

ELEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY (LECTURE – NOTES by Dr. Oriare Nyarwath)

21/04/2011

Logic – is a branch of Philosophy that is concerned with the study of reason. i.e. how humans should reason; not how they actually reason.

Philosophy comes from two Greek words *philein* meaning love and *sophia* meaning wisdom.

Therefore Philosophy can be said to be the love for wisdom.

Wisdom is the wide and sound knowledge of reality that affects a person and the willingness/commitment to apply that knowledge for the promotion of the general well-being.

***QUOTE:**

“There is nothing as sovereign as the dignity of human life. –Dr Oriare Nyarwath (21/03/2011)”

25/03/2011

Philosophy as an academic discipline or human activity is concerned with the examination of fundamental principles of reality (or imaginations).

Plato, using the concept of the Gyges Ring said that most people do things to evade fear. Suppose one has it (the Gyges Ring) he can do anything without being detected.

Philosophers do not read rules; therefore they are autonomous* beings.

*autonomous-free from control in action and judgment

You should do what is right and stand to defend it.

***QUOTE:**

“The age difference between you and your mother is constant! So to her you will always remain a child.”

Fundamentals of Philosophy

1. Nature
2. Society(search for better conditions of existence than the prevailing ones)
3. Human being(being human)
4. Ultimate reality(God)

Main/Traditional Branches of Philosophy

1. Logic (deals with reasoning)
2. Epistemology (Theory of knowledge)
3. Metaphysics (Beyond Physics: dealing with realities beyond the physical)
4. Ethics

1. LOGIC

-Logic is a branch of Philosophy that deals with reasoning.

-Reasoning is making a claim and giving justifications for the claim.

-It is a mental process by which the mind makes an inference from certain given deductions.

List of recommended books:

1. Ndowa J. B. & Kennedy Miencha; CPP101: Introduction to Philosophy
2. Nyarwath O., Traditional Logic: An Introduction(2010)

Meaning of Logic and its Importance

In the process of reasoning, the claims that given in the process of justification of the other claims are called premise(s).

And the claim whose justification depends on other premises is called conclusion.

Claims are propositions (statements) or a sentence that is either true or false.

Truth value is the quality of a claim to be either true or false.

A sentence is a group of words that make sense.

Sentences:

1. propositions
2. questions
3. imperatives/commands
4. exclamations
5. suggestions

In studying reasoning we need to take into consideration 2 things (aspects of reasoning);

- i. aspect of matter/content – in correct reasoning individual claims should be true
- ii. aspect of form – refers to a certain type of relationship between a given premise(s) used to justify conclusion

In conclusion, logic studies principles & structures of reasoning but with the main aim of distinguishing between correct and incorrect reasoning.

- Logic, therefore, can also be defined as both a science and an art.
- *Science – is a systemized enquiry
- Logic is an art because we make it part of our life.

QUOTE:

“Truth satisfies human curiosity; ignorance is bliss.” –Oriare Nyarwath

Importance of Studying Logic/ Reasoning Well

- 1) Reasoning makes us more rational than other animals.
 - Therefore, the study of Logic helps us to be more humane.
- 2) When we reason well we are likely to arrive at a justifiable truth.
- 3) By getting to truth, we acquire knowledge.
 - Reasoning well helps us in the acquisition of knowledge.
- 4) Reasoning helps us to avoid vagueness and ambiguity.
- 5) Logic enables us to be precise in our expressions and communications and that saves time.
- 6) Reasoning well helps us to avoid unnecessary conflicts.
- 7) Reasoning helps us to communicate logically.

Reasoning as Mental Process

-Reasoning as a process taking place in the mind (i.e. an activity of the brain which deals with thinking and reasoning) involves certain activities:

- 1) Simple apprehension:
 - grasping the nature of the reality upon which to reason
 - gives meanings (defines) certain realities
 - abstraction is the process by which the mind separates certain aspects of a reality from accidental aspects of a reality (i.e. essential attributes)
- 2) Judgments:
 - once we have understood the nature of a reality we can judge it.
 - judgment is expressed in form of prepositions.
- 3) Inference or reasoning

Basic Concepts of Logic:

A. Argument

-Reasoning is technically referred to as an argument.

-An argument is a set of prepositions in which it is claimed that the truth of one of the prepositions is established or inferred from the truth of the other prepositions is either necessarily(deductively) or by some probability(inductively).

-The preposition whose truth is claimed to be inferred from the truth the other preposition is called conclusion while the other prepositions from whose truth the conclusion is called premises e.g.

1. Most Kenyans are corrupt. (premise)
2. Oriare is a Kenyan. (premise)
3. Therefore, Oriare is corrupt. (conclusion)

***QUOTE:**

“Corruption is the degeneration of human consciousness.– Oriare Nyarwath”

-The truth of the conclusion is only probable, not certain.

For example;

Africans are evil. All students in this class are Africans. Therefore, all students in this class are evil.

-In an argument there are 2 forms of reasoning;

- Claims
- Conclusion

The argument in which the truth of the conclusion is claimed to be inferred necessarily from the premises is called a deductive argument.

The other type of argument in which it is claimed that the truth of the premises only offers a probable support to the truth of the conclusion is called an inductive argument.

***QUOTE:**

“Those humans who are well built are not endowed with good reasoning capacity; all women are naturally devoid of the capacity to reason. - Aristotle”

An argument therefore must have at least 2 prepositions, one being the premise and the other a conclusion.

B. Validity

-Validity or invalidity refers to the structure/form (nature of relationship between premises & conclusion) of a deductive argument.

***QUOTE:**

“The measure of your value: Ask yourself –Had you not been born, what would humanity have missed? If your answer is NO, then you are useless!” –Dr Oriare Nyarwath

A deductive argument is said to be valid when **IF the relationship between its premises were true, then its conclusion must also be true!**

-In such a case, the truth of the premises implies the truth of the conclusion, and therefore, in such an argument it is impossible for one to accept the truth of the premises but deny

However, a deductive argument is said to be invalid when **the relationship between its premises & conclusion is such that the truth of its premises, if granted, does not imply the truth of its conclusion.**

-In such an argument, one can accept the truth of the premises but deny the truth of its conclusion without any contradiction. i.e. in that kind of an argument the premises one that the conclusion asserts.

e.g. Human beings breathe. A cat breathes. Therefore, cats are human beings.

C. Soundness

Soundness is an exclusive attribute of a deductive argument comprising both the form and the content of a deductive argument.

A deductive argument is therefore either sound or unsound.

An argument is sound when it is **valid** and all its premises are actually true.

*truth –proposition/statement

An argument being a set of claims can never be said to be true or false.

It is only a statement or proposition that can be true.

Validity is an attribute of deductive statement.

The meaning of the premises must imply the meaning of the conclusion in a sound argument, i.e. the premises must be true.

However, an argument is unsound when it is either invalid or if it has a premise which is actually false.

A good deductive argument is one that is sound, i.e. which is valid & all its premises are true.

But a deductive argument which is unsound is a bad argument.

D. Strength

Strength is an exclusive attribute of an inductive argument.

Strength describes a form of an inductive argument.

An inductive argument is strong when the relationship between the premises and the conclusion is such that, IF the premises were true, then there is greater probability of its conclusion being true.

But an inductive argument is said to be weak when the relationship between its premises and conclusion is such that, IF the premises were true, then there is lower probability of its conclusion being true.

***QUOTE:**

“Nobody has a monopoly of truth.” –Oriare Nyarwath

An inductive argument can also be described as cogent or uncogent.

Cogency takes into consideration the form & content of an inductive argument.

An inductive argument is cogent if it is strong and all its premises are actually true!

But it is uncogent when it is weak or some of its premises are actually false.

There are two types of errors/mistakes that can be committed in an argument but which should be avoided:

I. Logical mistake(fallacy);

-conclusion is inconsistently inferred from the premises

-it is a defect of an argument, i.e. when the given premises either do not justify the conclusion (deductive argument) or least supports the conclusion (inductive argument)

-Therefore, an invalid or a weak argument commits a logical mistake.

II. Factual mistake;

-This is a mistake of fact.

-It occurs whenever there is an actually false premise in an argument.

These 2 mistakes should be avoided in an argument because any argument that commits either of them fails to establish/justify the truth of its conclusion yet the main aim of an argument is to justify the truth of its conclusion & consequently to have it accepted.

E. **Fallacies**

A fallacy is a logical error in reasoning.

-A fallacy is an argument whose premises fail to offer justification/support to the conclusion either necessarily (with the case of a deductive argument) or by some probability (in the case of inductive argument)

There are 3 types of fallacies:

a) Fallacies of Relevance

b) Fallacies of Ambiguity

c) Fallacies of Presumption

a) Fallacy of Relevance

-They are called so because in most cases the conclusion arises from irrelevant claims.

-In a proper sense of reference, these fallacies should be called fallacies of irrelevance.

-Types of fallacies of irrelevance include;

- i. ***Argumentum ad Baculum (Fallacy of appeal to force/threat)***
-e.g. If you come late to class then you will fail in your exams.
- ii. ***Argumentum ad Verecundiam (Fallacy of appeal to inappropriate authority)***
-e.g. The stock market is undergoing hard economic times; because McDonald Mariga says so.
- iii. ***Argumentum ad Misericordium (Fallacy of appeal to mercy/pity)***
-This occurs when one does not address the issue at hand but instead seeks mercy on the basis of his/her situation/condition. e.g A man sentenced to death for murdering his parents seeking for pardon because he is an orphan.
- iv. ***Argumentum ad Ignorantiam (Fallacy of appeal to ignorance)***
-This fallacy is committed by the fact that there is no evidence; therefore the conclusion comes as a reason to believe the truth of the conclusion.
- v. ***Argumentum ad Hominem (Fallacy against Man)***
 - a. *Ad hominem circumstantial*
-committed when victim (respondent) attacks the person rather than addressing the argument presented by the opponent.
 - b. *Ad hominem abusive*
-using abusive language against a person, e.g.
NYAROMBO: I strongly believe that abortion should be legalized.
NAITORE: No! That cannot be.
NYAROMBO: Because you are a thief, a murderer and a rapist!
 - c. *Ad hominem Tu Quo Que*
-is a “you too” fallacy
- vi. ***Fallacies of Slippery Slope***
-This fallacy is occurs where there is no clear connection between points/facts/prepositions.

-It is committed when one allows a certain thing/policy to occur, it will in turn allow another thing/policy to occur until it hits a dead end.
- vii. ***Fallacy of Non Causa Pro Causa (Fallacy of False Cause)***
-This fallacy is committed when a wrong cause is attributed to an event where the event may/should have a different cause. e.g.

On 25th December, 2010, Atieno Odipo died in a road accident. Why? Because he did not believe in the existence of God.

viii. ***Fallacy of Accident***

-committed when you move a general principle to an exceptional case. e.g., Someone talking loudly in an operation theatre simply because of freedom of expression.

ix. ***Fallacy of Division***

-committed when one assumes that what is true of whole must be true of part.

x. ***Fallacy of Composition***

-committed when one assumes that what is true of part must be true of whole. E.g., Sodium and chlorine are poisonous substances. It therefore follows that sodium chloride (salt) is a poisonous substance.

xi. ***Argumentum ad Populum (Fallacy of Appeal to People)***

-committed by eliciting/ exciting emotions; seeking to influence peoples minds
- occurs mostly in public speech-making & advertisements(appeal to snobbery).

***QUOTE:**

**“Reasons like back like a weak door when emotions take charge.” –
Otieno Adipo**

-is also called the “bandwagon argument/ fallacy”

-occurs mostly in adverts. e.g., certain products are associated with certain celebrities; certain margarines are associated with certain youthfulness; certain drinks like beer (e.g. Guinness) are associated with power

xii. ***Fallacy of Strauman***

-This fallacy is committed when the victim/ respondent “creates his own man” (opponent) and also creates an argument for him and reverts and defeats that argument.

b) **Fallacies of Presumption**

a. ***Petio Principii (begging the question)***

-This fallacy occurs when one assumes the very thing (s)he’s trying to prove.

-It is simply sneaking the conclusion into the premises.

-It is called “circular”. e.g.

The bible is the word of God because the bible says so.

b. ***Fallacy of Complex Question***

-It makes an interrogation that assumes a certain state of affairs.

-Any answer to that question, therefore, involves the granting of the assumption.
e.g.,
LAWYER: (*To the suspect*) Have you stopped stealing?
SUSPECT: Yes!
LAWYER: Then it means that you were a thief!

c) **Fallacies of Ambiguity**

-Such arguments use a term or phrase that has more than one meaning.
-Usually, this term or phrase is shifted/ changed in terms of:

i. **Equivocation;**

-This fallacy is committed when a term/ word is used in an argument to mean different things.

-This occurs in premises and is inferred in the conclusion. e.g.,

1) Power corrupts. Knowledge is power. Therefore, knowledge corrupts.

2) God is love. Love is blind. Therefore, God is blind.

ii. **Amphiboly;**

- In this kind of argument, unlike equivocation, fallacy is committed when a phrase/proposition that is vague, and therefore susceptible to various interpretations, is used. e.g.,

Professor Mwangi will be giving a lecture about heart failure in the biology lecture hall. Therefore, it must be the case that there has been a number of heart failure in the biology lecture hall recently.

2. ETHICS

Introduction to Ethics

-Ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with actions and behaviour of man in the society.

-Ethics can be defined etymologically as coming from the Greek word *ethos* meaning character/ personal character.

-It is, therefore, an investigation into the nature of a virtuous life or the right way of to live.

-Ethics is concerned with understanding/ evaluating the character of individuals.

-It studies moral values and standards by which we ought to live.

- Therefore, ethics seeks guidelines for human conduct.
- We evaluate human conduct in terms of what is good or bad.
- Morality comes from the Greek word *mores* that means social habits, customs & manners.

Difference between Morality and Ethics:

- Whereas morality concerned with habits, manners & social manners, ethics is a philosophical study of how man behaves.
- Therefore, morality is the material object of study.
- Hence, we can conclude that ethics is a discipline that studies morality.

Kinds of Moral Reasoning

-There are 3 kinds of moral reasoning:

1. Descriptive ethics
2. Normative ethics
3. Meta-ethics

1. Descriptive Ethics

- This is that kind of ethics that focuses on the existing moral behaviour of a community/ society.
- It basically relies on what is perceived as good or bad i.e. moral codes
- It does not judge; it only describes.
- It asks the question; “How ought we act?”
- It does not ask ; “How do we act?”

2. Normative Ethics

- In normative ethics we seek to identify and formulate ethical norms and standards.
- It involves articulating the character of good habits to be acquired.
- It is characterized by/the “ought”
- It looks at the consequences/ end results of human actions.

3. **Meta-Ethics**

- We analyze and explain the norms of ethical claims & values (explain the meanings)
- e.g. Philosophers inquiring the legality of abortion.

Moral Agents

- A moral agent is referred to as a human being who is normal, has the capacity to reason and is aware of the consequences of his/ her actions.
- That means that such an individual can be blamed for, rewarded or punished for his/ her actions.
- Therefore, he/ she is seen to be a responsible person.
- An ethical action is an action that is performed by a moral agent.
- It is an action that can attract blame or praise.

Philosophy is the study of reality. It is concerned with the pursuit of fundamental principles in reality and therefore asks questions e.g. “What is the origin of the universe?”

Branches of Philosophy:

1. **Metaphysics**

- is concerned with the study of being, in general.
- the study of ultimate reality, i.e. the object of Metaphysics goes beyond signs.
- Metaphysics comes from two Greek words *meta* –beyond and *phusika* –physics.

2. **Epistemology**

- comes from two Greek words *epistem* –meaning “the theory of” and *logos* – meaning knowledge (or discourse of knowledge)
- Ethical terms –words that are used in evaluating ethical actions e.g. good, bad or evil.

3. **Ethical Judgment**

- This is any ethical statement that makes a judgment on an ethical action

4. **Virtue**

- Virtue is a functional excellence in an individual that makes the individual morally/ intellectually superior or excellent.
- This term is used to mean righteousness or excellence in moral character or disposition.

5. **Value**

- This term is used to mean “out-of-the-ream” of morality altogether.
- Non-moral beings are beings that can never be said to be either moral or immoral.
- Areas that are non-moral are e.g. chemistry, biology or mathematics.
- Therefore, it means that morality is totally out of their concerns.

6. **Amoral**

- Refers to an individual who has no moral sense and is indifferent to right or wrong.
- Amoral has been used, e.g. to refer to criminals who appear to have no remorse to whatever they have done.

Ethical Theories

There are certain theories that have developed over time and act as standards of criteria which can be used in determining the rightness/ or wrongness of an action, decision, policy or rule.

Therefore, these theories assist us in interpreting that which is morally right or wrong. They attempt to answer the question: “What criteria/ standard do we use in determining a moral action?”

There are two theories;

- a. Teleological Theories (also called universal/ ethical egoism or utilitarianism)
- b. Deontological Theories (of Immanuel Kant)

a. Teleological Theories

-*Teleos* means “the end result”

-*Logos* – theory/ discourse/ science

-Teleology therefore means the science of theory

-Teleological theories are theories that assert that the rightness or wrongness of an act, rule or policy depends on the results or consequences.

-There are two types of teleological theories:

- i. Ethical egoism
- ii. Utilitarianism

i. Ethical Egoism

-This is a view that a person should act and maximize his/ her own good/ benefit.

-According to Mappes, ethical egoism states that “a person ought to act so as to promote his/ her own self interest.

-An act, therefore, is morally right when, compared to an alternative, its consequences are such as to generate the greatest balance of good over evil for that particular agent.

-Acting ethically requires that human beings act in their own selfish interest and maximize the benefit for themselves (according to ethical egoists).

-Ethical egoism is said to be derived from the nature of human beings, i.e. selfish

-According to Frankena, psychological egoism states that “human beings are by nature selfish and are only interested in their own good.”

-The problem we have with ethical egoism is that it tends to go against the spirit of morality, that is, to do away with selfishness.

ii. Utilitarianism

- This is a philosophy that was fronted by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.
- According to them, this is the view that “an act, rule, policy or decision if its consequences bring about the greatest good/ happiness/ benefits for the greatest number of people who are affected by that act.”
- In utilitarianism, 2 things are important;
 - i. The greatest happiness/ benefit/ good
 - ii. The greatest number of people.
- Bentham derived the theory from the fact that all human beings have the capacity to feel pain and pleasure.
- This means that pain and pleasure are the two main determinants of bad or good respectively.
- It is for these two determinants to point out what to do and what we shall do because the principle of utility recognizes these two things.
- Therefore, according to Bentham, human beings are pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding creatures.
- So we simply avoid pain and seek pleasure in our lives.
- For utilitarians, it is the consequences that count all that determines the morality of an act.
- Utilitarianism is a goal-oriented principle that seeks to maximize welfare and happiness for the greatest number of people.
- Utilitarianism, therefore, is concerned with the consequences of the actions rather than the actions themselves.
- Bentham rejected the absolutist morality of the religion of his time.
- Kinds of utilitarianism;
 - a) Act Utilitarianism
 - b) Rule Utilitarianism
- a) Act Utilitarianism
 - An act is right if when compared to a possible alternative is likely to promote the greatest balance of good over evil.
 - Every person’s interest must be considered.
 - Act utilitarianism emphasizes on acts that promote the greatest balance of good over evil.
 - Example;
 - “A nurse in a hospital receives two patients in critical condition; a civic woman and a good-for-nothing drunkard. Any minute wasted results to loss of life of either patient. The nurse saves the civic woman. Reason:- The civic woman will be of help to the society compared to the good-for-nothing drunkard.”
- b) Rule Utilitarianism
 - An act is morally right if it is in accord with a rule that if generally followed will bring about the greatest balance of good over evil.
 - This was proposed by J.S. Mill.

-The difference between these two laws of utilitarianism is:

“Whereas act utilitarianism embodies a one-stage procedure (i.e. actions → benefit), rule utilitarianism embodies a two-stage procedure (i.e. action → rule → benefit)

Example act utilitarianism;

“Doctors follow the Hypocrates oath of confidentiality to patients, but in case a patient has a disease and is likely to spread it to other people, the doctor then might have to disclose it to others.”

Problems with Utilitarianism

- b) It can be used to justify oppression of individuals and individual rights in a society.
- c) When the determination of good over evil is difficult, the theory becomes difficult to apply.
- d) It's very difficult to quantify and compare utilities.

b) Deontology

-is an ethics of duty

-Comes from two Greek words *deos* –meaning duty and *tology* –meaning theory.

-Invented by Immanuel Kant (Konigsberg, Prussia, 1724)

-Immanuel Kant argues that the morality of an act depends on the act itself because it is an obligation which is intrinsic

-His main aim was to seek the fundamental principles of ethics.

-He rejects utilitarianism.

-According to him, the rightness/ wrongness of an action should be judged on whether or not it conforms to a certain duty.

-In utilitarianism, the principle is hypothetical (i.e. conditional, marked by “if”) but Kant's duty ethics is categorical, i.e. universal/ absolute –principles that apply to humanity as a whole.

=>categorical –it is a dictate of nature; based on intrinsic principles.

=>goodwill is the only will that defines itself: it is the only good without conditions/ qualifications.

=>goodwill is absolute.

-Kant says that duty to self is important; brings about happiness.

-The problem is it denies duty to others.

-So, according to him, that which determines the morality of an action is the intention of

-An act done from duty is moral.

-It cannot be based on anything else.

-He therefore comes up with the **categorical imperatives**;

-in his first imperative, he states that;

“I must always act in such a way that at the same time I can also will that my maxim (principle) becomes a universal law.”

-Must always:

(i) never fail to speak the truth; (ii) keep promises; (iii) There is no freedom.

-in his second imperative, he states that:

“You must always treat humanity either in yourself or others as ends and not as means to an end.”

-The implication of this is, e.g.,

“If a married woman comes home late, runs straight and hides under the bed. And then three armed men come and ask you where your wife is, you must always speak the truth that she is under the bed.” –i.e. always speak the truth.

2 Kinds of Deontology

A. Rule deontology

B. Act deontology

A. Rule Deontology

-states that the rule is preset, i.e. it is absolute, universal and therefore never changing

-all actions ought to be based on that rule

B. Act Deontology

-there is no rule;

-one has to look at a situation and therefore act

Critic of Deontology

Deontology is argued to be idealistic and therefore unreal because Kant does not offer a solution for conflict of duties; e.g.

“If a married woman comes home late, runs straight and hides under the bed. And then three armed men come and ask you where your wife is, you must always speak the truth that she is under the bed.” –i.e. always speak the truth.

However, one is most likely to tell a lie.

Therefore, Kant does not provide a solution to such a conflict.

Classical Ethical Theories

These theories are referred to as classical because they were developed during the ancient history of philosophy.

1. Plato

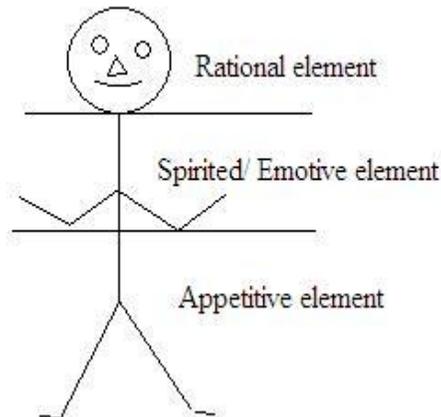
2. Aristotle

N.B. These two philosophers are the two prominent Greek philosophers besides Socrates.

1. Plato

-Plato tied morality to human nature and more specifically to an individual's personality, determined by the harmony between the three elements of the soul, moral status and character.

-Plato observed that there are 3 elements/ parts of the human soul and with this there are 3 activities that go on in the person.



i. Rational Element

-According to Plato, the rational element is the center of reason.

-It is where the desire to figure on a problem, to understand and know a fact, is located.

ii. Spirited/ Emotive Element

-The spirited element is in charge (superior to) the other elements, i.e. it has the ability to compare and contrast the other elements.

-It controls both the spiritual and the appetitive elements so that they do not operate outside the moral framework.

-This spiritual element exists to act as an ally of a rational element but is always subjected to the rational element.

-The spirited element, therefore, is the center of our emotions, e.g., feelings of love, hatred, pride, jealousy, etc.

iii. The Appetitive Element

-This is where a person's physical is located, e.g. hunger, lust, thirst, etc.

- Therefore, of the three elements, the rational element is entitled to leadership.
- When reason takes up leadership, an individual is said to be wise/ prudent as (s)he will be able to moderate emotions/ appetites which sometimes may be in excess.
- If reason is in charge, it directs our emotions towards happiness.
- When a spiritual element submits itself to the rational element, one is said to have a virtue called **fortitude/ courage**.
- When the appetitive element is kept within its acceptable limits and moderation by the rational element, one is said to have the virtue of **temperands/ moderation**.
- The 3 virtues sire **justice**.
- Attainment of virtue (happiness) is, therefore, dependent on the health/ well-being of an individual's personality.
- These four virtues are referred to as **cardinal virtues**.
- Lack of this health & well-being is characterized by the four corresponding vices; **injustice, ignorance, cowardice and licence**.
- *cardinal – Latin word for “hinge”
- The term cardinal implies that the four cardinal virtues are the “hinges” upon which the door of morality swings.

2. Aristotle's Ethical Theory

- is based on the argument that all human beings just like all other things in nature have a distinctive goal to achieve or aim to fulfill it.
- Aristotle's ethics, therefore, is goal-oriented or purposive.
- According to Aristotle, nature –including both animate and inanimate things –is purposely directed to some end.
- Therefore, Aristotle's ethics is teleological.
- Aristotle's ethics is found in his masterpiece Nicomachean Ethics.
- He thought that human behaviour must also be goal oriented or aim at some goal.
- He identified happiness as the ultimate rule towards which we act.
- Happiness is therefore the ultimate good because:
 - i. It is the end for which human beings pursue all other things.
 - ii. It is unconditionally complete.
 - iii. It is self-sufficient because it alone makes life choices worthy.
- According to Aristotle, happiness consists of acting in accordance to reason.

***QUOTE: “The general rule of morality, therefore, is to act in accordance with reason.”**

- Since reason is central in human life, reason is a necessary condition for the ultimate good.
- Intellectual virtues** are virtues that assist us to reason well, e.g., knowledge, skills...
- Besides intellectual virtues are moral virtues which come as a habit of which come as a result of habit.
- A virtue is a habit nurtured and geared towards a moral good.

-These moral virtues can also be referred to as **virtues of individual character** and assist in making decisions based on reason, to control our emotions and appetite.

Aristotle's Gold Mean Theory

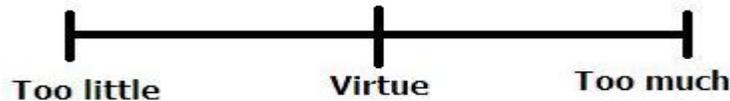
-Also called **doctrine of Golden Mean**.

-It shows human beings on how to conduct themselves and therefore achieve happiness.

-Being virtuous and therefore happy is, according to Aristotle, "being well-fed".

-There is, therefore, the correct of every individual and this amounts to what we call **the mean**.

-It is the mean because it strikes between too little (deficiency) and too much (excess).



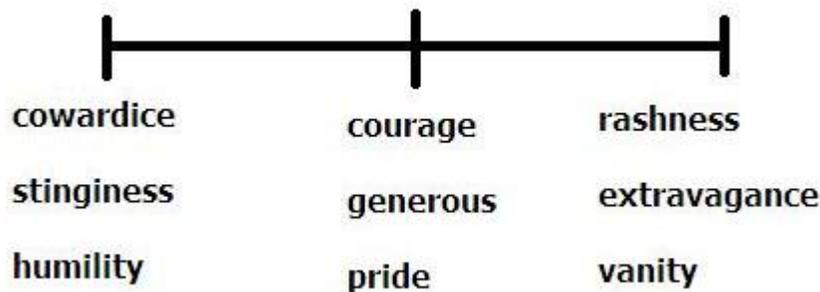
-He applies this idea of Golden Mean to in the moral sphere, such that the action is in accordance with reason.

-Virtue therefore lies at the center.

-This therefore requires that individuals adopt a rational, emotional approach to life thereby avoiding being too much or too little in actions/ comments.

-But Aristotle's Mean is not the same for everyone (**limitation**)

-Also, not all our actions can be classified into their means on extremes, e.g. You must always keep your promises. → Keeping promises has no excess or deficiency



-Among Aristotle's virtues, there are four which he considers:

- i. Prudence –knowledge of moral goodness
- ii. Fortitude –state of moral character that gives us courage to face vanity

- iii. Temperance –gives us the capacity to resist the attractiveness of physical desires
 - Once you have prudence, fortitude and temperance, this state enables one to be fair in his/ her dealing.
 - It enables one not just to pursue one's own interests but willing an equal good to others.

Professional Ethics

- The word *prophes* is derived from the Greek word *prophaino* which means to declare public.
- This Greek word *prophaino* became the Latin word "*prophesions*" –a word that was used to refer to public statements made by persons who sought to occupy positions of public class.
- Profession/ statement was meant to bind the person uttering it but not the listening to act to help those seeking particular types of assistance.
- It is like an oath.
- The reason why they made such public statements as noticed by Koehn was in order to win a trust of those who needed their services, e.g. the Hypocratic Oath made by medical doctors
- Individuals, therefore, become professionals by virtue of what they profess or publicly proclaim before other people who claim a particular knowledge or skill that the professionals have.
- A professional, therefore, is an individual with a high level of skill or knowledge in a particular field and whose practice meets the highest standards of the profession.
- It has been noticed that a profession is not so much concerned with the occupation but rather the practice of the occupation or with controlling how the occupation is practiced.
- A profession, however, can be defined generally as:
 - “a vocation/ occupation requiring advanced knowledge in a particular field and whose practice meets the highest standards of the profession.”

- Lowenberg defines professional ethics as **a qualification of the special obligations that arise out of a person's voluntary choice to become a professional.**

***QUOTE: “Truth is not found in numbers.” –Otieno Adipo**

- It therefore identifies and describes the ethical behaviours expected of professional practitioners.

Objectives Of Professional Ethics

- Professional ethics has the following objectives:
 - i. To provide guidance in the practice of the profession especially where the practitioners are faced with practice dilemmas.

- ii. To protect members of the public from charlatans and quacks.
- iii. To protect the profession from external control, especially government control.
-This is because many professionals have realized that self-control is more important than governmental control.
- iv. To promote harmony and brotherhood within the profession.
- v. To help professionals avoid litigations, i.e. to its members who are sued for malpractice.

Criteria / Various Ways of Identifying a Profession:

- i. The members of the profession must possess the **esoteric** (i.e. unique) knowledge or skill not shared by other members of the public which enable them to provide an important service.
- ii. The members must have proved their competence through an examination administered by a recognized examining/ professional body.
- iii. The profession must have a professional organization to regulate the practice, with powers to admit, and expel members from the practice. Members must be licensed to practice.
- iv. The profession must have a professional code of conduct to regulate and guide professional practice with a distinct ethical orientation.
- v. The professionals must exercise a high degree of individual autonomy and independence of judgment in their practice.
- vi. Professionals must publicly set an oath pledging to render service to humanity.

Professional Values

-Lowenberg argues that professional values need to be derivable and in conformity with the general societal values, although he acknowledges that in some cases, however, there might be some differences in emphasis, practices and interpretation.

-Among the core values for professionals are the following:

- i. Regard for individual integrity
- ii. Respect for individual rights and autonomy
- iii. Commitment to making social institutions more humane and responsive to human needs.
- iv. Respect for and acceptance of unique characteristics of diverse populations
- v. Responsibility for one's own ethical conduct and nobility for practice

Ethical Values in Professionalism

-A profession is one which by virtue of the fact that its members adhere to a distinct ethical guidance in the course of their practice.

-Therefore, every profession must have certain core values at the center of its practice.

-Some of the **core values**:

- i. **Trustworthiness:-**
-Requires a number of values/ virtues e.g. honesty, integrity, loyalty and reliability.

-Professionals are thought to be trustworthy by the public either because they are experts or because they are service providers to public good.

a) **Honesty:**

-requires a close connection between professionalism and a commitment to serve others truthfully.

-it can therefore be understood in two ways:

1. **Honest in communication** –requires a commitment to convey the truth as you know it best and avoid any communication that can mislead or deceive.

-There are two dimensions in this type of honesty:-

- a. **Truthfulness** –the intention not to misrepresent a fact
- b. **Unclear commitments** –be sure that when you are making a commitment the person understands

b) **Loyalty:**

-the responsibility to promote the interests of your profession/ affiliation i.e. by safeguarding confidential information and avoid conflict.

ii. **Respect:**

-People are not things or tools to be used by others

-Every person has a right to be treated with dignity

-People are valuable or worthy as they deserve to be treated with civility

-Respect is about honouring the essential world of all people including oneself

-We are morally obligated to treat everyone with respect regardless of who they are or what they have done

-Respect requires civility and courtesy

-It is a responsibility that we are the best we can at all situations

-Respect requires civility, courtesy, tolerance and decency when dealing with humanity

iii. **Responsibility**

-This is the value based on the assumption that an individual is in full control of himself/ herself and therefore accountable for his/her actions and conduct.

-It means that recognizing what we do/ don't do matters.

-Responsibility is the relation between the act and the agent as doer of the act, as answerable/ accountable for that act.

-The agent therefore wills the act knowingly.

-The degree of agent's control over his/ her act can be lessened by what are called modifiers of responsibility.

-These are:

- a) Ignorance affecting the knowledge
- b) Strong emotions affecting the consent of the will
- c) Intellectual fear opposing the will, a contrary wish

iv. **Force**

-actual use of physical com.....

-human beings are rational animals and therefore have in their possession the capacity to reason

-possession of the capacity gives us the power of deliberation before they act in certain ways

-Responsibility requires the following:

- i. Accountability
- ii. Pursuit of excellence
- iii. Perseverance
- iv. Continuous improvement
- v. Self-restraint

v. **Fairness**

-This is the form of justice where due considerations should be given to all without any bias/ discrimination

-The following are required:

- a) Process –using open/ unbiased processes when evaluating problems
- b) Impartiality –decisions should be unbiased without favouritism and prejudice
- c) Equity –not taking advantage over weakness or ignorance of others

-Fairness also requires that an individual corrects mistakes promptly or over time.

vi. **Decency**

-is attained when certain standards are achieved and certain actions are avoided especially those that are distasteful to the public majority

-In order for humans to live as human beings, they ought to observe a certain minimum ethical requirement below which their human right is violated.

-As an individual, we are morally bound in our activities, whether public or private, not to operate below this minimum.

-Professionals must ensure that their profession is always decent and they don't allow indecency.

vii. **Accuracy**

-Truthfulness alone is not enough.

-Professionals must practice their profession with tooth-comb accuracy

-Accuracy has to do with getting issue rightly, i.e. by figures, facts, names, claims etc.

-If, however, you realize that you are wrong, you ought to do the right thing by accepting responsibility.

-Always pay meticulous attention to details and be careful even about small things like spelling of names, figures, sequences of events....

viii. **Kindness**

- is a character trait that enables us to regard an be of assistance by virtues of their position can either be harmed or helped by their actions.
- Kindness can also be generally seen as one's concern with the good of others and not necessarily their own
- Kindness has an element of concern for others and a willingness to assist those who are disadvantaged.

Date: Tuesday, 25 May 24, 2011

RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY/ WHY DO WE STUDY PHILOSOPHY?

Definition:

Philosophy –love of wisdom

- philosophers seeking to address certain things e.g.
Socrates –acquiring objective truth;
Plato –acquiring absolute reality
Aristotle –understanding the metaphysical structure acquire acquired from absolute being

General Definition of Philosophy

- the discipline that seeks to address the most basic/fundamental principles/issues in the world concerning reality
- philosophy asks questions that appear very obvious
- it is concerned about the existence of things e.g. the existence of God
- philosophy is also concerned about basic concepts such as justice, reality
- seeks to understand and establish certain fundamental principles

What is the Methodology of Philosophy?

- a critical understanding/evaluation of issues (speculative discourse) because it involves reason
- evaluated because we look at issue critically
- philosophy does not have a subject matter
- it is also difficult to give it a proper definition
- philosophy is regarded as a second order activity

The Four (4) Traditional Branches of Philosophy

1. **Metaphysics:**

- concerned with terrestrial and extra-terrestrial reality
- concerned with the notion of “Being”; synonymous with reality
- it is therefore concerned with meta-empirical reality –reality beyond the physical world

-it asks questions about the Nature of God, Spirits or even the Nature of man (e.g. does the soul exist? Where is the soul located in the human body? Is the soul synonymous with the mind?)

Sub-branches of Metaphysics:

- a. General Metaphysics
- b. Special Metaphysics

a. General Metaphysics:

-concerned with the ontological nature of man
-concerned with ontology
-“*ontos*” –Greek word for being

b. Special Metaphysics:

1. **Rational Psychology:**

-philosophy of the human person
-concerned with things like the nature of dreams, memory and common sense as an inner sense

2. **Natural Theology (Theodicy):**

-“*Theos*” –Greek word for God
-an attempt to study the nature of physical universe, its nature & origin

3. **Cosmology:**

-“*cosmos*” –Greek word for universe
-concerned with the study of the physical universe, its nature & origin
-gave birth to the philosophy of science

2. **Epistemology:**

-concerned with the study of knowledge
-it looks at the structure, source, the scope or limit knowledge
-etymologically, “*episteme*” –Greek word for knowledge

3. **Ethics**

-is concerned with how we ought to act
-the conduct of human person in the society
-distinguishing between good and bad; moral and immoral

4. **Logic**

- concerned with reasoning
- distinguishing between correct and incorrect reasoning

Why do we Study Philosophy? (Values of Studying Philosophy)

- i. It broadens ones knowledge in his/her field of study
- ii. It inculcates ethical values in an individual
- iii. Assists an individual to reason correctly

*QUOTE: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” –Socrates

The Nature of Philosophic Problems:

- A philosophic problem is a problem that is prone to be interpretable variously/ prone to various interpretations thereby leading to disagreements even though there is great meaning attached to that particular problem
- i.e. it is not “a common sense understanding” of problems
- philosophic problems are critical, analytical & require evaluation
- they arise when there is disagreement when interpreting that problem

Characteristics of Philosophic Problems:

- i. Philosophic problems are not as a result (product) of inadequate information e.g. Is a zygote a human person? What/who is a human person? <*a human person & a human being do not necessarily mean the same thing>
- ii. They are unresolved and therefore intractable, i.e. you cannot bring them to an end; they are always there –since pre-Socratic (before Socrates) times
- iii. They are conceptual, i.e. Philosophers do not concern themselves with concrete things, e.g. the concept of free-will & determinism
- iv. Philosophic problems are abstract