

Key Terms

Philosophy of Life

Know the meanings to the following terms and be able to demonstrate what each means in a case study.

Altruism	To intentionally place the interest of other persons at the center of one's concern.
Amoral	That which is neither moral nor immoral. Outside the sphere to which moral judgments apply.
Conscience	Internalized moral instructions.
Egoism	The central and most important part of the moral life is one's own self. The concern of other persons is not a significant consideration.
Ethical theory	The study of fundamental principles which defines values and determines moral duty and obligation
Ethics	The study of how people relate to each other . A broad term that notes the various ways we examine and understand "right" and "wrong," "good" and "bad" human behavior.
Existentialism	Each person must find meaning and purpose within one's own existence and experience.
Etiquette	Any special code of behavior or courtesy.
Fatalism	The belief that God or fate foresees, ordains, and is the cause of every event in the person's life and the universe. One's role is simply to accept what happens.
Hedonism	The fundamental premise is that humans pursue pleasure and avoid pain. What is valuable and good is determined by what brings the greatest pleasure. Pleasure is viewed as the ultimate goal, the chief object of life.
Humanism	Humankind is basically good. Humans themselves are the ultimate standard, "the measure of all things."
Individualism	The individual is the most important and final determiner of what is moral or immoral. The individual is to be valued above the community in any and all situations.
Legalism	Outward conformity or reliance on obedience as a means of gaining salvation or earning acceptance with God.
Materialism	The acquiring or material possessions is the driving force of life. The quantity of one's possessions determines the quality of one's life.
Morality and Morals	Social conventions about right and wrong human conduct. For Christians, morality and morals begin with the teachings of scripture as the basis for evaluating human conduct.
Naturalism	The cosmos is everything, and all things have a natural origin and explanation. Humans create their own ethics and values.
Nihilism	Life is without meaning, value, purpose, or direction. Humans are unable to affect their own destiny or make any difference in the meaning of life.
Pluralism	Belief that within a common society, each and every ethnic, religious, or cultural group can and should hold and propagate their particular understanding of the moral life.
Pragmatism	The good is identified by the fact that "it works." Practical results are seen as the ultimate criterion. Expediency determines morality.
Prima Facie Principles	An obligation that can be overridden by a more important obligation –creating a moral hierarchy.
Principle	A general or fundamental truth; a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption on which others are based or from which others are derived.
Rationalism	Truth and reality can be known by reason alone, apart from divine revelation
Relativism	There can never be any absolute and universal principles or moral truth. Truth and morals vary with the times, places, and people.
Situational Ethics	Emphasizes the importance of the situation in determining what is right or wrong. The morality of an act is determined by love, or the lack of it, quite apart from the guidelines of the law.
Standard	A temporary or local application of a principle in accordance with existing conditions.
Transcendentalism	A mystical philosophy that emphasizes the spiritual over the material. It advocates direct contact between God and humanity. It points inward to self and to nature as the source of all truth.
Universalism	The view that ultimately all people will be saved.
Utilitarianism	The moral action is always to seek the greatest good for the greatest number of people.