MEANING AND NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY
MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

• The word philosophy is derived from the Greek words *philia* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom) and means “the love of wisdom.”

• Pythagoras was said to have been the first man to call himself a *philosopher*; in fact, the world is indebted to him for the word *philosopher*. It is said that when Leon, the tyrant of Phlius, asked him of who he was, he said, “a Philosopher” and he likened the Philosopher to spectators at ancient games.

• Before that time the wise men had called themselves *a sage, which was* interpreted to mean *those who know*. Pythagoras was more modest. He coined the word *philosopher*, which he defined as *one who is attempting to find out*.

• According to him, men and women of the world could be classified into 3 groups:
  - those that love pleasure
  - those that love activity and
  - those that love wisdom.
Philosophy

• The term has been derived from two Greek words, ‘Philos’ means love and ‘Sophia’ means wisdom.

• Philosophy means love of wisdom, love of the truth, love for knowledge or passion for learning.
Meaning of Philosophy

- Philosophy as:
  - Love of knowledge
  - An Activity
  - A comprehensive picture of the universe
  - A guide to a way of life
  - Philosophy and Science
MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

- Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.

- Philosophy is the rational attempt to formulate, understand, and answer fundamental questions.
ETYMOLOGY (LANGUAGE)

THREE ANGLES TO DEFINE PHILOSOPHY

TERMINOLOGY

PRACTICALITY
Philosophia
- Philo: love
- Sophia: knowledge
- Philosophy: love for knowledge or wisdom

Philosophers: those who have a love for knowledge

ETYMOLOGY (LANGUAGE)
“... knowledge which encompasses truth. ... contains metaphysics, logic, rhetoric, ethics, economics, politics and aesthetics.
“… only through knowledge can man attain the real truth.”

(427SM-348SM)
“... knowledge about the physical universe.”

(870SM - 950SM)

AL-FARABI
PRACTICALITY

Thinking thoroughly

Free from the bonds of tradition

Characteristics: systematic, rational, universal
Systematic
Thinking logically and sequentially

Rational
Thinking to the finest detail and solving the problem with full responsibility

Universal
Not being confined to several aspects only
Can we say that all questions are philosophical questions?

What is classified as philosophy?

Who philosophises?

Is there a difference between a common man who philosophises and a philosopher?

What is the difference?
BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

Metaphysics (ontology): speculative, cause-and-effect relationship
E.g: What is truth? What is mankind?

Logic: differentiates between valid and confusing ideas
E.g: What is good reasoning? Not so good reasoning?

Axiology: ethics and aesthetics
E.g: What is goodness? What is beauty?

Epistemology: knowledge and beliefs
E.g: What is knowledge? What are the sources of knowledge?
1. ... is a set of views or beliefs about life and the universe, which are often held uncritically.

We refer to this meaning as the informal sense of philosophy or “having” a philosophy. Usually when a person says “my philosophy is,” he or she is referring to an informal personal attitude to whatever topic is being discussed.
2. Philosophy is a process of reflecting on and criticizing our most deeply held conceptions and beliefs.

These two senses of philosophy— “having” and “doing”—cannot be treated entirely independent of each other, for if we did not have a philosophy in the formal, personal sense, then we could not do a philosophy in the critical, reflective sense.

Having a philosophy, however, is not sufficient for doing philosophy. A genuine philosophical attitude is searching and critical; it is open-minded and tolerant—willing to look at all sides of an issue without prejudice.

To philosophize is not merely to read and know philosophy; there are skills of argumentation to be mastered, techniques of analysis to be employed, and a body of material to be appropriated such that we become able to think philosophically. Philosophers are reflective and critical.
3. Philosophy is a rational attempt to look at the world as a whole

Philosophy seeks to combine the conclusions of the various sciences and human experience into some kind of consistent world view. Philosophers wish to see life, not with the specialized slant of the scientist or the businessperson or the artist, but with the overall view of someone cognizant of life as a totality.
4. *Philosophy is the logical analysis of language and the clarification of the meaning of words and concepts.*

Certainly this is one function of philosophy. In fact, nearly all philosophers have used methods of analysis and have sought to clarify the meaning of terms and the use of language.

Some philosophers see this as the main task of philosophy, and a few claim this is the only legitimate function of philosophy.
5. Philosophy is a group of perennial problems that interest people and for which philosophers always have sought answers.

✓ Philosophy presses its inquiry into the deepest problems of human existence.
✓ Some of the philosophical questions raised in the past have been answered in a manner satisfactory to the majority of philosophers.
✓ Many questions, however, have been answered only tentatively, and many problems remain unsolved.
  – “What is truth?”
  – “What is the distinction between right and wrong?”
  – What is life and why am I here?
  – Why is there anything at all?
IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

1. The study of Philosophy enables us to think carefully and clearly about important issues.

2. In studying Philosophy, we learn to take a step back from our everyday thinking and to explore the deeper, bigger question which underpins our thought.

3. The focus in the study of Philosophy is to learn not what to believe, but how to think.

4. Studying philosophy sharpens your analytical abilities, enabling you to identify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in any position.

5. It hones your ability to construct and articulate cogent arguments of your own.

6. It prompts you to work across disciplinary boundaries and to think flexibly and creatively about problems which do not present immediate solutions.

7. Because philosophy is an activity as much a body of knowledge, it also develops your ability to think and work independently.