



## Glossary

**a priori** – (Latin) “from the earlier;” reasoned from a general principle

**abnormal** – not common

**abortion** – the intentional cessation of gestation.

**absolute** – not relative; guaranteed

**abstract** – existing only in theory or idea, not concrete or tangible

**acquaintance** – become familiar with via experience

**actual** – real, not merely possible

**analytic** – (philosophy) statements that are true (or false) in virtue of the way their meanings fit together (not **synthetic**); the **analytic/synthetic** distinction, which is about **meaning**, is closely related to the **necessary/contingent** distinction, which is about **possibility**; and the **a priori/a posteriori** distinction, which is about **knowledge**; some think that the three distinctions amount to the same thing, others do not

**analytic philosophy** – the style of doing philosophy we do in this class; analytic philosophy takes the approach of clarifying important concepts in the sciences and life, rather than providing an independent source of knowledge

**androcentrism** – male focused

**antecedent** – the first sentence in a **conditional** or **biconditional**

**argument** – a set of sentences, the last of which (**conclusion**) is supposed to follow from the prior ones (**premises**)

**arithmetic** – the mathematical study of numbers

**arteriosclerosis** – the blood vessels that carry oxygen and nutrients from your heart to the rest of your body (arteries) become thick and stiff — sometimes restricting blood flow to your organs and tissues

**atom** – the smallest unit of ordinary matter

**atomic sentence** – a basic sentence consisting of a **predicate** and a **variable**, but not **truth functions** or **quantification**.

**axiom** – an assumption necessary for a **proof**

**belief** – mental content held as true by an agent

**biconditional** – a connection of two statements where, if either is true, then the other must be as well. (“If and only if,” “iff,” “E,” “EQV,” “=,” “ $\leftrightarrow$ ,” “ $\Leftrightarrow$ ,” “ $\equiv$ ,” etc.)

**biochemistry** – the scientific study of the structure and function of biological chemicals (usually macromolecules)

**bourgeois** – (French) the materialistic middle class

**brute fact** – a basic truth that is asserted

**bullshit** – speech intended to convince with no necessary relationship to the truth

**calculus** – method of reasoning, especially about change or quantity

**Cartesian foundationalist program** – see **foundationalism**

**cause/causal** – of or relating to that which brings about effects

**ceteris paribus** – (Latin) “other things equal;” conditions that are exceptions to a rule

**cognitive** – relating to or involving mental processes, especially with respect to processing **information**

**cognitive science** – the study of mental information processing

**coherence theory of truth/coherentism** – an epistemological theory holding that a belief can be justified by cohering with other beliefs (not **foundationalism**)

**compound** – a substance composed of **atoms** of different **elements** in a fixed ratio (not **mixture**)

**concept/conception** – an abstract idea, thought to be less rigorous and clear than a strict definition

**conceptual analysis** – reverse engineering concepts in order to understand how they are constituted and their limits

**conceptual framework/scheme** – an organizing set of ideas for viewing and understanding the world (see **framework**)

**conclusion** – the last sentence in an argument

**conditional** – a connection of two statements where, if the first is true, then the other must also be true (“IF/THEN,” “ $\Rightarrow$ ,” “ $\rightarrow$ ”); depending on an **antecedent**; or imposing/containing an **assumption**.

**conjunction** – a connection of two or more statements where, if the conjunction is true, then both statements must be true (AND, , ,)

**conjunct** – a statement in a **conjunction**

**consequentialism** – the ethical view that takes the **moral** value of an action to be determined by its consequences (see **utilitarianism**)



**consequent** – the last sentence in a conditional or biconditional

**consistent** – logical coherence, such that all claims could possibly be true

**contradiction** – affirming statement and its opposite ( $\perp$ ); all contradictions are false (not **consistent**)

**correspondence/correspondence theory of truth** – the view that sentences are true if they refer to how some unobservable world actually is (see **true**)

**counterexample** – an **argument** that is formally equivalent to another, but in which the **premises** are true and the **conclusion** false.

**criterion/criteria** – standard by which something is to be assessed

**definiens** – that which defines

**definition** – a statement that gives meaning to a term

**denotation** – the explicit, referent or definition of a term

**denoting phrase** – a phrase that uniquely identifies a single object or concept

**dephlogisticated** – see **phlogiston**

**descriptive** – about how things are rather than how they should be (not **normative**)

**designatum/designata** – that which is named

**desert** – what one deserves

**dichotomy** – division of a subject into two alternatives

**disagreement** – paradigmatically peers coming to distinct conclusions, which may raise concerns about the truth of an epistemic or moral claim

**disease** – a state of poor health, usually **abnormal**

**disjunction** – a connection between two or more statements where, if the disjunction is true, then at least one of its statements must be true. (OR, EITHER, “ $\vee$ ”)

**disjunct** – a statement in a disjunction

**distributive justice** – the equitable distribution of resources

**duty/duties** – **obligations**, especially to those who have rights or based on understood **moral** rules

**dynamic** – (typically) non-linear, continuously updating change, (for Stevenson) the use of terms to connote feelings, moods, or motivate actions or attitudes

**egalitarian** – equal or equivalent **rights** and opportunities

**element** – an atom or set of atoms having the same number of protons

**elimination** – doing without, dispensing with

**emotive meaning** – emotional valence of an expression, often not expressed in the content of the statement itself

**empirical** – able to be assessed by experience

**empiricism** – a view that holds that experience and sensory evidence are the root of knowledge

**entitlement** – that to which one is to be provided due to some standing or action

**entity** – thing

**epistemology** – the philosophical study of knowledge and justification

**equivalent** – statements that each imply each other

**equivocate** – a fallacy of ambiguity in which the meaning of a term is changed from one statement to another

“**eternal feminine**” – the assumed immutable concept of ‘woman;’ gender essentialism

**ethical** – that which is **moral**; an action that deserves to be considered for its own sake; social **principles** of a group

**essence/essential** – a property of an object that it needs to be itself (not **accidental**)

**ethical judgments** – assessments of whether something is ethical

“**Euclide est un veritable despote; et les verites geometriques qu’il nous a transmises, sont des lois veritablement despotiques**” – (French) “Euclid is a true despot; and the truths geometrics that he transmitted to us, are truly laws despotic”

**existence** – the state of being **actual**

**explanation** – an account of why something is the case (rather than a mere description of the fact that it is).

**explication** – the process of replacing inexact pre-theoretical concepts with exact, scientific concepts (Carnap)

**extension** – the set of things in the world to which a concept or expression **references** (not **intension**)

**external questions** – (Carnap) questions about the **framework** itself, much confusion can be avoided

- by confusing **internal questions** with external questions
- fact** – about the **actual world** (not **value**)
- fairness** – equivalent distribution according to each agent's **utility function**
- fallacy** – faulty reasoning (note: fallacy does not mean false)
- feminine** – exhibiting culturally stereotypical behavior and appearance associated with women
- feminism** – the advocacy of women's rights
- feminist empiricism** – the advocacy of greater women's focus and representation in science and other fields
- feu follet par excellence* – (French) “most excellent fire sprite” a pretentious way of saying that something is hard to pin down
- flatus vocis* – (Latin) “voice blast;” a very pretentious way of referencing mere names or sounds as opposed to the objects to which they refer
- foundationalism** – the view that **beliefs** are **justified** when they are based on **basic** or **self-evident** (not **coherentism**)
- framework** – way of organizing ideas, evidence, and experience
- gene** – a unit of heritable biochemistry
- genetics** – the study of variation and its heredity
- genome** – the complete set of genetic material in an **organism**
- good** – (hypothetical) that which may be beneficial (categorical) that which is morally desirable for itself
- health** – the absence of illness
- hemoglobin** – a protein found in blood cells that carries oxygen or carbon dioxide through the body
- heterogeneity** – differentness, unequally distributed (not **homogeneity**)
- historicism/historicist** – the act or practice of explaining current phenomena by appeal to history
- historiography** – the writing of history
- Human Genome Project** – a decade long, \$3 billion project aimed at discovering the human genetic code in the hopes of discovering genes ‘for’ particular traits; although it was eventually completed and interesting results followed, it turned out genetics were not nearly as deterministic nor as interpretable as scientists had thought
- idealists** – a group of views that thought of reality as in some way deeply related to human experience, understanding, or perception; relevant German idealists include Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, although there were also other famous idealists elsewhere like Bishop Berkeley
- imperialism** – the imposing one's will on another, especially in the context of governments
- implication** – the truth of one statement requires the truth of another
- information** – (cognitive science) a measure of uncertainty or randomness; something has as much information as can be most compressed without loss of content
- intension** – the **properties** implied by a **concept** (not **extension**)
- intention** – a mind's property of having content or being *about* something
- internal questions** – (Carnap) questions within a **framework**, to be answered according to the methods and standards of the framework
- intuition** – pre-theoretic understanding or desire
- ipso facto* – (Latin) “by that very fact”
- judgments, ethical** – see ethical judgments
- justice** – the elimination of arbitrary distinctions and a balance between competing claims (esp. of liberty, equality, and desert)
- justification** – evidence in favor of a claim
- knowledge** – the subject of **epistemology**; thought to be at least a **justified true belief**
- knowledge projects** – attempts to understand the world
- liberatory** – of or relating to the seeking of rights for marginalized groups
- life** – a state of being that is perceived as qualitatively different than inert matter; life is thought to have some moral standing, though perhaps less so than beings that are conscious, can feel pain, or are aware
- linguistic** – about language
- logic** – the study of reasoning about the truth of statements
- logical empiricism** – a broader, less hard-core view than **logical positivism**
- logical form** – organized of sentences using explicit logical connectives like AND, OR, NOT, IF, etc.



**logical positivism** – a view in the 20th century that held that the only meaningful philosophical problems were those which could be analyzed by logical analysis

**maxim** – a principle of conduct or belief

**marginalize** – to treat as unimportant

**marginal utility** – serves as a minimal benefit

**meaning** – that which is communicated or intended to be conveyed

**meaning, emotive** – see **emotive meaning**

**mechanism** – (explanation) – an **explanation** that adverts to clear, delineated, causal processes

**metaphysics** – the philosophical study of the fundamental nature of reality

**metaphysical realism** – the view that objects in the world exist independently of our thoughts and **frameworks**

**mixture** – a combination of two or more substances produced by no chemical combination or reaction

**modal** – relating to possibility, actuality, or necessity

**model** – a simplified representation

**modus ponens** – (Latin) “mode of affirming;” an argument of the form:  
 $p \rightarrow q$   
 $p$   
 $\therefore q$

**modus tollens** – (Latin) “mode of denying;” an argument of the form:  
 $p \rightarrow q$   
 $\sim q$   
 $\therefore \sim p$

**moral** – what is right to do regardless of one’s own aims

**naturalism** – the philosophical view that denies supernatural and is aligned with a scientific investigation into philosophical questions

**naturalized epistemology** – the philosophical view that science can best investigate and explain questions of knowledge and justification

**necessary** – could not be otherwise (not merely **possible** or **actual**, see **sufficient**)

**negation** – the denial of a statement. If the statement is true, its negation is false. (NOT,  $\sim$ ,  $\neg$ )

**negative right** – a guarantee that something will not be taken away

**Neurath’s Boat** – a metaphor for experience: we are on a boat (framework) that needs to be repaired

(anomalies), but there is no shore (foundations) in which to rest, so we must replace each plank (idea) using only the materials we have available

**nominalism/nominalistic** – the **belief** that **universals** or **mental concepts** have no **objective reality** but exist only as words or names

**nomological** – law-like

**non-cognitivism** – the view that moral claims are merely factual claims with emotional content (‘yay’/‘boo’)

**normal** – common, typical

**normative** – about how things should be rather than how they are (not **descriptive**)

**normative inquiry** – contemplating the ideal or desired state of affairs

**noumenon/neumena** – the ‘thing-in-itself’ world outside our experience (not **phenomenon**)

**noûs** – (Greek) “mental activities”

**numeral** – figure representing a number

**objective** – something that is assessed from an impartial, non-biased, ideal perspective

**obligation** – (see **right**)

**ontological/ontology** – the **metaphysical** study of the nature of being and existence

**operationalize** – give explicit criteria for

**P** – philosophers choose **P**, **Q**, and **R** their placeholder symbols for **propositions**

**paradigm** – an experiment /method that provides a model and unifying framework in terms of problems and approaches for a scientific community

**paradigmatic/paradigmatically** – most typical

**perception** – the interpretation of sensory experience

**person** – a creature worthy of moral consideration

**phenomenon/phenomena** – any state or process known through the senses

**phlogiston** – a hypothesized substance present in flammable objects

**point of view** – see **standpoint epistemology**

**positive right** – a guarantee that something will be given

**possible** – not **actual**, but consistent with our understanding of logic, metaphysics, and laws of nature

**Platonic/Platonism** – the view that abstract, non-physical objects actually exist



## Glossary

**practice** – way of behaving

**predicate** – (linguistics) the part of a clause containing a verb; (metaphysics) the application of one term to another (e.g. “Pegasus is a flying creature.”) Not strictly synonymous with **property**, as predicates can be impossible (e.g. “Pegasus both exists and doesn’t exist.”)

**premise/premiss** – sentences in an **argument** that purport to support a **conclusion**

**prima facie** – (Latin) “first appearance;” on the face of it (see **a priori**)

**principle** – a basic generalization that is accepted as true

**processing** – the conversion of information or of experience to information

**proof** – a logical demonstration showing that the **premises** guarantee the **conclusion**

**property** – a characteristic of an object

**proposition** – claims that can be shared, understood, and held to be true or false

**propositional attitudes** – an agent’s mental content toward a **proposition** (e.g. believe, doubt, suspect, etc.)

**propositional sign** – a proposition; propositional signs are sensitive to grammatical changes and word order differences

**pseudoquestion** – a statement framed grammatically as a question, but which cannot be answered, often because it makes an incorrect presumption (e.g. “where does the sun go at night?”)

**Q** – see **P**.

**quantification** – signs of quantity attached to a predicate or subject (“all,” “some,” “none,” etc.).

“*quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio*” – (Latin) “What then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is; if I wish to explain it to him, I do not”

**R** – see **P**.

**rationality** – deciding based on or in accordance with reason or in accordance to **values**

**rational acceptability** – what reasoners accept as a reasonable processes and products of inquiry they may be interested in

**rational reconstruction** – a systematic, formal restatement of intuitively understood concepts

**realism** – (epistemology) a view of a reality **ontologically** independent of conception, perception, etc.; (science) the thesis that what science dictates is approximately true; (ethics) the view that moral facts and values exist independently of our understanding of them

**reason** – the drawing of inferences or conclusions from known or assumed facts

**reciprocity** – when a listener and a speaker are able to communicate successfully

**recognition of intention** – to become aware of or understand a stated meaning

**reductionism** – (explanatory) explanations of complex phenomena are always improved by appeal to simpler or more fundamental things; (ontological) everything that exists is made from a small number of basic substances that behave in regular ways; (methodological) **explanations** ought to use the simplest entities **possible** (see **Occam’s razor**); (theoretical) higher-level theories are replaced outright by translating theoretical terms to more fundamental concepts

**reference** – the picking out of an object, idea, or property

**receptivity** – (Kant) the property of our minds such that objects in the real world can affect it

**representation** – the use of one symbol, idea, or object to stand for another

**right** – guaranteed benefit or protection (see **obligation**, **negative right**, **positive right**)

**right (to use)** – rights for use of objects or land

**S** – epistemologists typically label subjects ‘**S**’ as believing **propositions** (see **P**).

**salva veritate** – (Latin) “rescued truth” a case in which substitutions do not change the truth value or meaning of a proposition

**scepticism/skepticism** – doubt about what is held as the true

**science** – a way of systematically isolating variables to better understand the world

**semantic/semantical** – concerning the **meaning** of something rather than its structure (not **syntax/syntactic**)

**sense** – (general) the faculty through which the external world is apprehended; (language) the **meaning** of a term (Not **reference**)



## Glossary

**sex** – the biological distinctions between man, woman, and other categories

**sexism** – the privileging of one sex over another

**situated knowledge** – the view that there is no **objective knowledge**, rather that knowledge reflects the identities, biases, locations, and conditions of the knowers.

**social** – having to do with human interactions

**social utility function** – what society prefers

**sociobiology** – the 1970s approach of using biological principles to explain human social phenomena

**spatio-temporal** – in space and time

**speech act** – speech that constitutes an action as well (see **illocution**)

**spontaneity** – (Kant) the automatic recognition and interpretation of the external world by our faculties

**spontaneous feminist empiricism** – the view that eliminating sexist bias is a sufficient feminist end

**standpoint theory/standpoint epistemology** – the view that perception

and experience are mediated by one's experience and any attempt at an objective 'view from nowhere' is, at best, the viewpoint of the culturally dominant majority

**state of affairs** – how things are

**strong objectivity** – (feminism) the view that the combined perspectives of diverse groups actually improve the impartiality of outcomes (not **weak objectivity**)

**subjectivism** – (ethics) the view that morality is decided by the individual

**sublimate** – to take improper feelings or forms and use them for productive, appropriate ends

**sufficient** – enough to bring about a result (see **necessary**)

**surveyability/surveyable** – able to be verified or proven

**syllogism** – a logical argument type consisting of single deductive inference.

**synapse** – junction between two nerve cells, the energetic

**synonym/synonymy** – the same concept expressed in another word or phrase

**syntax/syntactic** – concerning the structure of something rather than its **meaning** (not **semantic**)

**tautology** – a statement that is true solely due to its logical structure; repetition of an idea in a different word or phrase; redundant

**theory** – a system of ideas that purports to explain a **phenomenon**

**thesis** – an unproved statement advanced as a premise in an argument

**time-slice** – an instance

**true** – (correspondence) a proposition that corresponds to some fact of reality; (coherence) a proposition that is part of some coherent system of beliefs; (pragmatic) a proposition one would still accept at the end of inquiry

**truth functional** – a logical connection ("if," "not," "and," "or," etc.) such that the truth of the sentence is a function of the connection and the subparts of the sentence.

**transcendent/transcendence** – beyond one's personal experience

**universal** – applying to all of the members of some domain or set

**uptake** – understanding a stated meaning

**utilitarianism** – the ethical view that the correct action is that which provides the most benefit for the most people

**utility function** – a measure of preferences across alternative options

**value** – about underlying preferences (not **fact**)

**variable** – (math) a symbol standing in for an unknown quantity

**verificationism** (meaning) – the view that the only claims that are meaningful are those that can be verified

**virtue** – (general) in terms of; (ethics) desirable trait

**viz./videre licet** – (Latin) "it is permitted to see;" in other words; namely

**Weltanschauung** – (German) "worldview"

**weak objectivity** – (feminism) the 'view from nowhere' approach to truth, aiming to eliminate individual perspectival differences

**world** – that which is beyond our minds and in which we inhabit

**x, y, z** – variables