

Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction  
By Edward Craig

How ought we to live? What really exists? How do we know? This book introduces important themes in ethics, knowledge, and the self, via readings from Plato, Hume, Descartes, Hegel, Darwin, and Buddhist writers. It emphasizes throughout the point of doing philosophy, explains how different areas of philosophy are related, and explores the contexts in which philosophy was and is done.

Questions for thought and discussion

- If you wanted to avoid philosophy *completely*, what would you have to do?
- Do you really have a right to your own opinion? Always, or only sometimes?
- If you had been trying to persuade Socrates to escape from prison, what would you have said that Crito did not? What would you not have said that Crito did?
- Are there limits to what the State can properly demand of its citizens?
- Under what kinds of circumstance ought we to be cautious about believing what others have said?
- Some people believe in miracles. Why?
- How apt do you find the classic image of chariot and charioteer as a simile for the self?
- Is it true that wholes are 'less real', more a matter of convention, than their parts?
- What, if anything, legitimates the authority that States exercise over their citizens?
- What would happen if you decided not to believe *anything* without having a good reason for it?
- To what extent could you live with the view that morality is culture-relative?
- Is it possible that a human being might consist entirely of matter?
- Do we have any reason to think that a perfect being exists?
- When should the history of something affect our attitudes towards it?
- In the interests of whom, or of what, do you feel we most need a philosophy at present?
- On what matters would you most like to see the human race change its ways of thinking?

Other books by this author

Edward Craig: *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2005 Routledge)

Edward Craig: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Boxed set 10 Vols. 1998 Routledge)

Edward Craig: *The Mind of God and The Works of Man* (1996 Clarendon Press, OUP)

Further reading

Nagel, T. *What Does It All Mean?* (Oxford University Press 1987)

Blackburn, S.W. *Think* (Oxford University Press 1999)

Baggini, J. *Making Sense - Philosophy behind the Headlines* (Oxford University Press 2002)

Warburton, N. *Philosophy: the Basics* (Routledge 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2002)