

Reference Materials for HSE Global Scholarship Competition — 2022

Philosophy

I. List of primary recommended sources for topics 1-10 (see II. Contents. Topic Overview)

1. Dupré B. 50 Philosophy Ideas You Really Need to Know, London: Quercus, 2007.
2. Hofstadter D.R. & Dennett D.C. The Mind's I: Fantasies and Reflections on Self and Soul, NY: Basic books, 1981.
3. Nagel T. What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy, NY, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
4. Plato's Parmenides: Text, Translation and Introductory Essay, tr. Hermann A. & Chrysakipoulou S., Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2010.
5. Smullyan R. The Lady or the Tiger? NY: Knopf, 1982.

II. Contents. Overview of Topics 1–10 Recommended additional sources by topic

Topic 1. The problem of entry into philosophy (philosophical surprise motive).

Philosophy as yet to be completed discipline or teaching — an open project. Radical statement of the question of the knowledge foundations. The history of philosophy as a continuing dialogue, philosophers of antiquity as equipotent opponents. The role of an open question in philosophy. The concept of problem. Etymology: the problem πρόβλημα (from Greek) is "anything thrown forward, hindrance, obstacle"; from προβάλλω — "to throw forward, to put something forward, to blame"; from προ- + βάλλω. The difference between the philosophical problem and the problem statement in scientific knowledge. Philosophical surprise motive. "Awakening" to reflection, "awakening to surprise." Radical skepticism motive. Critical thinking. Dogmatic "wisdom" and philosophy.

Additional sources:

1. Heidegger M. What is Philosophy? tr. Wilde J.T. & Kluback W., NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 1956.

Topic 2. What does it mean "to know"? (The problem of difference of truth and opinion)

Philosophy begins not from a soothed, "self-satisfied" wisdom, but from intellectual anxiety. "Mental spasm" — the inability to find a simple question for "elementary" questions. We still do not know what "knowledge" is. Knowledge and sensual perception. Knowledge and opinion. Antique philosophy began with distinguishing the "way of truth" and "way of opinion". But what is the difference between the truth and a simple opinion? A justification? An explanation? What is the truth? "Way" and "method" (μέθοδος from μετά — "between, after" + ὁδός — "way", literary, "the way after something", "a method of research") leading to the truth. The method of Socrates — "learned ignorance" as a search for knowledge.

Additional sources:

1. Law S. The Philosophy Gym: 25 Short Adventures in Thinking, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, 2003.

Topic 3. What can one rely on? (Problem of reliability)

Problematics of common sense. Strategies of philosophical interaction with "common sense" views — protection of common sense, provocation of common sense, rejecting "common sense" prejudices. The philosopher must cure the "ailments" of reasoning before reaching the concepts of common human understanding. The argument of sleep. The argument of madness. Belief in the existence of the outside world. Reliability of knowledge. The problem of any "knowledge" adopted for granted. Cartesian doubt. Point of support. That which cannot be otherwise, which opposite is unthinkable. What is given to us as clear and obvious? What is given to us directly? Search for an undoubted base for knowledge.

Additional sources:

1. Wittgenstein L. On Certainty, London: Blackwell, 1969.

Topic 4. What can one know? ("Reality" as a problem)

"Objectivity" (lat. objectum — "subject", literary, "thrown forward", objectus — "lying in front of"). Subject "reality" (lat. res — "thing, business"). The question about a thing. The question of the actual state of reality. Reality — existing reasons. What can be called real? What does "exist in reality" mean? How do you think of existence regardless of any subject (lat. subjectum, from subicere — "subjected", subjectus — "lying down below, subordinate, subject")? "Objective reality" and reality. The question of the boundaries of the possible knowledge of reality. The phenomenon and the thing in itself. "Critique of Pure Reason" project. Overcoming dogmatic metaphysics and skepticism. "Scandal in philosophy".

Additional sources:

1. Moore G.E. Proof of an External World // Proceedings of the British Academy, 1939, №25 (5), 273-300.

Topic 5. How is understanding possible? (Understanding as a problem)

How is understanding possible? Other consciousness and its "opacity." The other as a topic of philosophy. "Inter-subjectivity" and alert embodiment. How can one be sure that he understands and is understood? The deceptiveness of understanding and examples of imaginary understanding. Hermeneutics of reality. Interpretation of the actual situation. Here and now as the starting point of interpretation. Understanding yourself and your own way of being. Casual life and practical horizon of understanding. Understanding and event. Philosophical hermeneutics. "Pre-understanding" and prejudice. Discrediting prejudice by enlightenment. The problem of truth in the perception of art. The problem of truth in humanitarian sciences. Understanding history.

Additional sources:

1. Gadamer H.-G. On the Circle of Understanding // J. M. Connolly and T. Keutner (eds.) Hermeneutics versus Science, Three German Views. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959, 68-78.

Topic 6. Why do the words have meaning? (The problem of meaning and value)

How is it possible that the word has a meaning? The similarity between a name and an object. How are general concepts possible? "Where" is the meaning? Sign and symbol. Sound and image. The ideal meaning of a concept. Particular and general. Word as a label. Implication and meaning. Semantic triangle — sign, subject, meaning. Meaning (denotation) and the meant (designatum). The meaning of a proposition and the value of truth. Meaning as following the rule of language game. "Three ways of spilling ink" — the situation of a statement being made and its effect. Performatives. Promise, recognition, statement, order. Identity created as a set of performatives. The actions done with the help of words.

Additional sources:

1. Frege G. On Sense and Reference // Philosophical Review, 1948, №57 (3), 209-230.

Topic 7. Is my action free? (The problem of freedom of will)

How can freedom of will exist? How can it even be possible when every state of consciousness is predetermined? How do determinism and freedom of will relate? Them (non-)compatibility and (non-)combinability. Freedom of will and predetermination. Theological

context. Freedom as an illusion or epiphenomenon. Context of sciences studying the brain. Strategies for "salvaging" freedom or refusing it. Freedom and unpredictability. Freedom as a regulatory idea. Does the ethical action make sense in the absence of freedom of choice? Freedom as a condition for the possibility of ethical attitude to other person. To act as if freedom was in the world.

Additional sources:

1. Sartre J.-P. Existentialism and Humanism, tr. Mairet P., London: Methuen, 1948.

Topic 8. What should one do? (Ethical selection problem)

Where can one find support when solving moral questions? The inevitability of a deed. Ethical choice as a choice of a life project. Ethical choice as a project of a living world for oneself and for others. Virtue as a means of achieving happiness. Higher good. "Happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with complete or perfect virtue". Virtue — the ability to do your best. The virtues of the will (ethical) and mind (dianoetic). Ethics of virtue. Categorical imperative. Formalism in ethics. The kingdom of goals. The maxima of my will as the basis of universal legislation. Moral autonomy and heteronomous motivation. How can one know that one act ethically? Another person not only as a means, but also as a goal. Ethics of duty.

Additional sources:

1. Edmonds D. Would You Kill the Fat Man? Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Topic 9. What is just? (Justice as a problem)

Inequality as one of the components of the real world in which we live. The question is how we perceive this inequality. Is inequality a basis for injustice? "Equality of chances" as an ideologeme. The problem of social justice. Types of justice — distributive and equalizing. Justice, property, and foundation of the state. Power as a condition for justice and injustice. Justice as honesty. Sense of justice. Institutions providing equal freedom and shared distribution. Natural duties and natural obligations. Welfare as rationality. Theory of justice.

Additional sources:

1. Rawls J. The Sense of Justice // Philosophical Review, 1963, №72 (3), 281-305.

Topic 10. What is a person? (The problem of person in philosophy)

Questions "What can one know?" And "What should one do?" (as well as the question "What can one hope for?") are summed in a question "What is a person?" Anthropological concepts are not neutral. They rely on metaphysical prerequisites being a "sketch of the world".

Philosophical anthropology. Position of a person in cosmos. Openness to the world. Biological ineptness of a human. "Eccentric viewpoint" — a person must make himself what he wants; a person is at a distance from the world; a person is not rooted in being (non-alibi of being). Person as a project, as a constantly renewable choice of self. Symbolic structures. Imagination. Utopian anthropological projects. Despite the anthropological constants, human is the open project.

Additional sources:

1. Scheler M. On the Place of Man in the Cosmos, NY: Farber, 1954.

III. Online sources

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu>
- Ted Honderich. The Oxford Companion to Philosophy // Oxfordreference. URL: http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t116&subject=s22
- PhilPapers. URL: <http://philpapers.org>
- The Basics of Philosophy. URL: <http://www.philosophybasics.com>