

1. Introduction

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I. What is philosophy?

Goal: figure out how to engage productively with seemingly-intractable questions.

Methods: clarifying concepts, using thought experiments, and examining *arguments*.

II. Arguments

A **proposition** is a claim that is either true or false.

An **argument** consists of a string propositions (*premises*) followed by another proposition (*conclusion*).

An argument is **valid** if it's impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false.

An argument is **sound** if it's valid and the premises are true.

An argument is **potentially persuasive** if a reasonable person could come to accept the conclusion on the basis of the premises.

Example 1:

P1. If you always ought to brake for animals, then God exists.
C. Therefore, God exists.

'I was born in July.' ✓ (true)
'I was born in August' ✓ (false)
'Go Steelers!' ×
'I'm a Steelers fan.' ✓
'Please close the door.' ×
'I'd prefer the door closed.' ✓

We mean *impossible*.

Valid? Sound? Potentially Persuasive?

Example 2:

P1. If you always ought to brake for animals, then God exists.
P2. You always ought to brake for animals.
C. Therefore, God exists.

Valid? Sound? Potentially Persuasive?

Example 3:

P1. God exists.
C. Therefore, God exists.

Valid? Sound? Potentially Persuasive?

Example 4:

P1. Everything has a cause.
P2. If the universe has a cause, then God exists.
C. Therefore, God exists.

Valid? Sound? Potentially Persuasive?