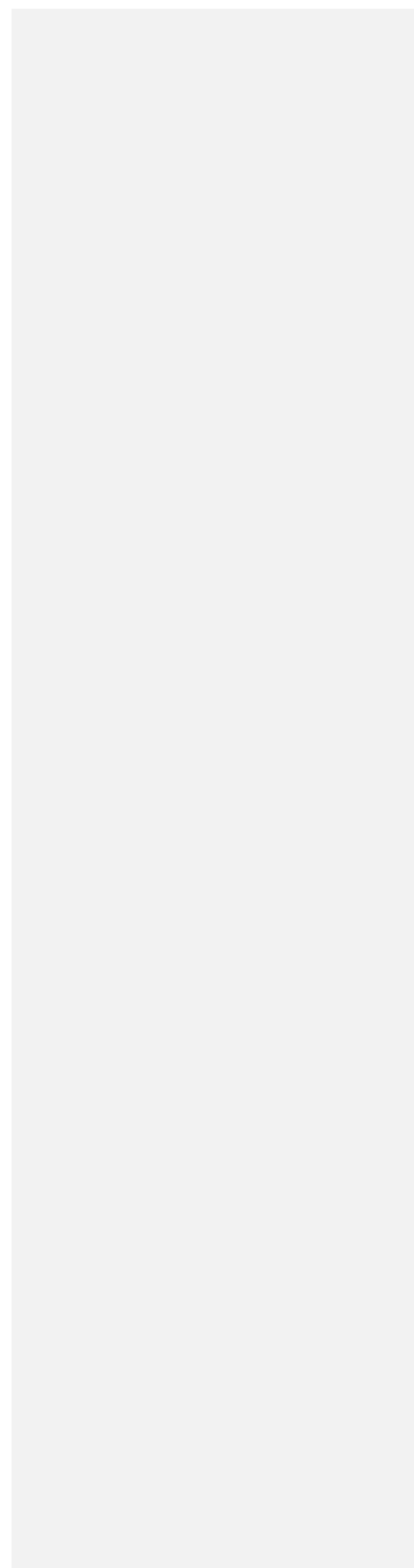


Philosophy for Highschoolers

By David Rudmin

Annotated Teachers' Edition 1.4

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David Rudmin studied Theology and Classics with a minor in Philosophy (nearly a triple-major), graduating in 2004 *summa cum laude* from Christendom College in Front Royal, VA. He currently lives in Harrisonburg Va., and writes for a living.

Introduction

Philosophy for Highschoolers is a new way of studying metaphysics and human nature in a uniquely phenomenological (i.e. diagrammed) way. Traditionally, metaphysics was a field limited to only those with a mind for abstract reasoning, and enough time to read the voluminous writings (Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, etc.) of those who had gone before them. However because of the abstruse nature of the subject, as well as difficulties in language (Greek, Latin, German, etc.), even after many years of reflection, often a person still didn't have enough of a 'grasp' or certainty about a matter to be able to solidly say or deduce something new, or definitively rule out something else as 'wrong.' Thus philosophy became vague and imprecise, as philosophers opted to instead become historians, focusing on one particular field, or one particular philosopher's worldview, rather than on becoming proficient in the art as a whole.

The beauty of Aristotle, and later St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy (which together developed into Scholasticism) is that it is a universal, complete system, theoretical as well as practical, and so it is perennially applicable. It considers all existence in the universe, from the very smallest building blocks of language (where we first get our concepts), to the regular processes and patterns that we find functioning in the world, all the way up to the very heights of divinity. Throughout all of this, particular concepts and natures function over and over in regular, dependable ways, just as functions and operators do in mathematics and physics. Thus the system is a broad-and-universal, but also rigorous one, enabling us to come to definite, deep conclusions about the nature of our universe, and of our very selves. What we learn in philosophy then can, and will determine our attitude toward other sciences, society, and even toward life itself. Indeed, every person and every institution has an unspoken philosophy-of-action, whether or not they realize it. Scholastic philosophy is unique in that it goes to the heart of what it means to *be*, exposing the mystery of our human nature in a way more profound than any other modern philosophy or social system currently does.

In assembling this book, I have sought to accomplish two things at once: My first goal has been to try to collect the most standard, common, classical understandings and formulas, as they are commonly held out there among Thomistic scholars. However, I have not necessarily collected all such opinions. Where such opinions are inconsistent either with themselves (to my belief), or with other things elsewhere in the text, I have preferred to opt for and use those lines of reasoning which are most consistent with the spirit and content of the rest of the text, or to supply my own views on the matter, fully aware that I may be charting new ground, with no historical precedent or basis to go on, except for the standard of my own integrity, and the inter-corroboration of the conclusions I come to. Where I do this, supplying original information of myself, I try to note it in the footnotes, so that readers may know where it came from. My second and greater goal has then been to assemble a single position or worldview that I believe to be consistent with itself, and thus tenable as a legitimate, modern, philosophical worldview, opposed to others. Students who read this work, will be thoroughly versed in this worldview, not only verbally, but also graphically, through the diagrams. All in all then, my intended goal has been to receive and build with the most solid and sure things that classical philosophy has to offer, but to construct a thoroughly original, functional system

for thinking about and understanding the 3 great mysteries in life: man, the universe, and God.

To Teachers and Administrators:

Welcome to *Philosophy for Highschoolers*! This philosophy book is recommended as a full curriculum or reference-text for introductory philosophy classes at the high-school, college, or seminary level. The book consists of 114 short-read sections, each followed by a set of questions (with teacher-answers provided). These questions may be used as homework, class discussion-starters, or test questions.

The text is designed for use primarily by Aristotelian/Scholastic/Thomistic philosophy and theology teachers. However, since the course is incremental in its nature, even persons without any background in philosophy should theoretically be able to understand (and even teach!) the course, simply by progressing through all the sections in order, one-by-one, using the teachers' comments and pictures to help them understand the various concepts along the way.

Year-planning

For purposes of generating a departmental curriculum, it would be advisable (though not necessary) to precede this course with a rigorous course in Logic, and to follow it with the sequel course in Theology (to be released in Fall 2012). A slight background in Biology and/or Physics would also be helpful for students to better comprehend certain points in the course.

As a year-long course (180 days), this text should cover approximately 2/3 of the time (114 suggested readings + 6 tests/exams = 120 days). In that case, the teacher will either want to supplement the course with outside readings interspersed throughout the year, or will want to fill the last 1/3 of the course with a different text or assignment.

As a half-year course (90 days), the teacher will have to move quickly, covering three sections every two days (114 sections \times 2/3 = 76 days + 6 tests/exams = 82 days).

It is recommended that every unit be followed with a Unit Test (5 tests), and that the course as a whole be completed with a final exam. The current edition lacks any testing materials, and so the teacher will have to create his/her own tests: The teacher may wish to generate his/her own test-questions, or may prefer to simply select and reuse questions from the ends of each section. Material for testing may also be gathered from the diagrams and Glossary.

The last unit (Unit V) is a spring-board to the sequel introductory theology textbook (vol. II) which is expected to become available in the Fall of 2012, for students who have already completed this introductory philosophy course. It is recommended that teachers should take special care to preview Unit V in order to determine whether they agree with its subject-matter and wish to include it in this course. Some teachers will appreciate its usefulness whereas others may consider the subject-matter too abstruse and/or theoretical. Although the author believes Unit V to be convincing in its own way, he admits that it does not have the same rigor and verifiable certainty as Units I-IV.

What follows is a list of recommended reference books that students and especially teachers should either have, or at least have access to, in the event that they should wish to look up the citation on a particular footnote. These books comprise the heart of the course and are extremely useful tools in the library of the lifelong scholar. The printed edition/year of the book does not matter.

Recommended Course Texts:

McKeon, Richard. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Random House, New York.
Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa Theologiae* [-gica].

For Teachers (continued): How to Use the Text

Using the Highlighted “Teachers’ Comments”

Throughout the text you will see highlighted screen-tips, commonly known as “Teachers’ Comments.” These comments are provided first to give the teacher a greater understanding and knowledge (greater than the students) of the things in the text. Second, they are also intended as supplemental information to be communicated to the students, if the teacher so chooses. Although optional, it is highly recommended that the teacher pass on this information to the students, as it may be essential to a particular student’s understanding and grasp of the topic, or even to the flow of the text as a whole. Thus the comments have primarily lecture-value for embellishing the course.

In a hard-copy (paper) edition, these comments will probably be printed in the margins of each page. They will also appear in the margins if they are viewed electronically, using Microsoft Word 2007. However, if they are viewed electronically using an earlier version of Word, then they can be viewed by hovering the cursor over each yellow highlight, in order to view that comment.

A Typical Day.

Before each class, students should be expected to (1) read the section, (2) answer the questions (unless the teacher deems certain ones “too difficult”), and (3) be prepared to ask questions about things which were unclear to them, or which they didn’t understand.

Before class, teachers should thoroughly familiarize themselves with (1) the text itself (including diagrams, and any cross-references to other diagrams elsewhere in the text), (2) the Teachers’ Comments, (3) any relevant terms (underlined words whose definitions can be found in the Glossary), and (4) the questions at the end of the section.

It is envisioned that a class-period could follow any one or several of the following formats, with the first ones being preferable:

(1) Seminar format. The teacher identifies key points or themes that he/she wants to convey, and tries to ask leading and probing questions to cultivate vibrant and even passionate class-discussion about the matter-at-hand.

(2) Question-and-answer format. If the teacher is uncomfortable with leading a class-discussion, he/she may simply assign the reading, and instruct the students to come to class with questions about things they didn’t understand. Then during the class period,

Comment [D1]: This is an example of a Teachers’ Comment.

the teacher will briefly summarize the reading, paragraph by paragraph, and respond to any questions or problems that the students have about each particular paragraph. If the students have no more questions or problems, then the teacher can move on to discussing the extra material provided in the Teachers' Comments.

(3) Dry-Read/Lecture format. If the teacher and/or students are completely unable to prepare beforehand for a class-period, then the class-period may still suitably be spent reading the section aloud, paragraph by paragraph, with the teacher occasionally interrupting the students' reading at relevant points (i.e. at each highlight), to mention the extra material contained in the attached Teachers' Comment.

For homework, teachers may assign as many or as few of the questions at the end of each section as they think appropriate, and may include additional questions as well. Another possible homework assignment, is to have the students look up, read, and perhaps outline or report upon certain of the primary sources (i.e. Aristotle or Aquinas) cited in the footnotes. These are often very valuable sections of philosophy, and a student will benefit greatly from direct contact with the original thinkers themselves. Of course, not all footnotes are as valuable as others, and so teachers should first preview the footnotes themselves, in order to decide which are suitable for outside reading.

To the Student:

Welcome to a this new, unique course in introductory philosophy! You are extraordinarily privileged to be using this book, since it offers new ways of studying that were not previously available to other students. This book presumes no outside knowledge, although a little background in Logic would be helpful in Unit III, as well as any Biology and/or Physics that you may have previously studied. As you go through it, you will see many diagrams and pictures. Be sure to study these carefully and gain a full understanding of each one of them, as these will be one of the main tools for helping you to understand the abstruse and difficult concepts. Many times we can represent with a diagram something invisible that cannot be seen here on earth. In the meantime you will also be using and learning many common philosophical terms, concepts, and tools. Be sure to use the Glossary to help you with this. If necessary, or if advised by your teacher, *memorize* some of these definitions word-for-word. Indeed, knowing all the definitions (and nothing more!) would already be an excellent foundation in introductory philosophy. As you read, you may not always agree with all the conclusions that the author comes to (esp. Unit V). Nevertheless, even if you disagree with something, still be sure to do the course justice, and invest sufficient time and energy to gain a full understanding of the author's position anyhow, since knowledge and the ability to reason is already valuable, and you owe respected authorities a fair consideration, even if you do not choose, ultimately, to agree with them. Completion of this course should enable you to move on to major texts in philosophy such as St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

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