

The History of Philosophy

The History of Philosophy – Structured Overview

1. Introduction

Philosophy’s history is a chronological tapestry of ideas about reality, knowledge, ethics, and the human condition. It can be divided into major periods, each characterized by distinctive questions, methods, and influential thinkers.

2. Ancient Philosophy (c. 600 BCE – 5th century CE)

Sub-Period	Key Themes	Representative Figures	Major Works
Pre-Socratic	Nature (archê), cosmos, substance, change	Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Democritus	Fragments (preserved in later authors)
Classical Greek	Ethics, politics, epistemology, metaphysics, logic	Socrates, Plato, Aristotle	<i>Apology</i> , <i>Republic</i> , <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
Hellenistic	Happiness (eudaimonia), stoicism, epicureanism, skepticism	Epicurus, Zeno of Citium, Pyrrho, Plotinus (Neoplatonism)	<i>Letter to Menoeceus</i> , <i>Enchiridion</i> , <i>Enneads</i>
Roman & Early Christian	Integration of Greek thought with law, theology	Cicero, Seneca, Augustine of Hippo, Boethius	<i>De Officiis</i> , <i>Confessions</i> , <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i>

Key Contributions

- **Logic & dialectic** (Aristotle's syllogistic).
- **Theory of Forms** (Plato).
- **Ethical frameworks** (Stoicism, Epicureanism).
- **Foundations for later Christian theology** (Augustine).

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3. Medieval Philosophy (5th?–?15th?centuries)

Region	Central Concerns	Notable Thinkers	Landmark Texts
Islamic Golden Age	Relationship between reason and revelation; metaphysics; science	Al?F?r?b?, Avicenna (Ibn ?S?n?), Averroes (Ibn? Rushd)	<i>The Book of Healing</i> , <i>The Incoherence of the Philosophers</i>
Scholasticism (Western Europe)	Synthesis of Aristotle with Christian doctrine; universals; proof of God	Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham	<i>Proslogion</i> , <i>Summa Theologica</i> , <i>Ordinatio</i>
Jewish Philosophy	Rational interpretation of Torah; ethics	Maimonides	<i>Guide for the Perplexed</i>

Key Contributions

- **Ontological argument** (Anselm).
- **Five Ways** (Aquinas).
- **Nominalism vs. realism** debate (Ockham, Scotus).
- Preservation and commentary on Aristotle that later fueled the Renaissance.

4. Early Modern Philosophy (16th?–?18th?centuries)

Movement	Core Issues	Principal Figures	Influential Works
Rationalism	Knowledge from innate ideas & reason	René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz	<i>Meditations</i> , <i>Ethics</i> , <i>Monadology</i>
Empiricism	Knowledge from sensory experience	John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume	<i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , <i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , *