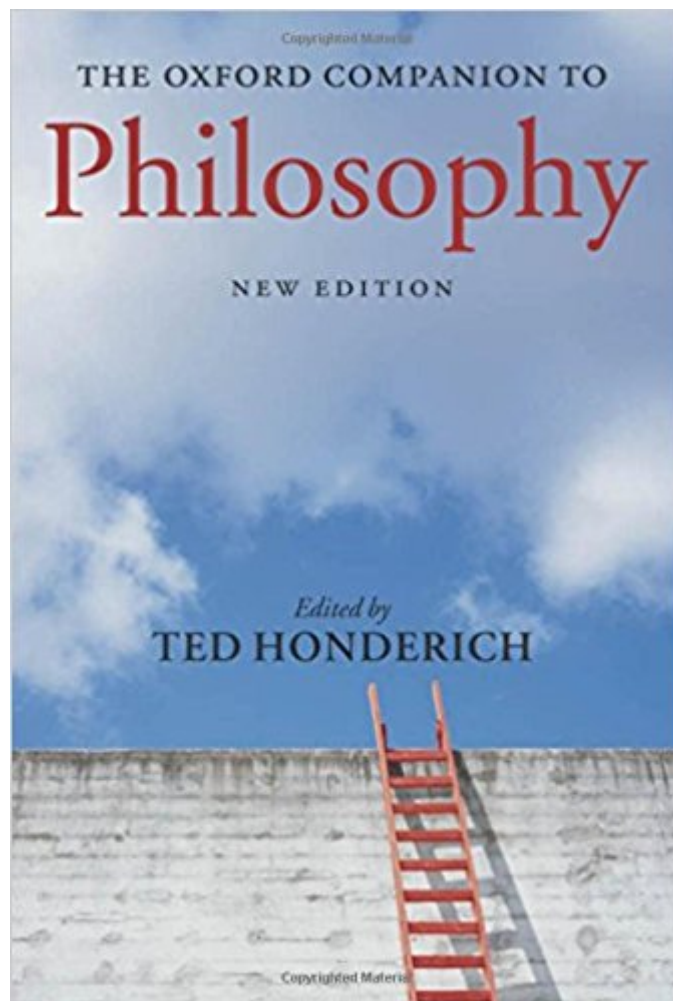




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The Oxford Companion To Philosophy New Edition



Synopsis

Offering clear and reliable guidance to the ideas of philosophers from antiquity to the present day and to the major philosophical systems around the globe, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* is the definitive philosophical reference work for readers at all levels. For ten years the original volume has served as a stimulating introduction for general readers and as an indispensable guide for students and scholars. A distinguished international assembly of 249 philosophers contributed almost 2,000 entries, and many of these have now been considerably revised and updated in this major new edition; to these are added over 300 brand-new pieces on a fascinating range of current topics such as animal consciousness, cloning, corporate responsibility, the family, globalization, terrorism. Here is, indeed, a world of thought, with entries on idealism and empiricism, epicureanism and stoicism, passion and emotion, deism and pantheism. The contributors represent a veritable who's who of modern philosophy, including such eminent figures as Isaiah Berlin, Sissela Bok, Ronald Dworkin, John Searle, Michael Walzer, and W. V. Quine. We meet the great thinkers--from Aristotle and Plato, to Augustine and Aquinas, to Descartes and Kant, to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, right up to contemporary thinkers such as Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray, and Noam Chomsky. There are short entries on key concepts such as personal identity and the mind-body problem, major doctrines from utilitarianism to Marxism, schools of thought such as the Heidelberg School or the Vienna Circle, and contentious public issues such as abortion, capital punishment, and welfare. In addition, the book offers short explanations of philosophical terms (qualia, supervenience, iff), puzzles (the Achilles paradox, the prisoner's dilemma), and curiosities (the philosopher's stone, slime). Almost every entry is accompanied by suggestions for further reading, and the book includes both a chronological chart of the history of philosophy and a gallery of portraits of eighty eminent philosophers. An indispensable guide and a constant source of stimulation and enlightenment, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* will appeal to everyone interested in abstract thought, the eternal questions, and the foundations of human understanding.

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Customer Reviews

Grade 10 Up "Opening with a stimulating preface (Philosophy thrives. It is only the sciences and the superstitions that come and go), Honderich presents this considerably revised and expanded update of his 1995 edition as a resource that will be equally useful to scholars and to general readers. Now including more than 2200 alphabetically arranged entries from nearly 300 contributors, it provides an encyclopedic view of philosophy's past and present, its ideas, disputes (the editor himself contributes an article on unlikely philosophical propositions), and key figures, living and dead. The articles range in length from several sentence definitions to meaty topical and biographical essays of several pages. Each concludes with a list of references; a scattered few are illustrated. A massive index backs up frequent cross-references to enhance ease of access. Back matter includes a time line and an absorbing series of maps, or schematic diagrams, of types and schools of philosophy. More extensive in scope and level of detail than the Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1999), this title makes an excellent companion for standard multivolume subject encyclopedias, and will serve college-bound students and beyond well for both quick reference and sustained enquiry." —John Peters, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"The brave, large aim of this book," boasts editor Honderich, as he did of the 1995 first edition, "has been to bring philosophy together between two covers better than ever before." That is a lofty goal indeed, given such outstanding competition as The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (1999), Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2000), and The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2005). The latter two are abridgements of the 10-volume Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1998). What all have in common are alphabetical arrangement, 2,000 or so articles of varying length by hundreds of experts, and an emphasis on the Western philosophical tradition beginning with the pre-Socratics and culminating in twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy while still making room for the continental and non-Western philosophical traditions. All have considerable complementary differences in terms of authors and entries. As with the first edition,

Honderich has provided a reference work of both great value and pleasurable reading. He has allowed authors to show their idiosyncrasies, perhaps nowhere more so than in his own mind-twisting entry on Unlikely philosophical propositions. Some 300 new entries (including Animal consciousness, Cloning, and Corporate responsibility) have been added. Many others have been revised, lengthened, or updated. The distinguished list of contributors has increased from 249 to 291. Subjects range from paragraph-length entries on philosophers (some of whom are represented in the handful of illustrations) and concepts to entries of several thousand words on 20 or so giants of Western philosophy, aspects of the major branches of philosophy, and various national philosophies. There are entries for some 150 contemporary philosophers. Each entry is followed by a reference list. Adding value are appendixes of logical symbols, maps of philosophy showing hierarchical relationships, and a chronology of philosophy with contemporaneous figures and events in the facing column. The index is composed almost entirely of main-entry headings with lists of entries that are related. This volume is highly recommended for academic, public, and high-school library reference collections and for philosophically curious browsers. For libraries looking for a work more uniformly accessible to the uninitiated, Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy is a better choice. Craig Bunch

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Philosophy professors generally tend to stay away from teaching, and act more like guides. While this is ideal since I do not want to be influenced by anyone else's bias, it makes navigating Philosophy a little difficult. You will find that studying Philosophy is not like any other conventional learning. This is a great go-to book for definitions of philosophical terms and ideas. Many different viewpoints are almost always included. I recommend this to any student of Philosophy

Not much "new" in this edition

A massive and comprehensive achievement.

Like the old Latin dictionary; another thing you need for the shelf. Funny how some understandings change over the years.

This extraordinary book is an exemplar of the "weighty tome" so beloved by lovers of knowledge; and that is certainly appropriate since it is billed as a "companion to philosophy." A "companion," as editor Ted Honderich notes in his preface, "is not only a book for diligent readers, to be studied and

perhaps labored over..."; nor is it merely "a complete reference book. It is more amiable than that. It diverts. It suits a Sunday morning." Well, maybe, but that would be a Sunday morning for logical positivists, Wittgenstein linguists, Kierkegaard intellectuals, professional logicians and perhaps child prodigies bored with their differential calculus homework. There are 249 contributors, contemporary philosophers, most holding academic positions at prestigious institutions of higher learning throughout the world, who wrote the 2,230 entries arranged alphabetically from "abandonment" (a term used by existential philosophers) to Zoroastrianism (the ancient Persian religion). In-between, the entries range from the whimsical to the esoteric to the downright impenetrable. An example of the whimsical might be "cat, Schrodinger's" from quantum mechanics. An example of the esoteric (as least to my mind) could be the entry on "corpuscularianism"--which I won't attempt to define. As for the downright impenetrable, how about, "logical theory," which, according to Christopher Kirwan of the University of Oxford who wrote the entry, "is best seen as a vaguely delimited and shifting group of problems." (All the entries are signed with the initials of the author who wrote the entry. These contributors are listed near the beginning of the book.) Or if that isn't enough how about the various entries entitled on the "history of the philosophy of" which includes "language, history of the philosophy of"; "law, history of the philosophy of"; "mind, history of the philosophy of," etc. There are entries on the philosophers themselves of course. All the great Western philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes, "the blessed Hume" (p. vii) (I agree with Honderich's exalted designation!), Kant, Hegel, etc. appear in lengthy entries. There is also a smattering of greats from the non-Western world, Buddha, Lao Tzu and others in shorter entries. Clearly the emphasis is on Western philosophy, but Eastern philosophy, I am happy to say, is not neglected. Also not neglected is religious philosophy. While there is no entry on Christian philosophy as such, many of the great Christian philosophers have entries. There are entries on "Hindu philosophy" and "Buddhist philosophy" and even an entry on Jainism. National philosophies, in so far as such a thing can be discerned or identified, are presented, including entries on "Japanese philosophy," "Russian philosophy," "American philosophy," etc. Additionally there are entries on the ideas and problems of philosophy such as "universals"; the "problem of evil"; "scepticism" and many others. Many of the fallacies of philosophy such as the "undistributed middle" or "denying the antecedent" appear with (sometimes difficult) explanations. There are entries on the history of various ideas, such as "epistemology, history of"; "metaphysics, history of," etc. There are even black and white photos of various philosophers, or in the case of the ancients, photos of statues of the philosophers. I have only one problem with this book. Many of the entries assume too much knowledge and understanding on the part of the general reader. This is because the book is "directed partly to

general readers for whom philosophy has a fascination greater than, or at least as great as, any other part of our intellectual and cultural existence," and partly "to those who study and practise the subject, and are scrupulous about their guides." (p. viii) In other words, this is a book aimed at professionals or the nearly so. As such it is a challenging book both to read and to understand. At least it was for me. There are three appendices, one on logical symbols; another on "Maps of Philosophy," which presents groups or categories of philosophic ideas in pictorial or schematic form; and a third, "A Chronological Table of Philosophy" lists philosophers and important philosophic events alongside other historical people and events beginning with the "First flourishing of Greek philosophy" about 2600 years ago and the birth of Zoroaster to moral philosopher T. M. Scanlon's publication of "What We Owe to Each Other" and (ironically, it would appear) the slaughter of Rwandans in the 1990s. Bottom line: a must for the professional academic philosopher and for the dedicated amateur, but decidedly not for dilettantes.

Having gotten tired of going to the campus library to meticulously look up concepts, ideologies, philosophers and terms, I broke down and bought the new edition of the "Oxford Companion to Philosophy." I must say that it has helped me many times to better understand concepts and ideas of many philosophers and has subsequently helped to reduce the time I spent looking things up online or in other books. The entries are very detailed and very well written to explain and elaborate on the details that a student or any person may need clarification on. Since this edition is around 40 dollars I wouldn't buy this book just to have it on your bookshelf but if you are like me and sick of going to the library at night then get this book. It will not only provide a solid definition but is a great place to start when researching.

I love this book. It's basically an abridged encyclopedia of philosophy, full of concise explanations about philosophers and philosophical themes. It's not perfect. Each entry is written by a different author, all of them university professors, many of them noted philosophers such as Searle, Singer, or MacIntyre. This necessarily means some entries are better written than others, and from time to time authorial bias seeps through and slants the way a theme or philosopher is presented. Nonetheless, almost every entry I've read has been at least interesting, and many have provided crisp, keen insights in a microscopic amount of space. It has enormous bookshelf value, and I keep it right next to my desk. Kudos to the publishers.

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