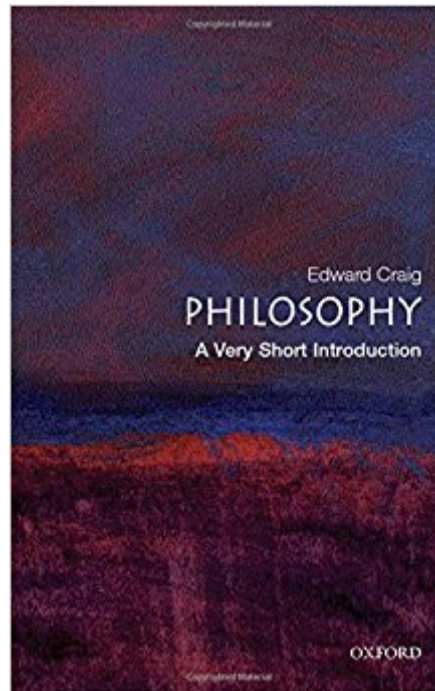




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Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

How ought we to live? What really exists? How do we know? This book introduces important themes in ethics, knowledge, and the self, via readings from Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel, Darwin, and Buddhist writers. It emphasizes throughout the point of studying philosophy, explains how different areas of philosophy are related, and explores the contexts in which philosophy was and is studied. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Philosophy: Questions for Consideration and Discussion If you wanted to avoid philosophy completely, what would you have to do? Do you really have a right to your own opinion? Always, or only sometimes? Are there limits to what the State can properly demand of its citizens? Some people believe in miracles. Why? What would happen if you decided not to believe anything without having a good reason for it?

'[The Very Short Introduction to Philosophy] shows that philosophy really can be fascinating, broad-minded and full of surprise. As a means of stimulating interest in the subject it has few rivals.'
Julian Baggini, The Philosopher's Magazine

Edward Craig book in the VSI series delivers what it promises, a glimpse in the main subjects of philosophy. The author strategy is a good one: the divers questions of philosophy are presented to the reader by important works of philosophers. In this way, one gets acquainted with the philosophic endeavour knowing the philosophers and the questions they debated. The book shows the relations between philosophers and the emphasis they gave to the problems that occupied their works. Further readings in philosophy are indicated with a brief explanation about the scope of each book. Must read for the philosophy student and lover!

Good introduction to philosophy

Edward Craig's short introduction was recommended in my Masters syllabus, prior to starting the course, for those looking to establish a basic understanding of what philosophy is, some key figures and why it might be important. Craig's book provides exactly this. An easy and accessible read that covers key milestones in the history of Western Philosophy as well as providing some key hooks to direct your subsequent forays on the philosophic corpus of literature.

Introductory philosophical texts tend to adopt one of two possible approaches: Either they give a chronological account of famous thinkers and schools, or they examine a set of topics - ethics, free will, nature of mind, etc. Craig opts for something different and rather interesting. The first three chapters are intended to be read in tandem with the works they summarize, namely Plato's "Crito", Hume's "On Miracles" and the Buddhist "King Milinda's Chariot". How many readers will actually do that is doubtful but it is an interesting idea that introduces the reader to three very different areas of philosophy. We then, somewhat more traditionally, have summary introductions to some philosophical themes and 'isms'. Next, Craig presents reviews of a very personal selection of philosophical classics. 'Idiosyncratic' may be a better word than 'personal' as it includes Darwin's "The Origin of Species" which would not normally feature in such a list. Finally, we have a description of philosophy as a discipline, asking what purposes and interests it serves. There's a lot of good things to say about this little book. It is a well-written, lively and authoritative introduction. Craig references the Hindu tradition as well as the Western and gives plenty of encouragement and advice for further study.

Awesome experience....

Have you ever been searching for something to read, picked up a text almost by chance, and then found yourself unable to put it down? For those with a philosophical bent - even those who may have studied philosophy - this is a wonderful introduction to pondering the big questions of life. It is neither shallow nor dumbed-down and encourages you to actually reflect and to think about life. Craig first advises to read slowly: the text is short (about 125 pages or so) but there is a lot packed into it. Indeed there is! He begins with 3 important questions and gives a chapter to each: What should I do? How do I know? What am I? Each question follows a text (all of which can be found online through a search engine) from Plato, from Hume, and a Buddhist text (The Questions of King Milinda). Craig outlines the arguments and raises interesting questions. The texts are classics and it helps to read them concurrently with Craig's book. This makes for an exceptionally enriching experience. The rest of Philosophy considers different philosophical topics (individuals, animals, the state, ethics, etc) and philosophers (Descartes, Hegel, Darwin, Nietzsche, etc) in an engaging manner. There are many suggestions for further reading. On balance, this is quite a "very short introduction" to philosophy. Enjoy!

Very gracious and accommodating in response to an inadvertent glitch. Well done!

My best friend majored in philosophy, and I've long admired the types of questions that occur to him when he's confronted with an issue. Now, having read this book -- as well as a couple from the bibliography -- I'm in the habit of asking myself similar questions. I recommend this book highly.

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