

UPSC PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL SYLLABUS



Complete Syllabus

Paper I (Indian Philosophy) &
Paper II (Western Philosophy)



Detailed Topics

Unit-wise Breakdown (Epistemology,
Ethics, etc.)



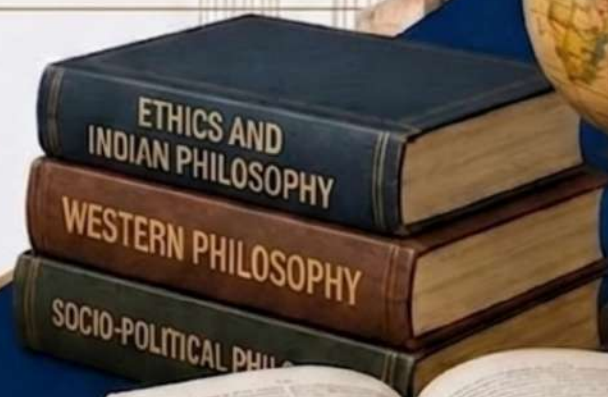
Exam Pattern

Marks & Structure
(Compulsory and Optional sections)



Preparation Tips

Strategy & Resources (Thinkers, Case Studies)



UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus Paper 1

History and Problems of Philosophy

1. **Plato and Aristotle:** Ideas; Substance; Form and Matter; Causation; Actuality and Potentiality.
2. **Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz):** Cartesian Method and Certain Knowledge; Substance; God; Mind-Body Dualism; Determinism and Freedom.
3. **Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume):** Theory of Knowledge; Substance and Qualities; Self and God; Scepticism.
4. **Kant:** Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments; Space and Time; Categories; Ideas of Reason; Antinomies; Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God.
5. **Hegel:** Dialectical Method; Absolute Idealism.
6. **Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein:** Defence of Commonsense; Refutation of Idealism; Logical Atomism; Logical Constructions; Incomplete Symbols; Picture Theory of Meaning; Saying and Showing.
7. **Logical Positivism:** Verification Theory of Meaning; Rejection of Metaphysics by Linguistic Analysis; Linguistic Theory of Necessary Propositions.
8. **Later Wittgenstein:** Meaning and Use; Language-games; Critique of Private Language.
9. **Phenomenology (Husserl):** Method; Theory of Essences; Avoidance of Psychologism.
10. **Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger):** Existence and Essence; Choice, Responsibility and Authentic Existence; Being-in-the-world and Temporality.
11. **Quine and Strawson:** Critique of Empiricism; Theory of Basic Particulars and Persons.
12. **Carnap:** Theory of Knowledge; Rejection of Transcendent Entities.
13. **Indian Philosophy:** Carvaka: Theory of Knowledge. Jainism: Theory of Reality; Saptabhangi; Bondage and Liberation. Schools of Buddhism: Pratityasamutpada; Ksanikavada, Nairatmyavada. Nyaya- Vaishesika: Theory of Categories; Theory of Appearance; Theory of Pramana; Self, Liberation; God; Proofs for the Existence of God; Theory of Causation; Atomistic Theory of Creation. Samkhya: Prakriti; Purusa; Causation; Liberation. Yoga: Citta; Cittavrtti; Klesas; Samadhi; Kaivalya. Mimamsa: Theory of Knowledge. Schools of Vedanta: Brahman; Isvara; Atman; Jiva; Jagat; Maya; Avidya; Adhyasa; Moksa; Aprthaksiddhi; Pancavidhabheda. Aurobindo: Evolution, Involution; Integral Yoga

UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus Paper 2:

Socio-Political Philosophy

1. **Social and Political Ideals:** Equality (formal, substantive, gender, caste); Justice (distributive, retributive, Rawls' veil of ignorance, Nozick's entitlement theory); Liberty (negative vs positive, Isaiah Berlin's two concepts).
2. **Sovereignty:** Austin's command theory; Bodin's absolutism; Laski's pluralist view; Kautilya's mandala theory and saptanga (seven limbs of state).
3. **Individual and State:** Natural rights (Locke, Hobbes); Duties and civic responsibilities; Accountability mechanisms (elections, judiciary, RTI).
4. **Forms of Government:** Monarchy (divine right vs constitutional); Democracy (direct, representative, deliberative); Totalitarianism (characteristics, Arendt's analysis); Theocracy (Iran model, medieval Europe).
5. **Political Ideologies:** Anarchism (Bakunin, Kropotkin); Marxism (class struggle, dictatorship of proletariat); Socialism (utopian, scientific, democratic).
6. **Humanism:** Secular humanism (human rights without divine sanction); Perennial philosophy (Aldous Huxley, common esoteric truths across religions).

Philosophy of Religion

1. **Concept of God:** Attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence); Relation to man (personal vs impersonal) and world (pantheism, panentheism).
2. **Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique:** Ontological (Anselm, Descartes); Cosmological (Aquinas' five ways, Kalam argument); Teleological (Paley's watchmaker, fine-tuning); Moral (Kant); Indian (Nyaya proofs). Critiques (Hume's empiricism, Kant's antinomies).
3. **Problem of Evil:** Logical (J.L. Mackie), evidential (William Rowe); Free will defense (Plantinga); Indian views (karma, maya).
4. **Soul:** Immortality (Plato's arguments, reincarnation); Rebirth (punarjanma in Upanishads, Buddhism's anatta denial); Liberation (moksha, nirvana).
5. **Reason, Revelation and Faith:** Fideism (Kierkegaard); Evidentialism; Reformed epistemology (Plantinga).

6. **Religion without God:** Buddhism (Dharma without creator), secular ethics, humanism.
7. **Religion and Morality:** Divine command theory (Euthyphro dilemma); Autonomy of ethics (Kant); Karma and dharma.
8. **Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Absolute Truth:** Hick's pluralistic hypothesis; Exclusivism (Christianity), inclusivism (Vatican II).
9. **Nature of Religious Language:** Analogical (Aquinas), symbolic (Tillich); Cognitivist (literal truth claims) vs non-cognitive (R.M. Hare's blik).