

APOLOGETICS

GLOSSARY

- ABSOLUTE:** That which is unconditional, uncaused and not limited by anything outside of itself.
- A POSTERIORI:** A method of thinking that goes from particulars to universals. A posteriori knowledge is based on the evidence of sense experience; such knowledge is only probable. (*Inductive*). Arriving at universal conclusions by first observing the particular facts.
- A PRIORI:** A method of thinking that goes from universals to particulars. A priori knowledge is based on the innate capacities and knowledge of the human mind, logic, the image of God in man, and general and special revelation. (*Deductive*) The conclusion follows from the already established premise.
- AXIOM:** A basic principle that cannot be deduced from other principles. The starting point from which other principles are deduced.
- CARTESIAN:** The philosophical emphasis of Descartes (1596-1650)
- EMPIRICISM:** The epistemological theory that contends that the only source of knowledge is experience (usually limited to sensation).
- EPISTEMOLOGY:** The branch of philosophy that seeks to discover the sources and limits of human knowledge. "*How We Know That We Know*"
- ESSENCE:** That which makes an object what it is in itself; the nature rather than the existence of a thing. Synonym = (*Substance*)
- ETHICS:** The branch of philosophy or Theology that attempts to discover norms by which people ought to live.
- EXISTENTIALISM:** The belief that the universe is basically irrational and that man is responsible for exerting meaning into his individual existence. Philosophical expressions are usually atheistic and pessimistic. Theological existentialists stress man's absolute dependence on God and the subjective and non-cognitive facets of religious experience.
- FIDEISM:** The exclusive reliance on irrational faith (belief without evidence); in another sense, all perspectives are fideistic as they must start somewhere, **i.e.** with presuppositions (Augustine, Pascal).
- LOGIC:** A study of the principles by which one may distinguish correct from incorrect reasoning.

METAPHYSICS:	The study of the nature and structure of being (reality). <i>Ontology</i>
MYSTICISM:	The belief that direct knowledge of God may be obtained by the human spirit separate from both empirical experience and propositional revelation; such knowledge is incommunicable.
NATURAL LAW:	A fundamental principle of right (justice) that human reason can supposedly discern, usually by intuition.
NATURAL THEOLOGY:	The attempt to know (prove) God by studying nature and relying on human reason; a posteriori and empirical in methodology.
NEO-ORTHODOXY:	A 20'th century Theological movement that denies the supernatural quality of the Bible because God cannot communicate verbally with man.
NIHILISM:	Literally "nothing"; a view that nothing is worth living for and thus human existence is meaningless.
ONTOLOGY:	The study of the structure of being (<i>Metaphysics</i>)
PARADOX:	An apparently self-contradictory assertion that is nevertheless made on the ground that to eliminate the apparent contradiction would involve denying some truth.
PRAGMATISM:	The idea that truth is determined by the practical consequences of ideas. If it works it's right (<i>Deweyism</i>).
PRESUPPOSITION:	Initial assumption(s) upon which all thought is based; difficult to become aware of or prove because the presupposition(s) stand prior to proof and become the criteria of possibility, e.g. theistic or non-theistic world view.
RATIONALISM:	The theory that reason is the source of knowledge independent of sense perceptions; A priori.
RELATIVISM:	The view that one's understanding is always limited to one's situation; particularly applicable to ethics.
SCIENTISM:	The elevation of science to the position of being the sole source of knowledge on any subject.
SCHOLASTICISM:	The name given to Medieval philosophy and Theology. Aquinas
SKEPTICISM:	The view that something cannot be known.

SUMMUM BONUM: Literally "highest good" that which is most worthy of being sought for its own sake; in Christianity = God.

SYLLOGISM: The logical form that has two premises in which the conclusion naturally follows if valid (*Deduction*)

THEISM: The belief in a personal God that is other (transcendent) than all created beings but nevertheless is in or with (immanent) all creation; a world view that says reality can only be understood if a Supreme Being is presupposed.

THEODICY: An attempt to show that the occurrence of evil in the world is consistent with belief in a God who is perfect in knowledge, power and goodness.