

# The History of Philosophy

and Course Themes

# The (Abbreviated) History of Philosophy

and Course Themes

# The (Very Abbreviated) History of Philosophy

and Course Themes

# Two Purposes of Schooling

1. To gain skills that improve the mind and quality of life.

# Two Purposes of Schooling

1. To gain skills that improve the mind and quality of life.
2. To convince others that you have done the above.

# Socrates

- The life, trial, and death of Socrates, recorded by his students Plato and Xenophon, are the first major events in the history of Western philosophy.



# Socrates

- The life, trial, and death of Socrates, recorded by his students Plato and Xenophon, are the first major events in the history of Western philosophy.
- Socrates' critical approach and reliance on rational argument is emulated by his successors

≈ 400 BC



# Plato

- Plato is known for three significant contributions to Western intellectual life:

≈ 375 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Plato

- Plato is known for three significant contributions to Western intellectual life:
  - Authored Socratic dialogs

≈ 375 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Plato

- Plato is known for three significant contributions to Western intellectual life:
  - Authored Socratic dialogs
  - Authored The Republic

≈ 375 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Plato

- Plato is known for three significant contributions to Western intellectual life:
  - Authored Socratic dialogs
  - Authored The Republic
  - Founded the Academy (from which the words 'academic', 'academia', are derived)

≈ 375 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Aristotle

- The third of the Ancient Greek “Big 3”

≈ 340 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Aristotle

- The third of the Ancient Greek “Big 3”
- Trained under Plato at the Academy, later founded his own school, the Lyceum

≈ 340 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Aristotle

- The third of the Ancient Greek “Big 3”
- Trained under Plato at the Academy, later founded his own school, the Lyceum
- Traveled extensively

≈ 340 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# Aristotle

- The third of the Ancient Greek “Big 3”
- Trained under Plato at the Academy, later founded his own school, the Lyceum
- Traveled extensively
- Writings were extraordinarily prolific

≈ 340 BC



Ancient (Greek)

# The Roman Period

- In the mid 100s BC, the Roman Republic conquered the Greek-influenced areas of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor. *Pace* specialists of Roman philosophy, it is generally an extension of Greek philosophy.

≈ 150 BC – 500 AD



Ancient (Roman)

# The Roman Period

- Some important figures of the Roman period include:
  - Cicero, an orator and statesman
  - Varro, an important scholar and writer
  - Seneca, an imperial advisor and Stoic Philosopher
  - Marcus Aurelius, a particularly intellectual emperor
  - Boethius, last major intellectual figure of antiquity

≈ 150 BC – 500 AD



Ancient (Roman)

# The Medieval Period

- One reasonably way of demarcating the difference between the ancient and medieval periods in philosophy is the influence of Christianity.

≈ 400 AD (Augustine)



# The Medieval Period

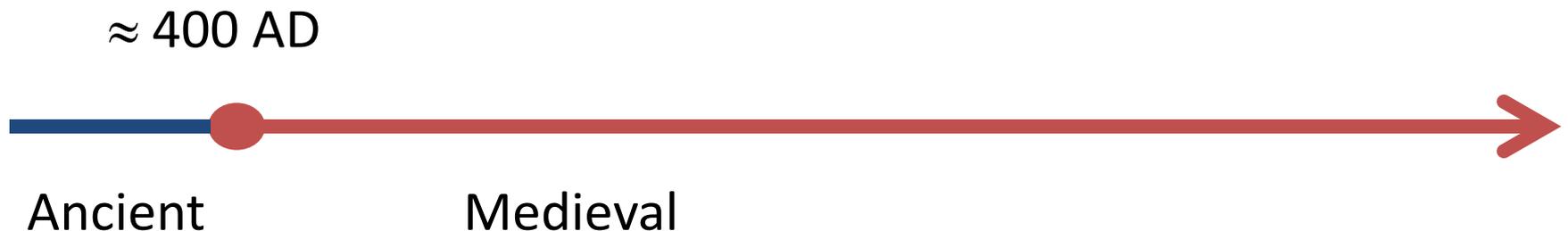
- One reasonably way of demarcating the difference between the ancient and medieval periods in philosophy is the influence of Christianity.
- The first of these figures is Augustine of Hippo, one of the important figures in early Roman Christian thought.

≈ 400 AD (Augustine)



# The Early Medieval “Dark Ages”

- Certainly, more was going on in Europe during the “Dark Ages” (about 500-1000 AD) than is often assumed.



# The Early Medieval “Dark Ages”

- Certainly, more was going on in Europe during the “Dark Ages” (about 500-1000 AD) than is often assumed.
- However, low levels of trade and communication in Europe mean that European scholars were less aware of each others’ doings, many old works were lost, and less material survives from this period.

≈ 400 AD

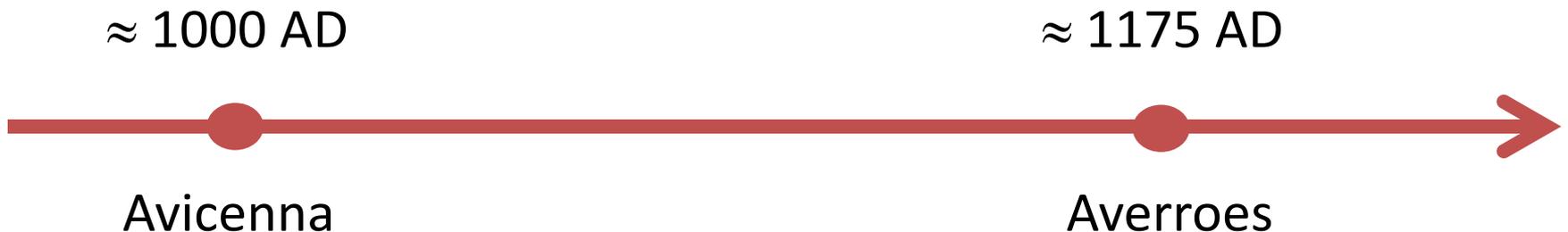


Ancient

Medieval

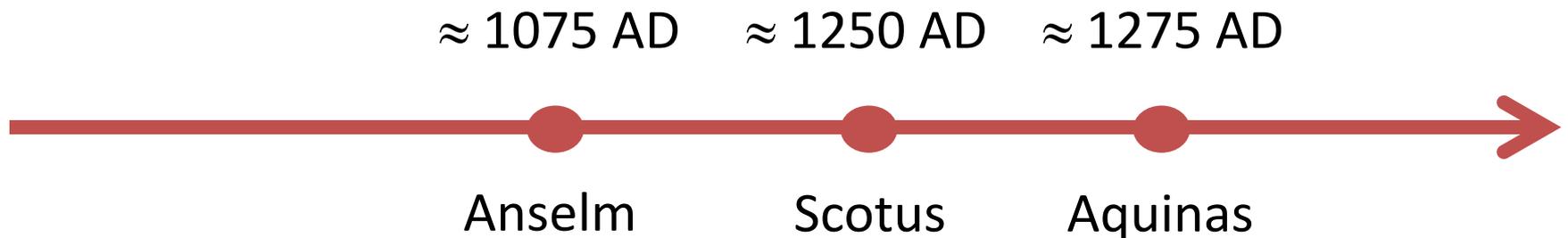
# The Islamic Golden Age

- Though much was lost in Europe during the early Medieval period, much was preserved and advanced under the Abbasid caliphates (about 800 to 1250)
- Ibn Cenna (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) were important contributors to philosophical thought in the later middle ages.



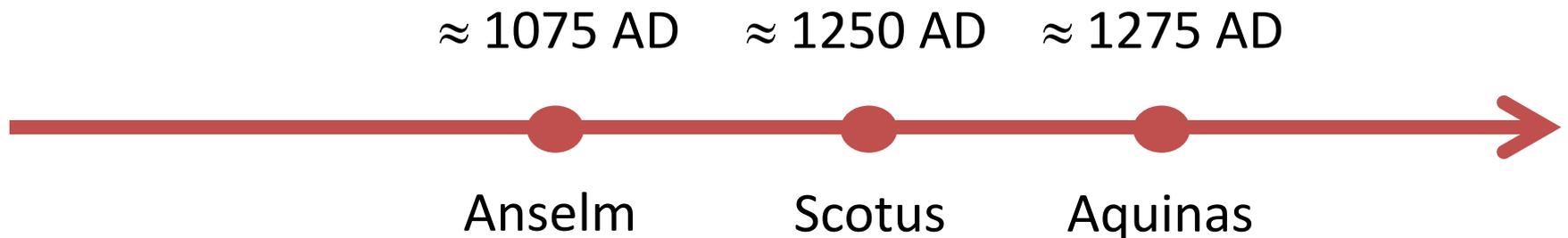
# The Intellectual Saints of the High Middle Ages

- Increasing European trade and communication with Islamic scholarship reintroduced a wealth of writings from the ancient world (including Aristotle) and much new knowledge as well.



# The Intellectual Saints of the High Middle Ages

- Increasing European trade and communication with Islamic scholarship reintroduced a wealth of writings from the ancient world (including Aristotle) and much new knowledge as well.
- This led to a resurgence of scholarly activity in Europe, assisted by the growth of monastic life.



# The Modern Period

- The invention of the printing press in 1450 changed the world, philosophy included.

1450 AD



Modern Period

# The Modern Period

- The invention of the printing press in 1450 changed the world, philosophy included.
- Philosophy is so old that the “Modern” period runs from about 1500 to 1800.

1450 AD



Modern Period

# The Modern Period

- The invention of the printing press in 1450 changed the world, philosophy included.
- Philosophy is so old that the “Modern” period runs from about 1500 to 1800.
- From here is becomes more difficult to identify only a few important figures

1450 AD



Modern Period

# The Modern Period

- It is during the modern period that a great many significant ideas that are now considered common sense were first proposed and argued.

1450 AD



Modern Period

# The Modern Period

- It is during the modern period that a great many significant ideas that are now considered common sense were first proposed and argued.
- Also, the modern period spurred the application of reason to ever more areas of life.

1450 AD



Modern Period

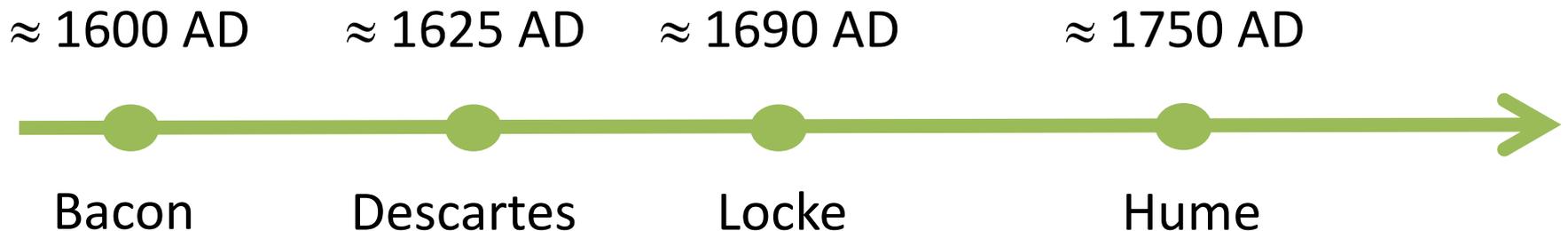
# Early Modern Humanism

- One of the distinguishing features of the Modern Period is an increasing focus on secular (non-church) issues and perspectives.



# Early Modern Science

- The Modern Period also saw the rise of a focus on observation, experiment, and mathematical modeling of the world, which is the genesis of modern science.
- The thinkers responsible for developing this worldview are known as Empiricists



# Political Innovation

- The Modern Period saw the influence of intellectuals on political life expand, and saw dramatic political reform.



# New Fields of Study

- The Modern Period onward saw a profusion of new fields of study that branched off of philosophy:
  - Physics, Newton (c1660)
  - Probability/Statistics, Pascal (c1640)
  - Chemistry, Boyle (c1670)
  - Calculus/Computing, Leibniz (c1680)
  - Economics, Smith (1776)

1800



# 19<sup>th</sup> Century

1800



19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

# 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- The last philosopher of the Modern Period is generally held to be Kant, who died in 1804.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> century was in many ways a continuation of the work begun in the Modern Period.

1800



19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

# Revolutions in Ethics

- Kantian Deontology
- Utilitarianism: Bentham, Mill (c1810, c1830)

1800



19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

# More new fields:

- Biology, Darwin (1860)
- Linguistics, de Saussure (c1890)
- Sociology, Weber (c1900)

1900



# 20<sup>th</sup> Century

1900



20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a widening split between philosophy as it was done in French and German speaking Europe and in the English speaking world (UK, US, Canada, Australia).

1900



20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Continental: Characterized by a reaction against philosophy of the modern period (post-modern philosophy), social criticism, and existentialism.
- Analytic: Characterized by rigorous logical and otherwise formal analysis of traditional philosophical topics

1900



20<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy

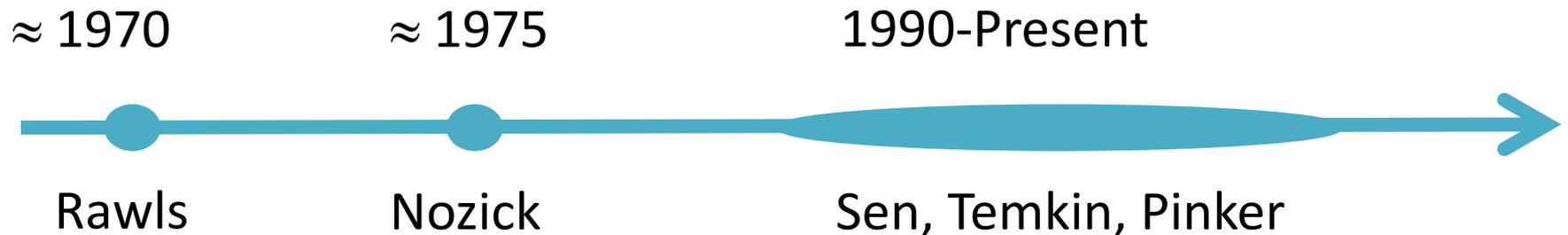
# The Analytic Philosophers

- The 20<sup>th</sup> century analytic movement brought advances to logic, mathematics, the philosophy of mind, and many other areas of metaphysics and epistemology.



# Reason and Analysis in Value Theory

- Advances in economics, game theory, the formal modeling of behavior with computers, and rational choice theory had a large influence on social and political philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



# Alive or Only Recently Dead

- Many of our readings are from folks who are either still alive, or only recently dead.



Contemporary

# Alive or Only Recently Dead

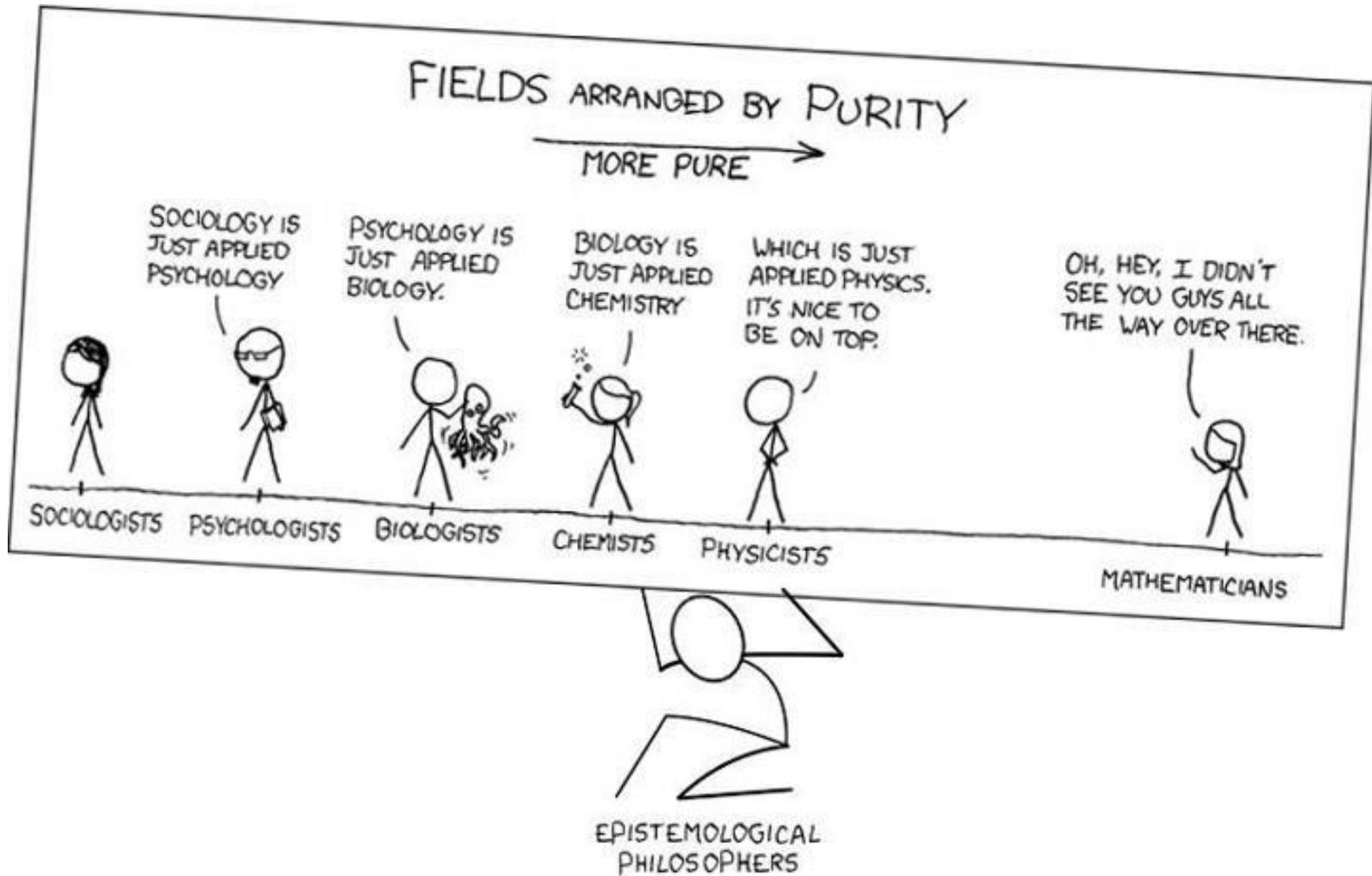
- Many of our readings are from folks who are either still alive, or only recently dead.
- It is up to historians to name whatever period we are currently in. We simply call it “contemporary”.



Contemporary

# **THEMES OF THE COURSE**

# Philosophical Foundations

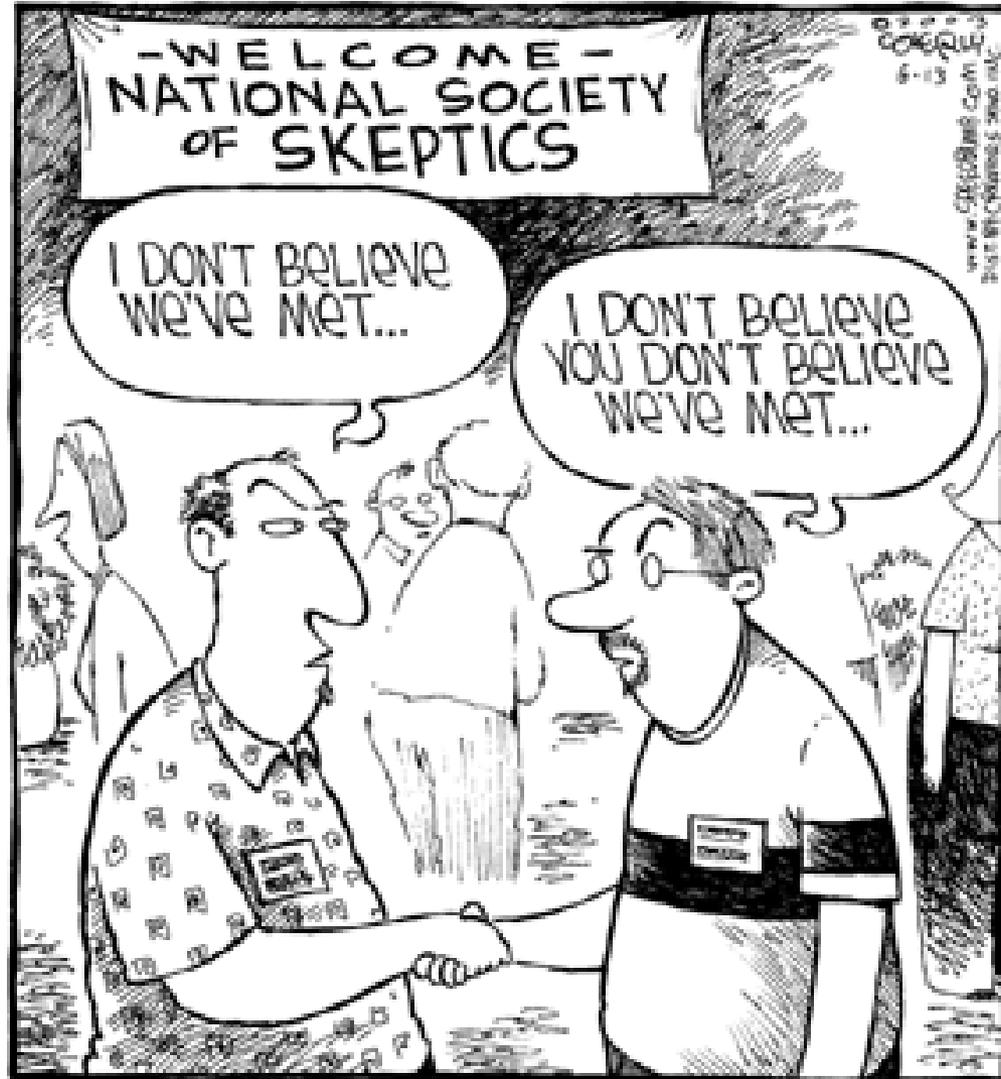


# Philosophical Foundations

- Every field of study contains philosophical questions (many of them branched off of philosophy itself).
- Generally, practitioners in those fields do not spend much time being aware of this fact.

# Skepticism

Copyright © 2003 Creators Syndicate, Inc.



# Skepticism

- Skepticism isn't doubt for the sake of doubt, it's a systematic doubt that is motivated by the realization that if our basic assumptions are not correct, then what we base on those assumptions will not be correct either.

# The Making of the Current World

- Many of the notions that we currently view as obvious had to be argued for.
- These arguments often came from philosophers, largely during the Modern Period.

# There's always more...

- What you have seen today is a radical simplification that leaves out much complexity.
- And so is what you will see tomorrow...
- Complexity in philosophy is fractal. Each piece of a complex idea is itself complex.

# Reason

- [https://www.ted.com/talks/steven\\_pinker\\_and\\_rebecca\\_newberger\\_goldstein\\_the\\_long\\_reach\\_of\\_reason?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/steven_pinker_and_rebecca_newberger_goldstein_the_long_reach_of_reason?language=en)