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Welcome to PHIL 1305: Philosophy and Critical Thinking

New to the course?

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [Syllabus](#) and *review the information carefully*.

To succeed in this course, please fill out your [Course Study Schedule](#) and take no more than **7 days** from when you enroll to turn it in via Modules.

Click [Start Here](#) to begin your course.

Returning to the course? Click **Modules** to the left and resume where you left off.

Important reminders:

- This is a **9-month, online, correspondence self-paced course**.
- **All submissions, including exams, must be completed by the course expiration date.** When you registered for the course, you were sent an email to your Texas State account indicating registration and expiration dates.
- **You may submit no more than one assignment per week for this course.**
- You may not take an exam before previously submitted assignments have been graded and returned.

**At the end of the course, you will be asked
to complete a brief course evaluation.
Your input will help improve the course.**

Contact Your Instructor/ODEL

Instructor

Even though this is a correspondence course, you are encouraged to contact your instructor, Audrey McKinney, at amckinney@txstate.edu if you have any concerns, questions, or problems.

Any email received between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours, except during holiday breaks or announced away times. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply within 48 hours of the next business day.

To ensure timely delivery of all e-mails related to this course, you must use your official Texas State Bobcat Mail email address.

Office of Distance and Extended Learning (ODEL)

Email: corrstudy@txstate.edu

When you are ready to take an exam, you must [submit a request to take a proctored exam](#)

Course Syllabus

PHIL 1305: Philosophy and Critical Thinking

Instructor: Dr. Audrey McKinney

amckinney@txstate.edu

Meet the Course Author

Audrey McKinney received her B.A. from the University of Delaware and her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She is Associate Professor of Philosophy Emerita at Texas State University and is the author of articles on logic, feminist theory, ethics, and the phenomenology of love.

A transplanted "Yankee," Dr. McKinney enjoys the delights of the Austin area, especially the cooling waters of Barton Springs, and travels yearly to West Texas to hike in Big Bend National Park and swim among the turtles, tetras, and catfish at Balmorhea State Park.

Scope & Nature of the Course

Philosophy is the study of fundamental questions about human experience: what are the reliable foundations for my knowledge? What is the true nature of my existence? Can I survive my bodily death? Is there a creator of the universe? How should I decide what is right? What makes my life meaningful?

Philosophers regard the methods by which these questions are explored to be as important as the questions themselves. Since the time of Socrates in Ancient Greece, philosophers have sought to base their views on arguments that can withstand scrutiny; philosophers want to be able to show others the truthfulness of their beliefs. Learning about philosophy, then, requires learning about reasoning: when do I have enough evidence for my beliefs? What is the right sort of evidence to construct? How do I distinguish good reasoning from bad reasoning?

This course is divided into six lessons; to access lesson content, click Modules in the left navigation. Lesson 1 will provide an overview of the terrain of philosophy and of the methods of logical reasoning. Lesson 2 will focus on the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates, who provides us with a marvelous model of an engaged thinker. Lessons 3 through 6 deal with important topics from various areas of philosophy. Lesson 1 will require you to read about 50 pages from the textbook; each of the remaining lessons will require you to read about 100 pages.

Content Outline

Lesson 1: The Terrain of Philosophy

This lesson covers the definition of philosophy, the various areas of philosophy, the role of argument in

philosophy, and fallacious forms of argument.

Lesson 2: Socrates and the Examined Life

This lesson focuses on Socrates, his willingness to go against public opinion, and his eloquent defense of his teachings during his trial.

Lesson 3: The Nature of the Self

This lesson is an examination of the nature of the mind. Is our rich subjective experience nothing but the product of physical processes? Or, is there a self that can continue on even after our physical self perishes?

Prep for the Midcourse Exam

Preparing for the midcourse exam; exam tips; sample questions.

Lesson 4: Are There Moral Truths?

This lesson introduces foundational questions about morality. Is there an objective standard for morality, or are individuals or societies the creators of their own moralities? If there is an absolute standard, on what will it be based?

Lesson 5: What Are Right Actions? Constructing an Ethical Theory

This lesson explores five ethical theories and examines their views on the importance of character, happiness, duty, emotion, and individual agency in moral decision-making.

Lesson 6: What Is Social Justice?

This lesson explores the relationship between the individual and the larger community. When is a society fully just for all of its members? What are the justifications for and limitations of governmental authority over the individual?

Prep for the Final Exam

Preparing for the final exam; exam tips; sample questions.

Required Materials

The required textbook for this course is:

Chaffee, John. (2011). *The Philosopher's Way: A Text With Readings* (3rd ed.). Boston: Prentice Hall.

ISBN 13: 978-0-205-77699-3

ISBN 10: 0-205-77699-X

I have chosen this text for several reasons. The writings of philosophers can be very difficult, replete with abstract ideas and concepts. In a lecture-based course, I would have the opportunity each class session to explain difficult concepts and help you to see the arguments that the philosophers are putting forward. The author of our text does a wonderful job combining primary source material passages from the writings of philosophers both past and present, with explanations of key concepts and helpful

background information. Professor Chaffee's approach also allows you to see a very important feature of philosophical exploration: philosophy is a conversation stretching over centuries. The organization of this textbook around central philosophical themes shows that philosophers across historical eras often address similar concerns; many of the arguments tackled by contemporary philosophers have roots in the works of the philosophers of ancient Greece. Issues pondered by the ancients are alive today! One final reason I have chosen this text is that Professor Chaffee has included works that point to limitations of the emphasis placed by many philosophers on discursive argumentation. This will allow us to explore whether the way in which the Western philosophical canon has been constructed is too focused on a specific kind of reasoning that, by its exclusion of certain voices and approaches, unintentionally impedes the philosopher's quest for truth.

Course Goals

After you have completed this course, you should be able to do the following:

- demonstrate improvement in your critical and moral thinking skills;
- demonstrate the foundational and synoptic nature of philosophical inquiry;
- identify some of the seminal figures in the history of philosophy;
- show your understanding of at least four areas of philosophical investigation;
- explain the methods used by philosophers;
- identify connections between philosophical theories and everyday life;
- recognize fallacious forms of inference;
- express and defend your own views on philosophical issues;
- recognize when your beliefs are inconsistent or in need of further justification; and
- appreciate the limits as well as the scope of the Western philosophical tradition.

Course Procedure

This course will consist of six lessons and two exams. You may access the lessons by clicking Modules in the left navigation. Each lesson includes the following elements:

- a reading assignment from your textbook,
- objectives,
- key terms,
- content that contains explanations of the material covered,
- a self-assessment, and
- an assignment to be submitted for grading.

Be sure to complete all the steps in the lesson, including the textbook reading assignment, before beginning the assignment that ends each lesson.

The course also includes a midcourse exam that covers Lessons 1 through 3 and a final exam that covers the remaining three lessons, Lesson 4 through 6.

To help you plan out your progress throughout the course, complete the [Course Study Schedule](#) before you begin your first lesson and submit it within the first 7 days of the course via Modules.

Assignments

The assignments are designed to help you develop your grasp of the key concepts. Try to complete the assignments using your own words; don't just parrot back a definition or rely too extensively on quotations from the textbook. One helpful strategy that you can use when trying to determine how well you understand a concept is to imagine yourself *explaining* the concept to a friend. What examples might you use to illustrate the concept? What questions might your friend ask to gain a clearer meaning of the concept? How would you answer these questions?

When assessing the assignments and essays on the exams, I'll be looking to see whether your responses are clearly written and correct, but I'll also be looking for a thoughtful engagement with the material: have you just given the barest possible answer and simply skated over the surface of the theories, or have you tried to understand the implications of the concepts? On occasion, I'll provide sample answers to give you an idea of the sort of response that would receive full credit.

It's best to try to answer the assignment questions from what you remember of the reading assignment rather than to copy out an answer from the text. Then you can check the text to see if you have gotten it right. This process will be a good indicator to you of whether you are really understanding the material.

I don't recommend that you use any sources other than the textbook and your own mind when preparing the assignments. You may be tempted to consult encyclopedias or Internet sites, but these often prove more confusing than helpful, and they might impede you from expressing yourself in your own words and that is what I am looking for. If you find yourself stumped by one of the writing assignments, feel free to email me: I'll give you some hints and guidance (but only that!) for how to proceed. Also, if there is a topic you'd like to pursue further after having completed a writing assignment, let me know; I'd be delighted to point you to some additional readings on the Internet or in hardcopy.

All assignments will be submitted via Modules. When submitting assignments, note that I will not accept any file types other than .doc, .docx, and .rtf. Also note the following:

- **Do not submit more than one assignment per week.**
- **Do not resubmit an assignment after it has been graded.**

Exams

There are two exams: the midcourse exam will cover Lessons 1 to 3, and the final exam is not cumulative and will cover only Lessons 4 to 6. After you submit Assignment 3, you will take the midcourse exam, and after you submit Assignment 6, you will take the final exam. The exams will each be worth 100 points, and each exam will be worth 35 percent of your final course grade. Both exams are closed-book and will consist of 20 multiple-choice questions and a series of short essay questions. The self-assessments and writing assignments in each lesson are designed to help you prepare for the exam; you'll also find specific review information for each exam later in this course.

Information on arranging for a proctor and scheduling the exams is available on the [Correspondence Course Testing page](#).

Grading Criteria

- **The average score for your midcourse and final exams must be 60 percent or better for you to pass this course.** So, if you scored 50 percent on the first exam, you would have to make at least 70 percent on the final to pass the course, regardless of the grades on your assignments.
- **To receive a passing grade in the course, you must complete and submit all assignments!**

If you have submitted all assignments and have a 60 percent average on your two exams, **then** your grade will be calculated as follows: each exam will constitute 35 percent of your final grade, and the assignments, taken together, will constitute 30 percent of the grade. Since there are six written assignments, each one will contribute to 5 percent of your final grade.

Assignment/Exam	Percent of Final Grade
Assignment 1	5 percent
Assignment 2	5 percent
Assignment 3	5 percent
Midcourse Exam	35 percent
Assignment 4	5 percent
Assignment 5	5 percent
Assignment 6	5 percent
Final Exam	35 percent
Total	100 percent

Grades will be assigned according to the following range:

- A: 90-100 percent
- B: 80 - 89 percent
- C: 70 - 79 percent
- D: 60 - 69 percent
- F: 0 - 59 percent

Faculty-Student Contact

Even though this is a correspondence course, I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. You are welcome to e-mail me by using the Email tool in the left menu bar. (It is important to keep all mail related to this course contained within this Canvas site.) I will always seek to reply within 24 hours of your email.

I am also available by request to have a phone or video chat. And I have specifically set aside Tuesdays 4-5 pm as "office hours" for the course.

Students Requiring Accommodations

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals.

A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking.

Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the [Office of Disability Services](#), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY).

Students should then notify the [Office of Distance and Extended Learning](#) at corrstudy@txstate.edu of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The [Texas State Academic Honor Code](#) applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The [Honor Code](#) serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community. As stated in the [Texas State Student Handbook](#), [Violation of the Honor Code](#) includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

Study Tips

While clear definitions for all of the important concepts will be found in the textbook or the study guide, it is not enough for you to *memorize* the definitions. Memorization can be an important first step, but a true understanding of a concept requires that you recognize how to *apply* the concept in relevant situations. For example, one concept we will be exploring at length is *mind-body dualism*, the view that the mind is distinct from the body and, unlike the body, is a non-physical substance. But what does this mean exactly? What are we saying about persons if we say their minds are non-physical? What possibilities are open that are closed if persons are simply physical beings? By answering these questions, you will arrive at a rich appreciation for the concept of dualism.

FREE TUTORING RESOURCES

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. You may access tutoring through Tutor.com by clicking on Tutor.com: 24/7 Online Tutoring in the left menu of this course. Then just respond to the questions to start tutoring. If you need help with writing specifically, then choose Writing as your topic.

Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the University Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the [Student Learning Assistance Center \(SLAC\)](#) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library

Final Comments

The study of philosophy can be both exciting and challenging. You will likely find that on occasion a philosopher expresses views that are in direct opposition to some of your most cherished beliefs. Your job will be to understand the reasoning that lies behind the position taken by each philosopher. The goal of this course is *not* to have you change your fundamental beliefs, but rather to have you gain a richer understanding of the foundation and implications of your views. The philosopher Socrates enjoins us to "know ourselves," and by learning about philosophy, you can come to learn a great deal about yourself, your worldview, and your values.

PDF Version of Syllabus

Here is a [PDF version of the syllabus](#) for your convenience.

Submission 1: Course Study Schedule

New Attempt

Due No Due Date **Points** 0 **Submitting** a file upload

Download and add target dates to this [Course Study Schedule](#)

Then click Submit Assignment and attach and submit your completed document.

After you upload your document, click Next to proceed with the course.

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L1: Objectives

After completing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- give a preliminary explanation of philosophy as a "quest for wisdom";
- discuss the traits of a critical thinker;
- identify arguments and their constituents (premises and conclusions);
- explain the difference between inductive and deductive arguments;
- detect and classify fallacious arguments; and
- name the six branches of philosophy and recognize the characteristic concerns of each branch.

Review these objectives again after completing this lesson.

Click Next to proceed to L1: Key Terms.

The Philosopher's Toolbox: Reason

As human beings we share a marvelous capacity for reasoning, a capacity that guides both our day-to-day lives and the moments in our lives when we sit down to make "big decisions." When you try to decide whether to go to a Cinco de Mayo party, when you quickly calculate whether you'll be able to merge into traffic on the highway, when you decide whether to use a seven iron or an eight iron on the golf course, when you choose a college or an employer, or when you figure out if you have enough money to go out to eat, you are using your powers of reasoning.

Our ability to reason allows us to imagine the world other than the way it is and, so, is the foundation of our creativity and inventiveness. The fruits of reasoning are many: vaccines, automobiles, novels, computers and the Internet, pens and pencils (not to mention, language itself!), skyscrapers; all human artifacts are the result of manipulating the world using reasoning.

Philosophers use reasoning in a very special way, to ask and attempt to answer foundational questions about the nature of our human experience. What is it to be a human being, the philosopher will ask. Will I be able to survive my bodily death? Am I truly free, or are my choices simply a product of my upbringing and genetic inheritance? What does it mean to be a good person? Should I look to a divine being for guidance, or is there another source of moral wisdom? Is beauty just in the eye of the beholder, or is there some standard of beauty free from all cultural influence?

The best way to learn about philosophy is by doing philosophy, by critically examining the theories that philosophers have put forward about the nature of reality, knowledge, freedom, value, and the meaning of life. A common misconception about philosophy is that its practitioners simply sit back (in a comfortable arm chair, of course!) and give forth any opinions that occur to them. But, in fact, philosophers take very seriously their quest for wisdom. They immerse themselves in the history of philosophy in order to know the views and arguments that have been put forward in the past. They don't want to re-invent the wheel--or, worse yet, invent a square wheel by putting forward an idea that earlier thinkers have shown to be defective.

In a single course, we will not be able to look in depth at all of the six branches of philosophy (logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, social and political philosophy, and aesthetics). In later lessons, we will focus on some of the main issues in metaphysics, ethics, and social and political philosophy. But, first, we will, like Chaffee, discuss some of the techniques of critical thinking, crucial elements in the "philosopher's toolbox." Then, in Lesson Two, we will look to the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates as an especially vivid and rich model of philosophical engagement; even when facing malicious and false charges brought against him and knowing that his life hangs in the balance, Socrates champions the importance of truth and reason.

Click Next to proceed to Arguments.

Lesson 1 Self-Assessment

Due No due date **Points** 0 **Questions** 21 **Time Limit** None
Allowed Attempts Unlimited

Instructions

Once you have read through all of this lesson and have finished the reading assignment in the textbook, you are ready to complete the Lesson 1 Self-Assessment. The self-assessment is a good way to test your mastery of the course material. The self-assessment does not count toward your grade, and you can review your submission and feedback immediately.

It's best to tackle self-assessments completely without looking at the textbook or your notes. Use these assessments as a way to see how fully you understand the key terms and concepts.

You can view feedback on your responses after you submit the self-assessment.

[Take the Quiz Again](#)

Attempt History

	Attempt	Time	Score
LATEST	Attempt 1	3 minutes	0 out of 0

Submitted Jul 30, 2020 at 12:31am

Part 1: Multiple Choice - 5 questions

Each of the passages below contains an argument; choose the sentence that is the conclusion of the argument.

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“Our political leaders of all affiliations are hypocritical. First of all, they never keep their campaign promises. And, they often make public statements that are outright false and hide what they are really up to.”

Choose the sentence that is the conclusion of the argument.

Correct!

- Our political leaders of all affiliations are hypocritical.
- First of all, they never keep their campaign promises.
- And, they often make public statements that are outright false and hide what they are really up to.

Question 2

0 / 0 pts

“The wind is blowing from the tee direct to the pin. The last time I hit a 7-iron from this distance my shot went off the back of the green. I’ve been working out a lot lately and am stronger than ever. I sure don’t want to land in the sand trap behind the green. Consequently, I’d better use a 9-iron rather than a 7-iron.”

Choose the sentence that is the conclusion of the argument.

- The wind is blowing from the tee direct to the pin.
- The last time I hit a 7-iron from this distance, my shot went off the back of the green.
- I’ve been working out a lot lately and am stronger than ever.

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Correct!

- Consequently, I'd better use a 9-iron rather than a 7-iron.

Question 3

0 / 0 pts

"We hear people say, 'We don't support the war, but we support our troops.' But, our troops have been trained to kill and people who join the armed services know that they will be trained to kill or to support killing. So, to support our troops is to support their war-like activities."

Choose the sentence that is the conclusion of the argument.

- We hear people say, "We don't support the war, but we support our troops."

- But our troops have been trained to kill, and people who join the armed services know that they will be trained to kill or to support killing.

Correct!

- So, to support our troops is to support their war-like activities.

Question 4

0 / 0 pts

"We should be cutting state spending and eliminating waste and bureaucracy instead of having a lottery. After all, a state lottery takes money out of the pockets of those who have the least, the poor. Lotteries take money out of the pockets of losers, and merchants lose out on goods and services that would have been purchased instead of the lottery tickets. Moreover, New Hampshire, the first state to have a lottery, found

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Correct!



We should be cutting state spending and eliminating waste and bureaucracy instead of having a lottery.



After all, a state lottery takes money out of the pockets of those who have the least, the poor.



Lotteries take money out of the pockets of losers, and merchants lose out on goods and services that would have been purchased instead of lottery tickets.



Moreover, New Hampshire, the first state to adopt a state lottery, found that having the lottery didn't lead to taxes being lowered at all.

Question 5

0 / 0 pts

"Wow, I'd love to buy a new car. But I sure don't have enough money. I would have enough money if I won the lottery. As the lottery slogan says, "You 'gotta' play to win". It's obvious, then, that I should play the lottery."

Choose the sentence that is the conclusion of the argument.



Wow, I'd love to buy a new car.



But I sure don't have enough money.



I would have enough money if I won the lottery.



As the lottery slogan says, "You 'gotta' play to win."

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Part 2: Identification - 5 questions

In the blank after each passage, type the name of the fallacy in that passage.

Question 6

0 / 0 pts

"I'm going to vote against the proposal to set aside some public land as a wildlife sanctuary; if we adopted the proposal, who knows what would be next—a special habitat for the spotted spider, perhaps? Pretty soon, ALL of the public lands would be dedicated to wildlife and none for use by us humans!"

You Answered

Fallacy 1

Correct Answers

slippery slope

Question 7

0 / 0 pts

"Humph, I think my sweetie might be cheating on me; well, two can play that game! That'll show my sweetie a thing or two."

You Answered

Fallacy 2

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Question 8

0 / 0 pts

“Some flight attendants have pointed to studies that show the air quality in airplanes is hazardous, especially to people exposed to it over long periods of time. But, the air quality in our airplanes is absolutely safe, and I can prove this by pointing out that the air quality in some buildings is worse than that in our planes.”

You Answered

Fallacy 3

Correct Answers

red herring

Question 9

0 / 0 pts

“I know that the store policy says “No returns under any circumstances,” but you’ve got to make an exception in my case. It would be a terrible hardship for me not to get my money back. I wouldn’t be able to pay my tuition on time.”

You Answered

Fallacy 4

Correct Answers

appeal to emotion

Question 10

0 / 0 pts

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“Americans have much higher incomes than people in many other countries—so I don’t know why some of my neighbors gripe about being poor.”

You Answered

Fallacy 5

Correct Answers

sweeping generalization

Part 3: Identification - 11 questions

Each of the following passages is either a quotation from a notable philosopher or a paraphrase of an important philosophical position. Determine which of the six branches of philosophy is involved in each of the passages, and type the name of the branch of philosophy in the blank.

Question 11

0 / 0 pts

“Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain.” (John Stuart Mill)

You Answered

a

Correct Answers

ethics

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Question 12

0 / 0 pts

“The best government is no government whatsoever; all government is an unjust limitation of human freedom.”

You Answered

b

Correct Answers

political philosophy

political

Question 13

0 / 0 pts

“A glass pitcher, a wicker basket, a tunic of coarse cotton cloth. Their beauty is inseparable from their function. Handicrafts belong to a world existing before the separation of the useful and the beautiful.” (Octavio Paz)

You Answered

c

Correct Answers

aesthetics

Question 14

0 / 0 pts

“All that I have, up to this moment, accepted as possessed of the highest truth and certainty, I received either from or through the senses. I

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You Answered

d

Correct Answers

epistemology

Question 15

0 / 0 pts

“Achievement of your happiness is the only moral purpose of your life, and that happiness, not pain or mindless self-indulgence, is the proof of your moral integrity, since it is the proof and the result of your loyalty to the achievement of your values.” (Ayn Rand)

You Answered

e

Correct Answers

ethics

Question 16

0 / 0 pts

“I can’t believe in the existence of God; why would an all-good creator of the world allow so much evil and suffering?”

You Answered

f

Correct Answers

metaphysics



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"We must be careful to see that arguments that seem quite persuasive can be unsound."

You Answered

g

Correct Answers

logic

Question 18

0 / 0 pts

"To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker." (Frederick Douglass)

You Answered

h

Correct Answers

political philosophy
political

Question 19

0 / 0 pts

"Of course there is life beyond this plane of existence; I'm confident that I will continue to exist even after my body dies."

You Answered

i

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Question 20

0 / 0 pts

“By its very nature the beautiful is isolated from everything else. From beauty no road leads to reality.” (Hannah Arendt)

You Answered

j

Correct Answers

aesthetics

Question 21

0 / 0 pts

“There must be a supreme being who has set a purpose for me; otherwise, my life would be without meaning.”

You Answered

k

Correct Answers

metaphysics



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