosophers have challenged this idea, but this problem, which is called the “problem of universals,” will not be discussed in this introductory course.)

**proposition** An assertion that is either true or false.

**psychological egoism** The thesis that people always act for their own self-interest, even when it seems as if they are acting for other people’s benefit (for example, in giving to charity, the egoist would say, the person is simply making himself or herself feel self-righteous).

**purposiveness without a purpose (Kant)** The idea that the elements of a beautiful object seem to cohere as if toward a purpose, but we can find no definite purpose. For example, a sunset seems to us a unified aesthetic phenomenon, but there obviously is no “purpose” to a sunset.

**quality** In Locke (and other authors), a property.

**rational** In accordance with the rules of effective thought: coherence, consistency, practicability, simplicity, comprehensiveness, looking at the evidence and weighing it carefully, not jumping to conclusions, etc. Rationality may not guarantee truth; all of the evidence and everything we believe may point to one conclusion, whereas later generations, who know things that we do not, may see that our conclusion was incorrect. Yet, it would still be, for us, the rational conclusion. Rationality points to the manner of thinking rather than its ultimate conclusions. Philosophically, the stress on rationality takes the emphasis off reality and places it on our manner of philosophizing.

**rationalism** The philosophy that is characterized by its confidence in reason, and intuition in particular, to know reality independently of experience. (See reason and intuition.) The term continental rationalism is usually reserved for three European philosophers: Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz.

**rationality** Acting in the best possible way; according to reason. Sometimes, rationality means simply doing what is best under the circumstances, without insisting that there is only one rational way of acting. In other words, rationality is considered relative to particular interests and circumstances. In Kant’s philosophy, however, rationality refers to that faculty that allows us to act in the correct way, without reference to particular interests and circumstances.
realism The thesis that reality exists in itself and that it is independent of our consciousness of it.

reason The ability to think abstractly, to form arguments and make inferences. Sometimes referred to as a “faculty” of the human mind (a leftover from eighteenth-century philosophy). In rationalism, the term describes the faculty that allows us to know reality, through intuition. In empiricism, simply the ability to recognize certain principles that are “relations of ideas,” for example, trivial truths (“a cat is an animal”) and, more complicated, principles of arithmetic and geometry. Empiricists deny that reason allows us special insight into reality, however; it tells us only relations between ideas. In metaphysics, however, reason often has a more controversial meaning, namely, that human ability to go beyond experience to determine, through thought alone, what reality is really like.

reasons Explanations, justifications, evidence, or some other basis for accepting a proposition.

reductio ad absurdum A form of argument in which one refutes a statement by showing that it leads to self-contradiction or an otherwise intolerable conclusion.

reflection To think about something, to “put it in perspective.” We often do this with our beliefs and our emotions. For example, “This morning I was furious at you, but after reflecting on it at lunch, I decided that it was nothing to be angry about.” One might say that philosophy is reflection about life and knowledge in general.

relations of ideas In empiricism, knowledge that is restricted to the logical and conceptual connections between ideas, not to the correspondence of those ideas to experience or to reality. Such knowledge can therefore be demonstrated without appeal to experience. Arithmetic and geometry were taken to be paradigm examples of “relations of ideas.”

relativism The thesis that there is no single correct view of reality, no single truth. Relativists often talk about the possibility of “different conceptual frameworks,” “alternative lifestyles,” and various “forms of consciousness.” They are opposed, often violently, to realists and absolutists. Also, the thesis that morals are relative to particular societies, particular interests, particular circumstances, or particular individuals. (See cultural relativism, ethical relativism.)

resemblance Having the same features. All people resemble each other (or at least most do) in having one and only one head; you resemble yourself five years ago in (perhaps) having the same texture hair, the same color eyes, the same fear of spiders, and the same skill at chess.

responsibility Answerability or accountability for some act or event presumed to be within a person’s control.

retributive justice “Getting even” or “an eye for an eye.”

retrodiction To say, on the basis of certain present evidence, what must have happened in the past. For example, the astronomer who looks at the present course of a comet can retrodict certain facts about its history. For the determinist, retrodiction is as important to his thesis as prediction.

rhetoric The persuasive use of language to convince other people to accept your beliefs.

rights Demands that a member of society is entitled to make upon his or her society. Everyone, for example, has a right to police protection. Some people, by virtue of their position, have special rights; for example, members of Congress have the right to send mail to their constituents without paying postage.

rule of inference A generally accepted principle according to which one may infer one statement from another; those rules of logic according to which validity is defined. All such rules are analytic, but there is considerable disagreement about whether all are so by virtue of their own logical form or whether some are so because they are derived from other, more basic rules. There is also the following question: Given that these rules define correct logical form, how is it possible to say that they have correct logical form?

secondary qualities In Locke, those properties (“qualities”) that are caused in us by objects but that do not inhere in the objects themselves (for example, color).

self-consciousness Being aware of oneself, whether “as others see you” (looking in a mirror or “watching yourself play a role” at a party) or just “looking into yourself” (as when you reflect on your goals in life or wonder, in a moment of philosophical perversity, whether you really exist or
Self-consciousness requires having some concept of your “self.” Accordingly, it is logically tied to questions of self-identity.

**self-contradictory** A contradiction within one and the same statement or set of statements. What I say may contradict what you say; but what I say might also contradict something else that I said, in which case I am being self-contradictory. Moreover, in a few strange cases, my own statement may be self-contradictory, for example, “I do not exist.”

**self-evident** Obvious without proof or argument; for Descartes, a “clear and distinct idea,” one about which there could be no doubt, and it is obvious that there could be no doubt.

**self-identity** The way you characterize yourself, either in general (as a human being, as a man or as a woman, as a creature before God, or as one among many animals) or in particular (as the person who can run the fastest mile, as an all-“C” student, or as the worst-dressed slob in your class). Self-identity, on this characterization, requires self-consciousness. The self-identity of a person, in other words, is not merely the same as the identity of a “thing,” for example, the identity of a human body.

**selfishness** Acting in one’s own interest to the exclusion of others’ interests. The word has a nasty connotation and so should be separated from the more neutral claims of the psychological egoist. To say that a person is acting selfishly is to condemn him or her and to say that the action is blameworthy. It is possible to act for one’s own interests, however, and not be selfish because one may also act for the benefit of others. A selfish act is to the exclusion of other people’s interests; an act may be both in one’s own interests and in the interests of others, however.

**semantic theory of truth** A formal theory, best known from the work of Alfred Tarski, that defines *true* in terms of a technical notion of *satisfaction*. According to the theory, every sentence in the language is either satisfied or not by a distinct class of individuals. This is adequate, however, only for artificially constructed languages. Generalizing the theory to natural language (for example, American English), we can say that the theory suggests that we (but not each of us personally) set up the rules according to which our sentences do or do not “correspond with the facts” of the world.

**semantics** The meanings of a sentence and its various components. Also, the study of those meanings. (So, we can talk about the semantics of a sentence, and we can talk about doing semantics.) “Merely semantic” is a nasty way of referring to conceptual truths, analytic sentences that are true just by virtue of meanings.

**sensation** The experimental result of the stimulation of a sense organ, for example, *seeing* red, *hearing* a ringing noise, *smelling* something burning. The simplest of mental phenomena.

**sense-data** That which is given to the senses, prior to any reasoning or organization on our part.

**sentiment** Feeling, emotion; particularly moral feelings (as in Hume, Rousseau).

**skepticism** A philosophical belief that knowledge is not possible, that doubt will not be overcome by any valid arguments. A philosopher who holds this belief is called a skeptic. Again, skepticism is not mere personal doubt; it requires systematic doubt with reasons for that doubt.

**slave morality** In Nietzsche’s moral philosophy, a morality that takes duties and obligations as primary, so called because it was the morality of the slaves who were not allowed to aspire any higher than mere efficiency and personal comfort.

**social contract** An agreement, tacit or explicit, that all members of society shall abide by the laws of the state in order to maximize the public interest and ensure cooperation among themselves. It is important that such a contract need never have actually been signed in history; what is important is that every member of a society, by choosing to remain in that society, implicitly makes such an agreement.

**society** A group of people with common historical and cultural ties; usually, but not always, members of the same state and ruled by the same government.

**soft determinism** A thesis that accepts determinism but claims that certain kinds of causes, namely a person’s character, still allow us to call his or her actions “free.” The soft determinist is therefore a compatibilist because he believes in both freedom and determinism.
**sophists** Ancient Greek philosophers and teachers who believed that no reality exists except for what we take to be reality.

**sound** Describes an argument whose premises are true and that is valid.

**sovereign** Independent. A sovereign state is one that is subject to the laws of no other state. A sovereign is a person (for example, a king) who is not subject or answerable to the commands of anyone else. A people are sovereign when their wishes are ultimate in the same way and not subject to commands by anyone else or any government. (To say that a people is sovereign is not to say that the will of any individual or group is sovereign within it.)

**Spenta Mainyush** The good spirit of Zoroastrianism.

**state** The center of authority in a society, for example, the largest political unit in a society. Usually a state is a nation, for example, the United States, Germany, etc. Usually, but not always, coextensive with a society and usually, but not always, distinguished by a single form of government and a single government (for example, the U.S. federal government).

**subjective idealism** The view that only ideas and mind exist and that there are no substances, matter, or material objects. In particular, the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley.

**subjective truth** In Kierkegaard, the “truth” of strong feelings and commitment.

**substance** A “unit” of existence, a being; something that “stands by itself”; the essential reality of a thing or things that underlies the various properties and changes of properties. Its most common definitions: “that which is independent and can exist by itself” and “the essence of a thing that does not and cannot change.” In traditional metaphysics, substance is the same as “ultimate reality,” and the study of substance is that branch of metaphysics that studies reality, namely ontology. In Descartes, a thing that so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist (God). Created substances need only the occurrence of God to exist. (See *essence, ontology*.)

**sufficient cause** Capable of bringing something about by itself (for example, four healthy people are sufficient to push a Volkswagen up a hill).

**Sufism** Islamic mysticism.

**syllogism** A three-line deductive argument; the best-known examples are those arguments of this form:

- All P’s are Q’s. (Major premise)
- S is a P. (Minor premise)
- Therefore, S is a Q. (Conclusion)

The major premise asserts something about the predicate of the conclusion (in this case, Q). The minor premise asserts something about the subject of the conclusion (in this case, S).

**sympathy** Fellow feeling; felt concern for other people’s welfare. In the ethics of Hume and Rousseau, the necessary and universal sentiment without which morals—and society—would be impossible.

**synonym** “Meaning the same.” Two words are synonymous if they are interchangeable in a sentence, without losing the meaning of the sentence. For example, *criminal* and *felon* are synonyms in most contexts. The test of a supposedly conceptual truth is to replace certain words with synonyms and then see if its denial yields a self-contradiction. In other words, substituting synonyms turns a conceptual truth into an analytic truth. For example, “ferns are plants”; substituting for “fern” its synonym (or, in this case, also its definition) “a primitive plant that bears spores, etc.” we have “a plant is a plant,” whose denial is a contradiction (“a plant is not a plant”) and thus is analytic.

**synthetic (statement)** A noncontradictory proposition in which the predicate is not entailed by the subject, for example, “horses are generally obstinate.” (*Synthetic* is opposed, in this sense, to *analytic.*) A synthetic sentence cannot be shown to be true by appeal to the logical form or the meanings of the component words. Kant defined a “synthetic” sentence as one that “adds an idea to the subject which is not already contained in it.” For example, “a horse is the source of a large income for some people” is a strictly synthetic sentence. No appeal to the meaning of “horse” will help you find out whether it is true or not, and its denial surely does not result in self-
contradiction. But, according to Kant, it must not be concluded that all synthetic sentences can be shown to be true solely by appeal to experience. Some, he claimed, are known a priori.

**synthetic a priori knowledge** Knowledge that is necessary and known independently of experience (and thus a priori) but that does not derive its truth from the logic or meaning of sentences (thus, synthetic). This is the focal concept of Kant’s philosophy.

**system** An orderly formulation of principles (together with reasons, implications, evidence, methods, and presuppositions) that is comprehensive, consistent, and coherent and in which the various principles are interconnected as tightly as possible by logical implications.

**tabula rasa** In Locke’s philosophy, the “blank tablet” metaphor of the mind, in opposition to the doctrine that there are innate ideas. In other words, the mind is a “blank” at birth, and everything we know must be “stamped in” through experience.

**tautology** A trivial truth that is true by virtue of logical form alone and tells us nothing about the world. (Popularly, a bit of repetitive nonsense, for example, “a rose is a rose is a rose.” Technically [in logic], a sentence that can be shown to be true no matter what the truth or falsity of its component parts.)

**teleological argument** An argument that attempts to “prove” that God exists because of the intricacy and “design” of nature. It is sometimes called the argument from design because the basis of the argument is that because the universe is evidently designed, it must have a designer. The analogy most often used is our inference from finding a complex mechanism on the beach (for example, a watch) that some intelligent being must have created it.

**teleology (teleological)** The belief that all phenomena have a purpose, end, or goal (from the Greek telos, meaning “purpose”). Aristotle’s metaphysics is a teleology, which means that he believes that the universe itself—and consequently everything in it—operates for purposes and can be explained according to goals.

**theism** Belief in God.

**transcendence** Sartre’s term for a person’s plan, ambitions, intentions, and hopes for the future (Do not confuse this use of the word with those introduced in Chapters 2 and 4.)

**transcedent** Independent of. In the philosophy of religion, a transcendent God is one who is distinct and separate from the universe He created. This is contrasted to the concept of an immanent God, for example, in pantheism, where God is identical with His creation, or, to take a different example, in certain forms of humanism, in which God is identical with humankind. (Hegel argued such a thesis.)

**transcendental** Referring to the basic rules of human knowledge, usually with an absolutist suggestion that there can be but a single set of such basic rules. Thus, Kant’s “transcendental deduction” attempted to deduce the one possible set of basic rules for human understanding, and Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology attempted to lay bare the one set of basic (“essential”) laws of human consciousness. Contemporary philosophers sometimes talk about “the transcendental turn” in philosophy, in other words, the attempt to move beyond claims that might apply only to ourselves and our way of viewing things to the way that things must be viewed.

**transcendental deduction** Kant’s elaborate attempt to prove that there is but one set of categories (basic rules or a priori concepts) that all rational creatures must use in constituting their experience.

**transcendental ego** The bare, logical fact of one’s own self-consciousness: Descartes’ “I think”; the self “behind” all of our experiences; the mental activity that unifies our various thoughts and sensations. (The term comes from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason.*)

**trivial** Obvious and not worth saying.

**truth of reason** In traditional rationalism, a belief that can be justified solely by appeal to intuition or deduction from premises based upon intuition. Arithmetic and geometry were, for the rationalists as for the empiricists, a paradigm case of such truths. The rationalists and the empiricists disagreed mainly on the scope of such truths and the restrictions to be placed on the problematic appeal to intuition.
unalienable rights Those rights that no one and no government can take away, for example, the right of a person to protect his or her own life. In other words, human rights.

unconscious Freud’s famous way of referring to the fact that there are ideas, desires, memories, and experiences in our minds to which we do not have privileged access, which we may be wrong about (and, therefore, about which our claims are not incorrigible), and which may be more evident to other people than to ourself. He also distinguishes a preconscious (“the antechamber of consciousness”). Preconscious ideas can be made conscious simply by being attended to. (For example, you do know what the capital of California is, but you weren’t conscious of it before I mentioned it; it was preconscious.) Truly unconscious ideas, however, cannot be made conscious, even when one tries to do so.

unextended Not having spatial dimensions. Philosophers (for example, Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza) often define mind and ideas as unextended.

unsound Describes an argument whose premises are false or that is invalid.

Upanishads The “secret doctrines” that form the basis of Hinduism and Buddhism.

utilitarianism The moral philosophy that says that we should act in such ways as to make the greatest number of people as happy as possible.

valid Describes an argument that correctly follows agreed-upon rules of inference. Always applies to arguments, not statements.

vicious circle Use of two propositions or arguments to support one another with no other support. For example, “He must be guilty because he’s got such a guilty look on his face. . . . Well, I can tell it’s a guilty look because he’s the one who is guilty.”

virtue Moral excellence. In Aristotle’s philosophy, a state of character according to which we enjoy doing what is right. In Kant, willing what is right (whether or not we enjoy it, in fact, especially if we don’t enjoy it).

void Empty space.

will The power of mind that allows us to choose our own actions or, at least, what we shall try to do. In Kant, a good will is the only thing that is good “without qualification,” in other words, acting for the right reasons and good intentions.

will to power In Nietzsche’s philosophy, the thesis that every act is ultimately aimed at superiority, sometimes over other people but, more importantly, superiority according to one’s own standards. In other words, it is what Aristotle meant by excellence. (Nietzsche has often been interpreted, however, to mean political power.)

Zend-Avesta The scripture of Zoroastrianism.

Zoroastrianism The religion of ancient Persia.