

Chapter 6: Connecting to Metaphysics

BIG IDEAS

Background

The inquiry in this chapter, considering arguments for theism, helps to set up the discussion of determinism and freedom in Chapter 7 (SE pp. 178-179), divine command and natural law ethics in Chapter 8 (SE pp. 199-201), and revelation or inspiration as a way of knowing in Chapters 10 and 12 (SE pp. 261, 308-309). It also builds upon the presentation of the Agent Intellect in Chapter 5 (SE p. 113). The question of intelligent design (creationism) will come up in Unit 5 (SE pp. 348-351). These metaphysical inquiries also crop up in the discussion of political philosophy, with examination of natural law (Aquinas, SE pp. 391, 437), as well as aesthetics, with the examination of beauty in relation to divine creation (St. Augustine, SE p. 481). The existential theme at the end of the chapter also enters into questions of relativism and free will in ethics (SE pp. 163-166, 180).

About Chapter 6

The question of whether there is a God can be approached through several classical and modern arguments, outlined in the opening section of this chapter. Students are engaged in a four (to six)-corners debate in order to learn more about the different positions. Discussion then moves to various explanations of the meaning of life, again exploring classical and modern philosophical theories.

Features

In this chapter, the following features are included to help students make personal connections and/or deepen their understanding of metaphysics. You may use all or some of these features as explained in the table that follows.

- There are three standard arguments for the existence of God: the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, and the argument from design. (SE pp. 136-142)
- Analogies are useful tools of thought, but can misrepresent the conditions for similarity. (SE p.143)
- Arguments for atheism include the problem of evil and naturalistic arguments. (SE pp. 144-148)
- Emmanuel Levinas argues that ethics could be a *first philosophy*. (SE p. 149)
- Theories about the meaning of life include cynicism, hedonism, stoicism, epicureanism, nihilism, and atheistic and theistic existentialism. (SE pp. 150-151)
- The study of metaphysics can be a source of consolation in life or preparation for death. (SE p. 152)
- Theories about the meaning of life revolve around pleasure, pessimism, faith, and existential self-determinism. (SE pp.151-155)

Feature	Student Textbook Page(s)	Opportunity for Assessment	Strategies for Classroom Use
Philosophical Reasoning in Context	143	Ask students to find a film clip demonstrating the problem in real life, as in the media (political speeches, science reports, etc.)	Watch the following clips (available on YouTube): False Analogy Fallacy Daniel Dennett on William Lane Craig Ask if theists are using faulty analogy in arguing for intelligent design. (see also SE p. 349).
Making Connections	149	Consider a journal entry (BLM J) on Levinas, using questions 1-3 on SE p. 149 as prompts.	To what extent is Levinas' emphasis on ethical relations with the Other a direct outcome of this life history? See the following additional resources: http://www.egs.edu/library/emmanuel-levinas/biography/http://mythosandlogos.com/Levinas.html
Philosophy in Everyday Life	152	Have students submit a blog post or YouTube clip that discusses hardship. Conduct a self and/or peer evaluation of the posts or clips.	Watch Eckhart Tolle speak about the key teachings of Epictetus (clip available on YouTube): The Wisdom of Epictetus Watch the following clip of a university student discussing one of Epictetus' works (available on YouTube). Or, create a blog discussion group to share ideas on how to handle suffering. "The Enchiridion" by Epictetus A reading of <i>Discourses of Epictetus</i> is available on YouTube as well: Discourses of Epictetus: Book 1: Chapters 1-2

Learning Goal

Students familiarize themselves with the major systems of thought about the presence or absence of a divine being, investigating various proofs and rebuttals developed throughout history and across many cultures.

Teaching Plan 1 (SE pp. 134-148)

Activity Description

Reading about the proofs for the existence of God and arguments for atheism, students will use comparison charts (BLM C) and argument builders (BLM B and BLM D) to form or shore up their own opinion. They will then enter into a four (to six)-corners debate, discussing the rationales for theism/monotheism, deism, polytheism, pantheism/panentheism, atheism, and agnosticism (see SE pp. 136-137).

Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes assessment opportunities for selected chapter questions, which are relevant to this teaching plan.

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions
Assessment for Learning	Paragraph writing; compare and contrast; hypothetical situation		1-4, SE p. 142
Assessment as Learning	Personal reflection	SE p. 143	
Assessment for Learning	Evaluation and counter-argument; applications		1-4, SE p. 148

Timing

225 minutes
(three 75-minute classes)

Learning Skills Focus

- Responsibility
- Collaboration
- Independent work
- Organization
- Self-regulation
- Initiative

Resources Needed

Make copies of these Blackline Masters:

- BLM 4.5 Unit 2 Culminating Activity: Metaphysical News Report
- BLM B Pro/Con List: Points for Debates and Essays
- BLM C Comparison Chart
- BLM D Argument Builder
- BLM E Learning Skills Tracking Sheet
- BLM G Debate Assessment Rubric
- BLM J Journal Writing Guide

Possible Assessment of Learning Task

Journal opportunity (see BLM J) for students to discuss where they stand in the four (to six)-corners debate on theism, atheism, polytheism, etc.

Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Task/Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/Self/Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Comparing arguments for God	Knowledge	For	Comparison chart	Teacher	Independent work; organization	136-142	BLM C
Logical fallacies: false analogy	Application	As	Small group discussion	Self; peer	Collaboration	143	

continued

Task/Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/Self/Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Comparing arguments for atheism	Knowledge	For	Comparison chart	Teacher	Independent work; organization	146-148	BLM C
Locating class members in schools of thought	Knowledge; Thinking; Communication; Application	For	Four (to six)-corners debate	Teacher	Initiative; responsibility	136-137	BLM B BLM D BLM G
Progress check: culminating activity	Learning skills and targeting for all four categories	As	Interview/consultation	Teacher	Responsibility; independent work; organization		BLM E BLM 4.5

Prior Learning Needed

Basic familiarity with world religions is helpful here, including terms such as *monotheist religions*. For some students, their familiarity or identification with one religion may make it difficult to see the value in others; additionally, there is the danger of reducing them all to one, in the spirit of ecumenicalism.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Fractal geometry is shown in the Chapter Opener (SE pp. 134-135), raising the question of intricate design or random creation in nature. See also the connection between mathematics and art (SE p. 525), an element in the formalist theory of beauty (SE pp. 477, 499). For a fascinating examination of this topic of self-similarity in design, and paradoxes of the infinity of a coastline (cf. Zeno's arrow, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/>), see the following clip (available on YouTube):

NOVA | Hunting the Hidden Dimension

2. Three standard arguments for the existence of God: As a class, use one side of the comparison chart (BLM C) to take notes on the ontological argument, the cosmological argument, and the argument from design (SE pp. 136-142). Leave room on the opposite side for arguments for atheism. This note taking will be helpful in the debate to follow, as well as the unit test at the end of the chapter.

Here are some useful online resources related to the question of whether God exists. Consider adding any new terms to the word wall.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/ont-arg/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments/>

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/theistic-proofs/the-ontological-argument/st-anselms-ontological-argument/>

http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_aquinas.htm

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/>

http://www.trinity.edu/cbrown/intro/cosmological_argument.html

<http://www.saintaquinas.com/philosophy.html>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/design/>

<http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/lphilreadingpaley.pdf>

<http://www.positiveatheism.org/faq/design.htm>

Video resources (all available on YouTube):

Ontological Argument

5 Classic Proofs For The Existence of God

Western Philosophy Documentary Section [2/3] part 2/5

Western Philosophy Documentary Section [2/3] part 3/5

3. The Fallacy of Faulty Analogy (SE p. 143): Is it a false analogy to equate the laws of nature with God? That was Hume's only use of the word *God* (see SE p. 350), but he was an atheist. Could a theist make the equation in order to try to show God exists? Discuss the following video clips (available on YouTube) in small groups, seeing if the fallacy applies:

Einstein on God

Monty Python She's A Witch!

4. Reasons for adopting atheism: Use the other side of the comparison chart (BLM C) to take notes on the problem of accounting for evil and naturalistic arguments such as insufficient evidence (SE pp. 146-148). This is also preparation for the debate and unit test.

Acc The following online resources are to assist in comprehension or extension of learning. Consider adding any new terms to the word wall.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/atheism-agnosticism/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume-religion/>

<http://www.philosophyofreligion.info/arguments-for-atheism/>

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386685/student_view0/chapter6/philosophy_web_resources.html

The following video resources are available on YouTube:

Bertrand Russell on God (1959)

How Did You Lose Your Religion?

Ricky Gervais on Atheism

23. How to live given the certainty of death

God Strikes Back (3/5) - Richard Dawkins

5. Four (to six)-corners debate on theism/monotheism, deism, polytheism, pantheism/panentheism, atheism, and agnosticism (see SE pp. 136-137). Students may use the BLMs for points for debate (BLM B) or argument builder (BLM D) to prepare their arguments for the position they most identify with. Have students go to the table or area they are most drawn to and collectively develop their rationale, being respectful of each other's opinions. Some may be unsure which group to join, and be there to test the fit rather than proclaim their firm identity as a theist or polytheist, etc. Either launch right into a class discussion or have one person from each table rotate to another table, representing *the Other* in Levinas' terms (see SE p. 149). This might generate more understanding of different positions, along the lines of travel experience. After several rotations, launch the whole-class discussion. BLM G could be used to assess the debate.

DI Students could write up a newspaper-style account of the debate, or tape a radio/television broadcast that reports on the diversity of views in the class or school. A collage could also be created to illustrate the diversity of stances.

6. Check in with students about their progress on the culminating activity (see BLM E and BLMs 4.5 and 4.6).

Acc If students are not on track, consider breaking down the assignment and setting small goals or steps and conducting regular check-ins.

DI To help engage any student who is not showing interest in the project, consider an alternate assignment of equal difficulty but better suited to his or her interests.

7. Remind students of the upcoming unit test on metaphysics (short-answer format, calling for use of terms and examples or arguments drawn from different schools of thought).

Acc Help students check their glossaries, or have them refer to the word wall.

Text Answers

Page 142: Section questions

1. See the key-terms list on SE p. 134. This paragraph-writing exercise could be done as formative preparation (*for learning*) prior to the summative unit test (*of learning*; see BLM 6.1).
2. See the Kalam Cosmological Argument, advanced by William Lane Craig (who is discussed on SE p. 170), which is a modern variant on the original from Aquinas. See also Richard Dawkins' critique of this new version of the argument for a God at the following Web link:

<http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/cosmological-argument.htm>

The following video clip related to the Kalam Cosmological Argument is available on YouTube:

Debunking the Kalam Cosmological Argument of William Lane Craig

3. A good proof has logical consistency (i.e., it is sound or valid as opposed to having circular reasoning) and uses sophisticated ways of handling evidence or testing truth claims. See "Dissecting an Argument Using Informal Logic" on SE p. 44. Good proofs also avoid the four common errors in reasoning known as Bacon's *idols of the mind* (see SE pp. 37-38). See also the discussion of the principle of sufficient reason (SE p. 25).
4. The effect might hinge on whether there is a final judgement or selective admittance to a heaven or blessed afterlife. If not, then behaviour might not be affected by proof of a God that simply started the world but leaves it to run itself. Pascal's Wager offers the advice that we had best behave as though there is a God, in case we do face final judgment for our life here on Earth. Even some existentialists could agree with this, so long as they are choosing to adopt this moral code instead of having it thrust upon them through indoctrination or intimidation. Many atheists live by the same moral code as theists and polytheists.

Page 143: Philosophical Reasoning in Context

The situation presented here, of knowing that others are having thoughts similar to our own, is called *the other minds problem*. A famous example from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is how we know someone else is experiencing toothache. We don't have to have access to their inner feelings or thoughts, but we can participate in the public exchange of pain behaviour and the language-games of toothache that grant us access to these otherwise private events. The danger of saying we cannot access these inner states is that it leads to *solipsism*, or people being seen (literally) as "souls alone," and ultimately to an absurd idea of a private language (which nobody else could understand). When we express sympathy for someone in pain, we are assuming that their state is analogous to one we have endured, and we make logical inferences as to someone's state from their facial expressions, body language and utterances of pain. We also get

pretty good at detecting pretence. See SE p. 302 for the epistemological question of how we know or judge when a child is really sick and when he or she is faking.

Page 148: Section questions

1. Answers will vary depending on the argument chosen. For example, the *perceiver relativity argument* (SE p. 146) should be entertained here, as it suggests that our petty concerns may not feature largely in the mind of a Supreme Being, any more than we would worry greatly about the quality of life among the ants living in our cupboards or the billions of micro-organisms that live within or on our bodies (comprising most of our mass).
2. Some may question how a benevolent and all-knowing God could allow certain things to happen, such as child abuse or rape, or even poverty amidst affluence in our society. How can these things be part of divine plan, or be considered good? Someone else might counter that we do not see the complete chain of interactions, including how good sometimes comes from the misfortune of others. As Foucault notes in his lecture series *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, early Christian thinkers came to see life as a test; enduring trials and tribulations in this life may be seen as preparation for a better life in the hereafter.
3. See the Stephen Hawking margin quote on SE p. 348, from *A Brief History of Time*, referring to his audience with the Pope on the question of whether the Big Bang theory corroborates the account of creation given in the Book of Genesis. In his cosmology, Hawking moved away from a model of a single creation event, as does cosmic string theory with its oscillations of creation through colliding membranes (see SE p. 366). See also the following video clips, available on YouTube:

Stephen Hawking on God

Richard Feynman on God

4. The problem of evil is most often used to show that bad things happen even with a God: How can morals rest on the presence of a God that turns away from horrible events like genocide, rape, murder, terrorism, torture, etc.? The argument that morality comes from God revolves around the deliverance of divine mandates, such as Moses coming down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments. *The New York Times'* article "Morals Without God?" draws on evidence from primate behavior:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/morals-without-god/>

See also The Human Spark series for studies on social skills such as cooperation or voluntarism among preverbal children and chimpanzees. The following clip is available on YouTube:

The Human Spark | So Human, So Chimp | Chimps vs. Kids | PBS

YouTube clips that explore morality and God should be carefully screened, as many are very strong in their denunciation of the opposing argument.

Teaching Plan 2 (SE pp. 149-157)

Activity Description

Opening with critical inquiry about whether metaphysics or ethics is the first philosophy, students enter into consideration of different explanations of human purpose or meaning in life. Here, they encounter arguments that set up pleasure as the ultimate goal and questions about whether the certainty of death is cause for optimism or pessimism. Finding personal connections to some of the theories offered is the goal, as well as using a variety of means for students to creatively express their views.

The topics discussed here are sensitive issues, and students may be in crisis over their answers (or lack thereof) to perplexing questions about the meaning of life and death. It might be advisable to subtly test the waters (e.g., consult colleagues) and see if anyone in the class has recently or traumatically dealt with death (especially suicide) in their family or other relations. Pets are also a touchstone to strong emotions.

Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes assessment opportunities for selected chapter questions, including questions in the Chapter Review, which are relevant to this teaching plan.

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions	Chapter Review Questions
Assessment as Learning	Reflection and imaginary response/encounter	1-3, SE p. 149		
Assessment as Learning	Redescription and application to students' own lives	1-2, SE p. 152		
Assessment for Learning	Critical thinking and problem solving		1 and 3, SE p. 155	
Assessment as Learning	Personal viewpoint		2, SE p. 155	
Assessment as Learning	Applications to students' own lives			1-3, 14, 16-18, SE pp. 156-157
Assessment for Learning	Compare and contrast; distinguishing views; conducting further research			4-13, 15, SE pp. 156-157

Resources Needed

Make copies of these Blackline Masters:

- BLM 6.1 Unit 2: Metaphysics Test
- BLM C Comparison Chart
- BLM J Journal Writing Guide

Possible Assessment of Learning Task

Unit test, short-answer format (BLM 6.1). The meaning of life is a good journal topic, if written from the student's perspective instead of merely summarizing other thinkers (see BLM J).

Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Learning Goal

Students will investigate many schools of thought on what constitutes the good life or what defines the meaning of life. They will work to locate their own views within the variety of explanations offered by philosophers across time, including answers to how we cope with hardship and face death.

Timing

225 minutes
(three 75-minute classes)

Learning Skills Focus

- Responsibility
- Collaboration
- Independent work
- Organization
- Self-regulation
- Initiative

Task/Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/Self/Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
First philosophy	Thinking	As	Interpreting quotes; literacy connections	Self; peer	Independent work; collaboration	149	
Exploring theories on the meaning of life	Knowledge; Thinking; Communication	As (self-reflection) and For (unit test preparation)	Creative expression: mixed media	Self	Independent work; initiative	150-155	
Facing death	Application; Communication	As	Creative expression: mixed media	Self	Initiative	152	

Prior Learning Needed

Some students may be familiar with existentialism from their English studies. Ask them to share what they already know about Sartre and Camus, or even existential films from directors like Ingmar Bergman or Woody Allen.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Read the feature on Emmanuel Levinas and his ethics of alterity (Otherness) as the first philosophy, ahead of metaphysics as a foundation for philosophy (SE p. 149). The notion that metaphysics is the first philosophy goes back to Aristotle. In his books *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, he presents a three-part system of knowledge, explaining how we make inductive and deductive conclusions and how the theoretical sciences relate to the practical and technical arts (see SE p. 295). One way of understanding this is through the ancient Greek definition of philosophy as “the study of things human and divine” (SE p. 3), found in Plato’s *The Republic* (Book 6) and in Cicero and Seneca, and among later thinkers in the New Academy and Stoa. From this perspective, Levinas is performing a dramatic reversal, bringing up the human side of the equation that may have been overlooked in comparison to the cosmological and scientific pursuits of knowledge. Coming to us after the Holocaust of the twentieth century, Levinas puts human encounters with each other at the centre of his philosophical inquiry. Ask students to respond in writing to the following quote from Levinas. Recall from Chapters 4 and 5 that identity and difference are fundamental concepts of metaphysics, from the pre-Socratic Parmenides (monism) to twentieth-century metaphysicians like Heidegger (reclaiming the topic of Being) and Strawson (using analytic means to clarify the topic).

“A calling into question of the Same--which cannot occur within the egoistic spontaneity of the Same--is brought about by the Other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity as ethics. Metaphysics, transcendence, the welcoming of the Other by the Same, of the Other by Me, is concretely produced as the calling into question of the Same by the Other, that is, as the ethics that accomplishes the critical essence of knowledge.” (Levinas, p. 33).

In Levinas' theory, we learn about ourselves and our own limits from the encounter with the Other. Encourage students to make literacy connections by discussing how Heidegger points out that one of the earliest meanings of the Greek word *ethics*, as *ethos* or *abode* or *home range*. Also discuss that *nomos*, meaning *custom*, comes from the Greek *nemos*, or *pasture*; compare this with *habit* and *habitat* in German and English (See BLM 8.2 on virtue ethics). The Latin root of *curiosity*, *cura*, is also connected to *curate* and *cure*, as in caring for collections or caring for other persons; compare this with the Greek *hospis*, meaning *hospitality* and *hospital*.). José Ortega y Gasset builds upon this Heideggerian theme in his book *Some Lessons In Metaphysics*. There is a trade-off between fear and attraction for what is unfamiliar or contrary. The Latin root of the word *foreign* is the same as in *forest*: *foranus*, with which we associate the boogeyman, wolves and other scary creatures. See the feature on critical awakening of subjects in Unit 6 (see SE p. 459) for an extension of this theme, showing how dialogue and dialectical struggle can bring about self-consciousness and liberation.

2. The Meaning of Life (SE p.150): In this section of the chapter, students are encouraged to find personal connections with some of the theories presented regarding the end of life or life goals.

DI Creative means of expression should be encouraged to help students explore these topics more deeply. Some examples could include writing lyrics, painting a triptych, making a comic strip, doing a storyboard for an original film scene or deconstructing one that has powerful meaning for the student as being emblematic of the meaning of life; see the scene of the plastic bag blowing in the wind in the film *American Beauty* (available on YouTube):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3OhrWr5lzk>

Links can also be made to the themes of artificial intelligence and consciousness explored in Chapter 5. Watch some clips from the film *Blade Runner*, in which Harrison Ford's character (possibly a replicant himself) finds romance with one of the simulated life forms, the replicants he hunts).

Blade Runner theatrical trailer

Original Ending of Blade Runner

Next, discuss different schools of thought on the meaning of life. The student textbook introduces students to classical and modern theories, including cynicism, hedonism, stoicism, epicureanism, nihilism, and atheistic and theistic existentialism (SE pp. 150-151). To complement this discussion, watch the following clip (available on YouTube) of popular British philosopher A.C. Grayling discussing the importance of making your own choices, citing Socrates on the merits of living the examined life.

AC Grayling: The Unconsidered Life

Acc For more background about the schools of thought, see the following resources (available on YouTube):

On Being a Stoic: A Documentary

Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness - Epicurus on Happiness

Albert Camus on Nihilism

3. After introducing the schools of thought, have students re-examine these approaches through thematic lenses. The different approaches are categorized as follows: pleasure, pessimism, faith, and existential self-determination (SE pp. 151-155).

Pleasure (SE p. 151) is connected to the discussion of stoicism versus hedonism in the "Philosophy in Everyday Life" feature (SE p. 152). To encourage reading of

primary documents, refer students to the works of Epictetus (see *Discourses of Epictetus* and *The Enchiridion*, available online at the following Web link:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Epictetus.html>

For more about pessimism and the digital material we leave behind when we die, see the article “The Last Word: Your Immortal Cybersoul” (see also Chapter 5, pp. 118-119):

<http://theweek.com/article/index/211288/the-last-word-your-immortal-cybersoul>

Acc Aristippus’ writings are no longer extant. What has survived of his ideas has been passed down through fragments quoted or paraphrased in other philosophers’ works, such as those of Plato and Aristotle. See the following sources for background on Epictetus (a Stoic) and, especially, Aristippus (a Cyrenaic hedonist):

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epictetus/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/epictetu/>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/aristip/>

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07187a.htm>

<http://www.third-millennium-library.com/readinghall/Science/Philosophy/HISTORY/23-Aristippus.html>

Stoically responding to the doctor’s counsel with acceptance of one’s fate, or hedonistically maximizing pleasure while one’s diminishing lifetime permits, draws us into metaphysics as consolation in life and preparation for death. Another response to hardship and death is pessimism, which some would say is realism. An old saying goes “The optimist believes this is the best of all possible worlds. The pessimist fears that is true.” Leibniz wrote in an optimistic vein about this being the best of all possible worlds, to which Voltaire responded satirically with a series of misadventures in his novel *Candide*. See a satirical take on syllogistic reasoning in this Broadway version:

Candide - 03 Best of all possible worlds

DI Offer a creative representation of the meaning of death (e.g., collage, poem, comic strip, lyrics, etc.). The clip below (available on YouTube) presents a humorous response to the question of whether there is meaning and purpose in life and death:

Monty Python-The Meaning of Life-Death

Acc See the following additional resources (available on YouTube) on pessimism (SE p. 153):

Tim Ferriss - Google IO Ignite - Practical Pessimism

Alain De Botton- Why Pessimism is Healthy and our Modern World is Not

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/alain_de_botton_a_kinder_gentler_philosophy_of_success.html

Schopenhauer - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary

Wittgenstein - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary (Part 1 of 2)

Wittgenstein - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary (Part 2 of 2)

The following resources (available on YouTube) are from the Alain de Botton documentary series:

Philosophy - A Guide to Happiness: Nietzsche on Hardship

Philosophy - A Guide to Happiness: Schopenhauer on Love

Philosophy - A Guide to Happiness: Socrates on Self-Confidence

4. Next, discuss the question of whether there is life after death. The following video clips (available on YouTube) of lectures by Professor Shelly Kagan at Yale University, as well as the final two clips with Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Carl Jung, investigate the topic through classical and modern philosophy and psychology:

1. Course introduction
 4. Introduction to Plato's *Phaedo*; Arguments for the existence of the soul, Part II
 7. Plato, Part II: Arguments for the immortality of the soul
 8. Plato, Part III: Arguments for the immortality of the soul (cont.)
 9. Plato, Part IV: Arguments for the immortality of the soul (cont.)
 10. Personal identity, Part I: Identity across space and time and the soul theory
 23. How to live given the certainty of death
 25. Suicide, Part II: Deciding under uncertainty
- Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennet Discuss the Meaning of Life and Death
Carl Jung speaks about Death

The topic of faith (SE p. 154) brings Russian novelist Tolstoy into the discussion (Figure 6-12). He also appears in Unit 7, in relation to the expressionist theory of art (see SE p. 501). Tolstoy created rural utopian communities to realize his ideas on the meaning of life. The following video clip (available on YouTube) is a reading of one of Tolstoy's writings on how to live:

Leo Tolstoy: What Men Live By and Other Tales

"God Sees the Truth, But Waits" is one of Tolstoy's writings that addresses the problem of evil. The following video clip (available on YouTube) is the trailer for a film based on this work:

God Sees the Truth but Waits Trailer

5. Existentialism (SE p. 155) introduces the question of self-determination and self-stylization in life, connecting to moral responsibility in ethics (see SE p. 180). Are we "condemned to freedom," as Sartre said in *Being and Nothingness* (see below)? See Rob Harle's summary of Sartre's definition of freedom online at

<http://www.nimbinaustralia.com/zenwatt/condemnedtobefree.html>.

Have students "test their free will" using these online resources:

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386685/student_view0/chapter3/philosophy_web_resources.html#free_will

<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/bb/freewill1.html>

Acc The following resource may be helpful for students who need more information about Sartre and existentialism:

http://maverickphilosopher.typepad.com/maverick_philosopher/2009/11/sartres-existentialism-and-the-meaning-of-life-part-one.html

The following video clips related to Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, existentialism, and Kierkegaard are available on YouTube:

Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir Screener

The Life & Time of Simone de Beauvoir Part 1

The Life & Time of Simone De Beauvoir Part 2

Kierkegaard - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary (Part 1 of 2)

Kierkegaard - Sea of Faith - BBC documentary (Part 2 of 2)

6. Journal writing: Personal reflections on the meaning of life (see BLM J). To stimulate reflection, connecting with the earlier discussion of external views on human suffering (SE p. 146), watch the video clips listed below (available on YouTube), which give a cosmic perspective. Ask students to consider these questions: Where do we fit into the universe? How important are our concerns in the grand scheme of things?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HX0mQ0YqK0s&feature=related>

The Detailed Universe: This will Blow Your Mind.

This Is Mind Blowing!

zoom out on life for a while, see how small size we are on earth

Perspective: Universal Scale

How Small is Earth?

Also try searching for *Hubble deep field images* on Google Images for more views of deep space.

7. Create your own set of student testimonies (in writing, audio, or comic-strip format) on what philosophy has to offer them on the existence of God or meaning of life. Try these prompts to get students thinking: Would you have been any worse off if we had not covered this unit in the course? Can you address ethics and epistemology, the other core units, without some grounding in metaphysics? See also the “Making Connections” feature on SE p. 459 for an example of how metaphysics (e.g., ideas like those in the “Allegory of the Cave” on SE pp. 11-12) enters into social change and liberation movements.

8. Prepare for the unit test by reviewing the word wall and the comparison charts created for this chapter, then conduct the Unit 2: Metaphysics test (BLM 6.1). Take up exemplary answers after the test is marked.

Collect and consider displaying or playing students’ culminating activity projects (see BLM 4.5), using the rubric for assessment.

Acc If a student doesn’t turn in their project by the time it is marked and returned to the rest of the class, consider offering an alternative assessment instead of leaving the mark as zero. Passing a course or successfully transitioning to higher education is a balance between time-management skills (which late penalties may help instill) and finding opportunities to recover from poor habits.

Text Answers

Page 149: Making Connections

1. Ethics as the first philosophy is interesting in that it puts emphasis on right conduct as the basis on which other aspects of philosophy rest, such as questions of how we know, how we organize ourselves in states or what we consider beautiful. It does not seem to escape the problem, however, that ethics itself requires some metaphysical grounding (see SE pp. 168-171).
2. Recall from the Introduction (SE p. 9) that there are constructive and destructive approaches to philosophy. The system builders like Aristotle, Hegel, and Whitehead seek an answer for everything, exhibiting a yearning for totality. Others, like Nietzsche, “philosophize with a hammer,” seeking to destroy these systems. Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and followers like Derrida, Rorty, and Foucault, fall into this camp. Levinas builds upon the work of Heidegger, who, in *Being and Time*, set out to destruct all of Western metaphysics in order to build anew on the ground provided by Plato.

3. The Greeks said that you should honour your parents, the gods, and strangers. For all you know, that stranger may be Athena or a demigod in disguise (as Odysseus realizes upon returning to Ithaca, meeting Athena dressed as a maiden outside a cave, but the suitors of his wife fail to see him at the banquet hall). See the remarks on finding our limits through encounters with the Other in Teaching Strategy 1, above.

Page 152: Philosophy in Everyday Life

1. See the Eckhart Tolle video clip recommended in Strategies for Classroom Use, as a modern-day admonition of Epictetus. Perhaps rock bands are the best example of Aristippus' hedonism taking a hold in the present.
2. Epictetus offers consolation in that many things are beyond our personal control; for example, if I cannot donate to the charity, that does not make me less philanthropic than someone who is rich; I simply lack the wherewithal to give as much money away as Bill Gates (a position Aristotle also took, prior to the Stoics). Aristippus counsels us to enjoy the pleasures of life now because life is short, and nobody knows what hardship lies ahead. This philosophy could lead to problems, however, such as unwanted pregnancy or dropping out of school, so sometimes it does make sense to look toward the future and plan more carefully. The average life expectancy in Canada is now 80 years, so most of us can count on having enough time to justify planning for the future. Managing debt is a case in point.

Page 155: Section questions

1. If the pursuit of pleasure is done to an extreme, then it may not be compatible with other pursuits that often require some self-sacrifice: civic duties (defending our loved ones when under attack), honour (living honestly or within the law), and compassion (giving time to raise our children or care for our beloved when sick, perhaps even giving a kidney to a family member in need).
2. Some people suggest that pessimism is simply realism, and that it is also freedom from self-delusion. The problem is that one may be happier not seeing everything as being negative, and that seeing only the negative in life may in fact bring it about. The power of positive thinking can be that it delivers both happiness and tends to create positive outcomes in the real world.
3. According to Sartre and de Beauvoir, we create meaning in our own life, much as an artist facing a canvas designs the layout, colour palette, and composition of a painting.

Pages 156-157: Chapter Review

1. Whether human reason is powerful enough to prove that God exists is something theists are more likely to affirm, and atheists see as an irrelevant question. See the discussion of skepticism on SE p. 242, and refer to new mysterianism in Chapter 5 (see SE p. 130). Theists are more inclined to believe in divine revelation, and therefore have confidence in God making himself known to us (which reverses the power from the human to the divine mind in enabling this knowledge).
2. Whether the existence of God requires a philosophical proof depends on the degree to which someone feels they can rely on faith as a way of knowing (see SE pp. 154, 261, 308).
3. Human life may seem less significant from the cosmic perspective (see Teaching Strategy 6, above), but to some people this view makes us all the more special. As far as we have seen, we are the only beings with radio and microwave communication in this area of our galaxy.

4. Students could use BLM C, and may include the following comparisons:
 - Cosmological argument (something started everything) and design (creation does not appear random).
 - Problem of evil argument (why would an omnipotent and omniscient God allow bad things to happen?) and insufficient evidence argument (we simply don't have the empirical evidence to corroborate religious claims).
 - Counter-arguments include false analogy and perceiver relativity: nature is not really designed like a watch, and from afar our concerns and the ugliness of the world do not appear so significant or bad.

5. Despite his external and atheist viewpoint, Bertrand Russell thought highly of himself, and he valued the human enterprise of studying philosophy (see the quotation on SE p. 7). In this case, the two views are not incompatible. Russell would also value subjective viewpoints, such as friendships, even though such affections do not have grand significance in the world. He could deflate someone, however, if they put on airs or made claims to superior insight without demonstrating their intelligence through rational argument. One of his more interesting books is *Mysticism and Logic*, inspired in part by his intriguing student, Wittgenstein, who wrote a mixture of both.

6. Atheistic existentialism is liberating in the sense that it frees people from orthodoxy and dogma, unburdening them of traditions and appeals to authority. It adds the burden of creating values for oneself, or as Sartre put it, we are condemned to freedom (see SE p. 180). Taken to an extreme, as with Camus, it can lead to absurdism and thrill-seeking behaviour (vitalism, or being fully alive in the moment as an answer to nihilism). Camus died while driving recklessly on a mountain road. He also questioned why we shouldn't commit suicide, but through this inquiry affirmed embracing our essentially meaningless life. His books *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus* offer further insights into his views on life.

7. Most students can identify themselves as either a theist or atheist, but some may have difficulty in that Hinduism is polytheistic and Buddhism may be seen as either pantheistic (divinity in nature) or non-theistic (the Buddha not being a representation of a deity). The question calls upon students to think of a strategy they might use to convince someone of the other persuasion, so focus on rhetorical devices as well as convincing lines of argument. To do this, students must anticipate what any weaknesses in their doctrine or openings for counter arguments. Consider modelling this with YouTube clips of Bertrand Russell or Richard Dawkins arguing for atheism, or William Lane Craig arguing for theism. See also the clip below showing Tony Blair debating Christopher Hitchens:

<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/297090-1>

8. Some philosophers argue that fundamentalist religious beliefs and reliance on faith suppress critical thinking, which is central to philosophy. Others argue that philosophy should be open to divine revelation as way of knowing (see Chapter 10). The ontological and cosmological proofs for the existence of God do use reason, but to a skeptic or atheist like Russell these will appear to be bending reason to arrive at a presupposed conclusion. Expect diversity in the opinions from the students, and encourage them to be open to hearing the arguments of both sides.

9. Students could use the discussion of intelligent design on SE pp. 349-351 as a starting point, supplemented by the following video clips (available on YouTube):
 - NOVA | "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial" | PBS
 - NOVA | Intelligent design on trial 1 - 12
 - Nova | Intelligent Design on trial 2 - 12

10. Students could use the following resources (available on YouTube) as starting points for their research:

The God Part of The Brain

Spirituality and the Brain: A Scientific Approach to Religious Experience

11. Humans can change their genetic codes and can, to some extent, direct their own evolution. The metaphysical implications are further blurring of the nature/nurture divide if we become the engineers of human nature. Ethical implications arise from the possibility of selecting out of existence types of people we do not currently value but that may be beneficial to our genetic and human-cultural diversity. Would we remove humans with a genetic propensity for certain diseases, or for obesity? The *Star Trek* movie *The Wrath of Kahn* is about a race of Nietzschean supermen genetically engineered to be superior, dominating the galaxy with their Nazi-like vision of a master race. The movie *Gattaca* also deals with the topic of eugenics, raising issues of whether we will continue to insure people with genetic defects. See also the *Blade Runner* trailer referenced in Teaching Strategy 2, above, which portrays genetically enhanced replicants struggling for equal recognition. See also the following online resources:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5278028/ns/health-genetics/t/genetic-mutationturns-tot-superboy/>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/apr/13/genetics.athletics>

12. Students will identify a song, television show, movie, book, or video game that explores metaphysical ideas. An example is the movie *Across the Universe*, a Beatles musical that includes songs like “Strawberry Fields Forever,” which echoes themes explored in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” (SE p. 11). Leonard Cohen’s song “Suzanne” might be fun to explore as well (clip available on YouTube):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUXC_dhQHzY&feature=fvsvr

13. Leibniz’s ideas about seeing evil and ugliness in the world are similar to someone standing in front of a painting that is very large, so that they have to stand back to see the beauty of the composition as a whole. This idea is presented on SE p. 146. Van Gogh’s painting *Starry Night* in Figure 6-13 would present a similar problem if one were too close, seeing only the brush strokes and not the beautiful swirls that make up the celestial sky. Ironically, Leibniz was “too close” to a geopolitical situation of his own day to see clearly the harm we might do. He advised the King of France to wage war on Egypt, hoping that fighting “the infidel” would unite Christendom, which was deeply divided over the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants and territorial disputes of European nations.
14. Most people are somewhat fragmented, so it is reasonable to say one is a hedonist under certain circumstances (such as in relation to the prom or a Super Bowl party), or pessimistic about getting into Harvard or Cambridge but optimistic about getting accepted to York University. Even an existentialist like Kierkegaard can be a theist, whereas Sartre was an atheist (SE pp. 151, 155, and 180).
15. The liberal philosopher John Rawls (see SE pp. 401-403, 428-429, 433-435) criticized Nietzsche as anti-democratic in his promotion of “rare specimens.” It appears Darwin’s theory of evolution had an impact on Nietzsche, as seen in the following quotes:

“Humanity shall perpetually work at producing individual great men – this and no other is its task.” (Nietzsche, 1965, p. 59)

“When a species arrives at its limits, and at the point of transition to a higher species, it is easy to see that the goal of its development does not lie in the mass of specimens and their wellbeing, or even in the lat-

est specimens to evolve. Rather it lies in the apparently scattered and chance existences which, given favourable circumstances, come into being here and there; and it should be just as easy to understand and demand that humanity, because it is capable of becoming conscious of its goal, shall look for and produce the favourable conditions under which those great redemptive men come into existence.” (Nietzsche, 1965, p. 60)

“The more I relinquish my rights and level myself down, the more I come under the dominion of the average and finally of the majority. The presupposition inherent in an aristocratic society for preserving a high degree of freedom among its members is the extreme tension that arises from the presence of an antagonistic drive of all its members: the will to dominate. – If you do away with firm opposition and differences in rank, you will also abolish all strong love, lofty attitudes, and the feeling of individuality.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 936)

“Not ‘mankind’ but overman is the goal!” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 1001)

“If only we *could* foresee the most favorable conditions under which creatures of the highest value arise! It is a thousand times too complicated and the probability of failure very great: so it is not inspiring to look for them! – Skepticism. – On the other hand: we can increase courage, insight, hardness, independence, and the feeling of responsibility; we can make the scales more delicate and hope for the assistance of favorable accidents.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 907)

“I characterize the ‘Will to Power’ – that is, an insatiable desire to manifest power; or the application and exercise of power as a creative instinct ... It is possible to trace all instincts of an animal to the will to power; as also all the functions of organic life to this one source.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 619)

“My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement (‘union’) with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they conspire together for power. And the process goes on.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 636)

16. Other disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology, and anthropology also offer insights on the meaning of life, as do literature and other forms of art. Philosophy offers a different kind of reasoning than the empirical human sciences or creative arts, lending insight into these fields as well.
17. Compared to science, metaphysics could be seen as an irrelevant and archaic enterprise, as the positivists and, later, the logical positivists concluded (see SE p. 329). It does make a difference, however, in terms of informing the basic presuppositions upon which our other thinking or judgements (valuations of things) rest. If I see nature as inert or as infused with divine substance (Spinoza), I may act differently with regard to resources. See, for instance, the Haudenosaunee code by which the Six Nations indigenous peoples lived (SE p. 92).
18. It is important to ask questions about the meaning of life because the questioning itself leads us to re-examine our actions and revalue what we have but may take for granted. As Socrates said (in *Apology*), “The unexamined life is not worth living.”