



Core Questions in Philosophy: A Text With Readings, Elliott Sober, Prentice Hall PTR, 2001, 0130835374, 9780130835376, 580 pages. For introductory philosophy courses. Presented in an engaging lecture-style format, this combined textbook-anthology leads students through a series of discussions on the basic issues and ideas in philosophy, with lectures supported by related readings from historically important sources. The discussions emphasize the logic of philosophical arguments; and, in particular, how they relate to the content of modern physical and social sciences. While the author's lecture approach lends this book a natural flow and sense of immediacy, it comprises a fully integrated textbook with all of the traditional organizational and pedagogical features, including chapter summaries, marginal notes, boxed inserts, discussion questions, problems, test questions, a glossary, and bibliography..

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Unto Others The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior, Elliott Sober, 1999, Philosophy, 394 pages. In Unto Others philosopher Elliott Sober and biologist David Sloan Wilson demonstrate once and for all that unselfish behavior is in fact an important feature of both ....

Presented in an engaging lecture-style format, this text/reader focuses on the basic issues and ideas in philosophy with lectures/discussions, supported by readings from historically important sources. Discussions emphasize the logic of philosophical arguments and how they relate to the content of modern physical and social sciences.

"I definitely think that the author wrote this book with the student in mind. Although the ideas presented are difficult, the author does a great job in explaining the theories without 'tarnishing' the philosophers theory. So many text ruin the power of the philosophical thought because they want to make the idea 'understandable'. It is not the case in this text. I thought the explanations were spot on." - Louis Howe, Jr., Central Connecticut State University

Elliott Sober is Hans Reichenbach Professor of Philosophy and William F. Vilas Research Professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research is in the philosophy of science, especially in the philosophy of evolutionary biology. Sober's books include The Nature of Selection -- Evolutionary Theory in Philosophical Focus (1984), Reconstructing the Past -- Parsimony, Evolution, and Inference (1988), Philosophy of Biology (1993), Unto Others -- The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior (1998, coauthored with David Sloan Wilson), Evidence and Evolution -- the Logic Behind the Science (2008), and Did Darwin Write the Origin Backwards? (2011). He won the Lakatos Prize in 1991 and the American Philosophical Association named him Prometheus Laureate for 2008. He has been president of the Philosophy of Science Association and the American Philosophical Association (Central Division). He is currently president of the International Union for History and Philosophy of Science (Division of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of

Science).

My work deals with understanding cooperation in humans. Since social interaction has a moral element, I have been ineluctably concerned with philosophical ethics. Although I studied a fair amount of philosophy in school, I did not study ethics, and I feel I have a rag-tag grounding in this aspect of modern philosophy. This is why I obtained Sober's undergrad textbook, which is really an intro to all of Western philosophy.

This book is nothing like my own introduction to philosophy, which consisted exclusively in reading excerpts from the great philosophers of the past, accompanied by the professor's lectures, which went 'way over my head. Now, my background was in math and physics, and I never read the classics in those fields (you need a dictionary to understand these old guys, and their notation was usually horrible). Sober's text is so refreshing! In each of the major areas of philosophy (he doesn't deal with logic, philosophy of science, philosophy of mathematics, and other specialized areas) he provides a lucid overview as well as a critique of the various views and his own assessment of which is correct and which is not. I agreed with him almost 100% of the time, and I found his analysis quite cogent and lucid.

Sober's treatment of ethical philosophy gets five stars for exposition, but only three for analysis and critique, in my view. I share Sober's deep appreciation for Aristotle and virtue ethics in general, the major attraction of which is its self-characterization as a set of principles for leading the good life. Virtue ethics thus avoids the utilitarian/deontological problem: why should we be moral? For virtue ethics, moral behavior is its own reward, the main problem being (a) have the fortitude and self-discipline to behave morally, and (b) figuring out exactly what the moral thing to do is. If this view is correct (I think it is) then the ethical theories of the past few centuries, virtue ethics aside, are completely misguided. As to the content of morality, Sober correctly criticizes Aristotle for thinking that virtue is unitary, when in fact his own conceptual framework is more consonant with the view that there are many virtuous paths, and virtue is in part culturally specific.

Recently, there have been serious efforts to answer the question as to the content of morality by treating moral discourse in much the same manner as communicative discourse: there are some basic organizing principles, but basically there are many different moral discourses and our job as scientists is assess their commonalities and differences, as well as modeling how moral discourses diffuse, expand, contract, become extinct, mutate and emerge, etc. In this sense, ethical theory should be like linguistics, where the structure of valid utterances are deduced from social practice, not by the idle intuitions of professional philosophers. See, for instance, David Wong's *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism*. Read more &rsaquo;

I got this book for a philosophy class, but I'm going to keep it as a reference. It doesn't get in-depth into anything, but it serves as an excellent, if cursory, introduction to the field of philosophy. It doesn't get dry as no one part seems to get rambling or long, and if you use the ideas discussed in this book to have debates or real-life discussions about the philosophical issues discussed, you'll never get bored or tired of reading it.

I gave it a four because at some points, it just seems to simplify certain issues or cut off just when things are getting really interesting. I feel that a few ideas are also misrepresented in the slightest ways (or perhaps it's my fault for thinking of things differently than the author does). But this was a perfectly good read... would recommend with limited reservations to anyone interested in philosophy.

If you're buying this book for class, don't worry--it isn't that bad. Sober provides thoughtful analysis, well-rounded arguments, and a good combination of analysis and primary resources. The only complaint I have about the book stems from Sober's writing; if you're an English person, his constant use of passive voice and "to be" verbs will drive you mad. Otherwise, a very good text.

This book is extremely slanted towards the author's opinion. While he does explain some concepts very well, his arguments about creationism are one-sided and fallacious. He states many of his

opinions as fact while most of them can not be backed up by any sort of Science. If you can ignore all of the platitudes and just plain nonsense he tries to force down your throat then you may enjoy this book. Otherwise, steer clear at all cost.

Presented in an engaging lecture-style format, this combined textbook-anthology leads students through a series of discussions on the basic issues and ideas in philosophy. The lectures are supported by related readings from historically important sources. Most of the lectures also contain boxed material highlighting key concepts or related topics. The discussions emphasize the logic of philosophical arguments--and in particular, how they relate to the content of scientific theories such as evolution. While the author's lecture approach lends this book a natural flow and sense of immediacy, it comprises a fully integrated textbook with all of the traditional organizational and pedagogical features, including chapter summaries, marginal notes, boxed inserts, discussion questions, problems, test questions, a glossary, and bibliography.

Just as valuable as Sober's lucid lectures are the sections of primary text that he liberally excerpts. Generous portions of Sartre, Plato, Descartes, and Mill make this text a good way to get a feel not only for the questions philosophers face, but the enormously varied styles with which they have approached and written about them.

Seriously, this book is a great introduction to philosophical problems. The contents are divided into four major sections, aside from a brief section introducing the reader to deductive, inductive, and abductive arguments: 1). arguments for and against the existence of God, 2). Can we really know anything, and if so, how do we know it?, 3). How is the mind related to the body, and do we have free will?, and 4). Ethics. Sober takes an essentially unbiased approach to all arguments for and against each perspective concerning each topic. There are arguably exceptions, however - for instance, I received a hint of bias from Sober toward a functionalist/identity theorist account of mind and brain (although he did admit there seems to be something special about conscious experience, or "what it's like," that this type of explanation doesn't account for). Also, Sober is clearly against subjectivism in ethics (and I totally agree with him, here).

I think Sober's explanations of some concepts are more laborious than they need to be. I don't mean to sound flip, but I typed up a study guide (in complete sentences and paragraphs, mind you) in which I summarized between 50-60 pages of Sober's section on ethics into a nice 10-page, 12-font, single-spaced, packet.

If you're interested in some philosophical issues, and aren't taking a university course for which a broadly-scoped textbook like this is mandatory, then you're likely going to want to seek out information more specified to your particular area of interest (i.e. philosophy of mind). However, if you'd like a basic "lay of the land" concerning the general questions modern philosophers explore, and the methods with which they attempt to do so, then this book is a welcome read. Read more &rsaquo;

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Elliott Sober (born 6 June 1948, Baltimore) is Hans Reichenbach Professor and William F. Vilas Research Professor in the Department of Philosophy at University of Wisconsin–Madison.[1] Sober is noted for his work in philosophy of biology and general philosophy of science. Sober taught for one year at Stanford University and has been a regular visiting professor at the London School of Economics. He earned his Ph.D in philosophy from Harvard University[2] under the supervision of Hilary Putnam. His work has also been strongly influenced by the biologist Richard Lewontin, and he has collaborated with biologist David Sloan Wilson. Sober has been a prominent critic of intelligent design.

Sober has served as the president of both the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association and the Philosophy of Science Association. He will be president of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (Division of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science) from 2012 until 2015.[3]

One of Sober's key fields of research has been the subject of simplicity or parsimony in connection with theory evaluation in the philosophy of science. To this end he published *Reconstructing the Past: Parsimony, Evolution and Inference* (1988) and, subsequently, a number of influential articles in mainstream philosophical journals.

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