

OMPU3112

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRENT ISSUES

SELF INSTRUCTIONAL
MATERIALS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS, HUMANITIES &
HOSPITALITY**

**BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS) IN
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

Topic 2 ► Philosophy in Life

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this topic, you will be able to:

1. Explain different philosophical orientations and their influence on individual perspectives.
2. Describe the nature and scope of theoretical philosophy in understanding abstract concepts.
3. Apply practical philosophy to analyze real-life ethical and social issues.
4. Discuss the development of new philosophies and their relevance to contemporary issues.

► INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is not only an academic discipline but also a way of life that shapes how individuals think, act, and make decisions. It influences personal beliefs, ethical judgments, and perspectives on reality. In everyday life, individuals are constantly engaging with philosophical questions, whether consciously or unconsciously, as they navigate issues related to morality, purpose, knowledge, and existence.

Understanding philosophy in life involves recognizing how different philosophical orientations shape one's worldview and behavior. It also requires distinguishing between theoretical philosophy, which deals with abstract ideas and fundamental questions, and practical philosophy, which applies these ideas to real-life situations.

In addition, philosophy continues to evolve through the emergence of new philosophical ideas that respond to changing social, technological, and cultural contexts. These developments highlight the dynamic nature of philosophy and its ongoing relevance in addressing contemporary challenges.

This topic explores the role of philosophy in shaping human thought and action, providing a foundation for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and informed decision-making in modern society.

2.1 PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

2.1.1 Meaning of Philosophical Orientation

Philosophical orientation refers to the way individuals perceive and interpret the world based on their beliefs, values, and assumptions. It acts as a framework that guides thinking, decision-making, and behavior.

Every individual develops a philosophical orientation through influences such as culture, religion, education, and personal experiences. These orientations shape how individuals respond to life's challenges, determine what they consider to be right or wrong, and influence their understanding of reality.

2.1.2 Types of Philosophical Orientations

Different philosophical orientations provide distinct perspectives on life:

- **Idealism**
Emphasizes ideas, mind, and spiritual reality as the foundation of existence. Reality is seen as shaped by consciousness and values.
 - **Realism**
Focuses on the external world as it exists independently of human perception. Knowledge is gained through observation and experience.
 - **Pragmatism**
Views truth as practical and based on outcomes. Ideas are evaluated based on their usefulness and effectiveness in solving problems.
 - **Existentialism**
Emphasizes individual freedom, choice, and responsibility. It focuses on personal meaning and the human experience.
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2.1.3 Influence on Individual Perspectives

Philosophical orientations play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to the world around them. These orientations act as an internal framework that guides thinking patterns, attitudes, and behaviors in both personal and social contexts.

Firstly, philosophical orientations influence how individuals **make decisions and solve problems**. Different orientations lead individuals to adopt different approaches when

faced with challenges. For example, a person with a **pragmatic orientation** tends to focus on practical solutions and outcomes, prioritizing what works best in a given situation. In contrast, an individual with an **idealist orientation** may emphasize moral principles and values, even if the solution is less practical. This demonstrates how underlying philosophical beliefs directly affect decision-making processes.

Secondly, philosophical orientations shape how individuals **interpret social and ethical issues**. People often evaluate issues such as justice, equality, and rights based on their philosophical perspectives. For instance, a realist may analyze issues based on observable facts and evidence, while an existentialist may focus on personal responsibility and individual choice. As a result, individuals may arrive at different conclusions about the same issue, depending on their philosophical orientation.

Thirdly, philosophical orientations influence the **development of personal beliefs and values**. These beliefs are not formed in isolation but are shaped by broader philosophical assumptions about truth, reality, and morality. For example, individuals who adopt a religious or spiritual orientation may base their values on divine principles, while those with a more secular or humanistic orientation may prioritize human experience and rationality. Over time, these beliefs become deeply embedded and guide behavior, identity, and life goals.

In addition, philosophical orientations affect how individuals **respond to challenges and uncertainties**. Life often presents situations that are complex, unpredictable, and ambiguous. A person with an existentialist perspective may embrace uncertainty and view challenges as opportunities for personal growth and self-definition. On the other hand, someone with a more deterministic or structured orientation may seek stability, rules, and clear guidance when facing uncertainty. These differences highlight how philosophy shapes resilience, adaptability, and emotional responses.

Furthermore, philosophical orientations also influence **interpersonal relationships and communication**. Individuals with differing philosophical views may approach discussions, conflicts, and collaborations in different ways. For example, those who value rational argument (logic-based orientation) may prioritize evidence and reasoning, while others may emphasize empathy, values, or cultural perspectives. Understanding these differences is essential for effective communication and mutual respect in diverse societies.

Overall, philosophical orientations serve as a lens through which individuals understand reality, make judgments, and interact with others. By becoming aware of these orientations, individuals can develop greater self-awareness, appreciate diverse perspectives, and enhance their ability to think critically and act responsibly in various situations.

 **Understanding philosophical orientations helps individuals become more reflective, adaptable, and open to diverse perspectives.**

2.2 THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY

2.2.1 Meaning of Theoretical Philosophy

Theoretical philosophy focuses on abstract and fundamental questions about reality, knowledge, and existence. It seeks to understand concepts that are not always directly observable but are essential for intellectual inquiry.

2.2.2 Scope of Theoretical Philosophy

Theoretical philosophy includes several key areas:

- **Metaphysics** – the study of reality, existence, and the nature of being
- **Epistemology** – the study of knowledge, truth, and how we know what we know
- **Logic** – the study of reasoning and valid arguments

These areas explore questions such as:

- What is real?
 - What can we know?
 - How do we determine truth?
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2.2.3 Importance of Theoretical Philosophy

Theoretical philosophy is important because it:

- Develops critical and analytical thinking
- Provides a foundation for scientific and intellectual inquiry
- Encourages deeper understanding of complex concepts
- Shapes frameworks for interpreting reality

Example:

Questions about whether knowledge comes from experience or reason are explored in epistemology, influencing how we understand learning and truth.

 **Theoretical philosophy helps us understand fundamental questions about existence and knowledge.**

2.3 PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

2.3.1 Meaning of Practical Philosophy

Practical philosophy focuses on applying philosophical principles to real-life situations. It deals with ethical decision-making, social issues, and human behavior.

2.3.2 Areas of Practical Philosophy

- **Ethics** – the study of right and wrong behavior
 - **Political Philosophy** – the study of governance, justice, and rights
 - **Social Philosophy** – the study of society, relationships, and social structures
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2.3.3 Application in Real-Life Situations

Practical philosophy helps individuals:

- Make ethical decisions
- Resolve moral dilemmas
- Evaluate social and political issues
- Act responsibly in society

Example:

Deciding whether to report unethical behavior in the workplace involves ethical reasoning and moral judgment.

2.3.4 Importance in Modern Society

In today's complex world, individuals face various ethical and social challenges. Practical philosophy provides tools to:

- Balance personal interests with social responsibility
 - Promote justice and fairness
 - Encourage ethical leadership
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 **Practical philosophy bridges theory and action, guiding ethical and responsible behavior.**

2.4 EMERGENCE OF NEW PHILOSOPHIES

2.4.1 Development of New Philosophies

Philosophy evolves over time as new ideas emerge in response to changing societal conditions, technological advancements, and global challenges.

New philosophies often arise to address issues that traditional philosophies may not fully explain.

2.4.2 Examples of Emerging Philosophies

- **Postmodernism** – challenges absolute truths and emphasizes relativism
 - **Environmental Philosophy** – focuses on human relationships with nature
 - **Feminist Philosophy** – examines gender equality and social justice
 - **Digital and Technology Ethics** – addresses issues related to artificial intelligence and digital life
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2.4.3 Relevance to Contemporary Issues

Emerging philosophies are important because they:

- Address modern challenges such as climate change, inequality, and technology
- Encourage critical reflection on existing beliefs
- Promote inclusivity and diverse perspectives

Example:

Environmental philosophy highlights the ethical responsibility of humans to protect the environment in response to climate change.

2.4.4 Challenges and Opportunities

- **Challenges:**
 - Conflicting viewpoints
 - Uncertainty in defining truth
 - Resistance to change
- **Opportunities:**
 - Innovation in thinking
 - Greater inclusivity
 - Adaptation to global changes

 **New philosophies reflect the dynamic nature of human thought in response to changing realities.**



SELF CHECK 2.1

Explain how philosophical orientations influence individual perspectives and discuss the role of theoretical and practical philosophy in addressing contemporary issues.

► CONCLUSION

In this topic, we learned that:

- philosophy influences how individuals think, act, and make decisions;
- philosophical orientations shape personal beliefs and perspectives;
- theoretical philosophy focuses on abstract concepts such as reality and knowledge;
- practical philosophy applies these ideas to real-life ethical and social issues;
- new philosophies emerge to address contemporary challenges;
- philosophy remains relevant in guiding individuals and society in a changing world.