

Philosophy 1: Study Questions

1. A) Distinguish religion, philosophy, and science. B) Why does it matter to get clear on these? (*Religion, Philosophy, Science*)
2. What is Bildung? How is this related to the notion of horizons? What does it mean to say we live in our meanings? How are our “prejudices” necessary conditions for any understanding or awareness at all? Why is the Bildungs-process so risky and challenging yet centrally important for individuals and societies? How is philosophy related to Bildung? Discuss all this in light of the discussions in class and what you have read for the course as well as your general knowledge and your life experience. (Pickard article: *Eros of Wisdom*)
3. Distinguish “reality” from experience. Why is experience inseparable from thinking? (Pay particular attention to Kolak’s chapters on knowledge and reality and related chapters 5-10) What does it mean that we live in our meanings and most of the time and do not notice our actual experience? How do phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics help wake us up to this and show us that experience is inseparable from meaning and interpretation? (Kolak, Pickard articles)
4. What is theory? What are the value, limits, and drawbacks to theoretical thinking? Explain how theories are completely different from experience (the phenomena of consciousness) and how confusing this can be (in science, religion, political ideology, etc., but most importantly in your own self-understanding and awareness). Why is theory subordinate to interpretation and not the other way around? Explain how scientism or positivism is the mistake of taking theory as more fundamental than interpretation? (Pickard articles, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>)
5. How are phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics different from theorizing? What is the relation of phenomenology and theorizing to the basic hermeneutic condition of “linguisticity” and interpretation revealed by philosophical hermeneutics? (Pickard articles)
6. What does it mean to be “awake” as we have used this term and how is this related to Chapters 12-14 of Kolak (for example, Kolak’s distinction between facts and valuations in Chapter 14 and finding that “*neutral center of awareness*,” a presence beyond all theories, p. 110)? What have you learned about answers, assumptions, and meaning (including ideals, habits, truth, knowledge, reality, right and wrong, good/bad in Kolak) that can make a profound difference in your life? (Kolak, Pickard articles)