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Philosophy and General Philosophy of Medicine

STUDY GUIDE

RECOMMENDED
by the Academic Council of Bogomolets
National Medical University as a study
guide for students of English language
education

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The study guide “Philosophy and General Philosophy of Medicine” contains the texts regarding the main subfields of philosophy included to the program of the University course on this academic discipline. The guidelines for seminars, the questions for self-control and a guide to philosophical terms are also presented. The study guide is committed to provide information on the issues of the history of philosophy, ontology, philosophical anthropology, gnoseology, methodology, social philosophy and philosophy of medicine.

The study guide is designed to meet the academic, professional needs of medical students of the higher education establishments.

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INTRODUCTION

The textbook “Philosophy and General Philosophy of Medicine” provides the information concerning the main subfields of philosophy included to the program of the University course of this academic discipline. The issues on the history of philosophy, ontology, philosophical anthropology, gnoseology, methodology, social philosophy and philosophy of medicine are presented and discussed in the textbook.

The course is based on the knowledge gained from the “History of Ukraine”, “History of Ukrainian and Foreign Cultures”, “Religious Studies”, “Logics”, “History of Medicine” and “Bioethics”. Knowledge and skills acquired while studying these courses can be applied in the process of Philosophy mastering.

The objective of the course is to shape the students' knowledge of all the main philosophical concepts, to form the plurality and alternative ways of philosophical perception and thinking and to provide the theoretical, axiological, methodological basis for the systematic scientific world outlook as an important element of the medical professional world outlook.

The course focuses on the main notions and aims of Philosophy, the philosophical aspects of methodology, ontology and gnoseology, as well as the current problems of society development. Special attention is paid to the history of philosophy. The separate chapter is devoted to philosophy of medicine, since from ancient Greece to the modern era philosophy has been at the basis of medicine. Philosophy provides the theoretical, analytical, methodological tools for the analysis of concepts in medicine, such as disease, health and care. The art of medicine involves practical reasoning, that is, critical thinking, intuition and sound judgment, which are in the field of philosophical issues. Moreover, the medical practice raises the questions which are central to philosophy. The general concepts and principles of philosophy of medicine are highlighted in the textbook.

Students are supposed to get explicit information about the general content of the course: the main notions and definitions of the fundamental philosophical categories, the facts from the history of philosophy and those regarding the contemporary problems of the modern society development. At the end of the course students will be able to use the acquired philosophical knowledge for the real social life problems analysis and formation of per-

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sonal position about the most topical problems of the modern society development.

The book contains 12 chapters: Human World Outlook and General Problems of Philosophy, Ancient World Philosophy, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, European Philosophy of the XVII—XIX centuries, Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Ukraine, Ontology, Philosophical Anthropology and Problems of Human Conscience, Gnoseology, Philosophical Aspects of Methodology, Social Philosophy and Philosophy of Medicine. The list of recommended literature, the guidelines for seminars and questions for students' self-control are also included. A guide to philosophical terms will help readers in mastering the main notions and concepts of Philosophy.

The authors convey sincere gratitude to the reviewers for their valuable remarks and useful suggestions.

The authors wish readers every success in mastering Philosophy.

CHAPTER 1

HUMAN WORLD OUTLOOK AND GENERAL PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

The representatives of all the regional cultures and social groups inevitably had to solve the basic world outlook questions and problems: “What are the main laws of Universe we live in and how should we use them to predict the future events and prepare to them?”, “What are the origins, essence and destination of human being?”, “What is the proper type of interaction between an individual human being and society and between human and world?” and so on. For the last two and half thousand years philosophy was a main tool to obtain the answers to such questions and this makes the study of philosophy an important and useful part of students training.

Therefore, understanding of the surrounding world and the place of an individual human being in it is a fundamental necessity for both an individual and the society, which grants them ability for self-definition and self-determination. There are objective and subjective reasons for that. An individual and society have the objective existence in the material world as complex system with its own laws, interrelations and rules of development, and so the essence of self-definition is in understanding the world as an integral system with its own laws of functioning and development, as well as in recognizing unbreakable ties to this system existing both for an individual and personality. The subjective factor is equally important for self-definition as a unique ability of a human being to evaluate his or her life, and results of his or her actions. It owes its existence to the presence of consciousness, and constant need for comprehension of the universe and abilities of an individual human being. Philosophy and other forms of world outlook in their interaction are fundamentally important for any human culture as a system of basic humanistic values, rules and patterns of human behavior.

World outlook is the most ancient product of human spirituality. It is a universal form of reflection, cognition and evaluation of the Universe, basic for the purpose of both self-definition and external world orientation. The foundation of the world outlook is knowledge (of the facts of individual life, as well as social religious, philosophical, ethical and scientific knowledge) that shapes the specific character of the world outlook. Several types of historical world outlooks can be identified through the history of humanity.

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Mythological world outlook is rooted in mythology as the earliest form of human world understanding and self-understanding. It reflects a belief that the universe has been created by imaginary beings (gods), and exists due to the presence of spontaneous collectivism, that mirrored life conditions in the most primitive pre-historical society and during the earliest periods of civilization development. Myths of Ancient India, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia and other countries are widely known. Notably, mythology functioned as a regulatory code for all the aspects and components of the life of the society and person. The specific nature of any mythology is defined by the combination of elements of symbolism and generalization, collectivism and anthropomorphism, prompted further development of other forms of world outlook.

Religious world outlook originated as a subsequent historical form, and is based on the knowledge of laws of correlation of natural and supernatural forces, dependency of a human being on the latter, and a strong belief in supernatural realm and God or multiple gods as creators and supervisors of both natural and supernatural world. Religion as a world outlook has always been functioning partially in the same way as mythological world outlook being a regulatory force in the sphere of human relations, defining the boundaries of the permissible and impermissible. But on other hand, the main world religions proposed concept of individual and not personal nature of sin, responsibility and salvation, so they participated in transition from collectivist to individualist general orientation of world outlook. Finally, unlike the mythology, the Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious world outlook originated quite the strict differentiation between spiritual, social and natural components of both universe and human essence with the unquestionable primacy of spiritual as representation of divine essence.

Theoretical (philosophical and scientific) world outlook is the third historical form of the world outlook. It has originated at a late stage of civilization development, and is based on a gained historical experience of humankind in such areas as discoveries of objective laws and cause-result chains of events of the material world, development of cognitive abilities and methodological schemes, strict differentiation of lifestyles and professional activity types with their specific experience, wide international exchange of knowledge and so on. The essence of the scientific world outlook is a combination of systematic theoretical rationalist understanding, critical innovative approach, and checking by results of practical activity for all the knowledge of both material world and human individual in their interaction. The

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norms and ideals of human behavior are thought to be based not on the divine will and interference but on the objective laws of the world.

There exist a lot of definitions of world outlook. In the most general form, world outlook is a specific system of individual and social spiritual values that allows creating a generalized reflection of the correlation between an individual and the world (with natural and the social components) for the purpose of self-definition and practical orientation. World outlook is a system of generalized perception of reality (knowledge, beliefs and ideals), which reflects, discloses and shapes a certain practical and theoretical attitude of an individual human being towards the world. It is a mode of perception, cognition and evaluation of the surrounding reality with an individual human being and different by nature social groups as a specific historical object of cognition and practical application of this knowledge.

World outlook structure and functions. There are several main elements of the world outlook. In the first place, it is *world outlook knowledge*. First is theoretical knowledge about the essence of the correlation between an individual human being and the world. Second are *world outlook beliefs* (internal socio-psychological elements of spirituality, responsible for acceptance or denial of the world outlook knowledge). Third are *world outlook principles*, allowing world outlook knowledge and beliefs to function and be applied in practical activity, which are basic for the presence of a world outlook judgment. It is the combination of the two above named elements, functioning simultaneously, that creates a holistic system of subject's spiritual world. Consequently, a world outlook performs two interrelated functions: human cognition orientation (defined by world outlook knowledge and judgment), and practical activity orientation (based on world outlook beliefs and principles as boundaries for actions). Not only reasoning, but also emotions and other psychological mechanisms participate in the functioning of the world outlook.

Judging from the point of view of the bearer and the subject of world outlook, one can identify personal world outlook (of an individual human being), social group world outlook (demographical or professional groups of people, such as medical practitioners,), then the world outlook of a nation and society as a whole. Individual and social world outlook content, meaning and forms of functioning are surely under constant historical changes. It reflects achieved results of the societal progress, evolution of culture, science and technology as well as the up-to-date major problems the human-

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kind is facing (e. g. global ecological problems, widespread of terrorism and so on).

World outlook and philosophy. Generalization as a specific element of a myth triggered the appearance of a new cultural phenomenon — philosophy. There are many versions of the origins of philosophy. One of them is based in the connection between mythology and philosophy. But if in mythology, the world outlook problems were formed randomly, the origin of philosophy was accompanied by contemplation about these problems based on the cognition of objective laws, governing human behavior and the universe.

Therefore, we can conclude that philosophy has originated as a result of the resolution of contradictions between a myth and first elements of empiric (based on trial and error) knowledge of the natural phenomena, society and an individual. Philosophy transliterates the language of a myth into the language of notions. Their abstract nature and diversity of their meanings characterize the language of philosophy. Philosophy itself is sometimes defined as a way of thinking rooted in the world outlook.

Philosophy subject and functions. Philosophy, much as the world outlook itself, is a multifaceted complex phenomenon, and it is constantly evolving. In Ancient Greece, philosophy was defined, notably, as the love for wisdom not wisdom itself. For the last centuries, many authors tried to equal philosophy to most general conclusions of science, or evaluate it as a special branch of science. In general, the subject of modern philosophy is a constant search for the essential elements of human existence, contemplation over the acquired knowledge and those actions of an individual human being, that lead to the acquisition of this knowledge. Philosophy is a specific form of social consciousness; it generalizes experience acquired through the realization of a human spirit, as reflected in a particular theoretical hierarchy of human values. *The main problem of philosophy is a relation of an individual human being to the Universe*, which forms a system of human values and undertakes a spiritual analysis of the human individual behavior and social activities.

As a specific spiritual formation, philosophy performs a number of functions. Here are some of the most fundamental ones. *World outlook function* of philosophy is known for its ability to take part in the formation of an individual's world outlook, providing it with theoretical basis. Therefore, philosophy is a theoretical foundation of the world outlook. *Cognitive function* of philosophy is recognized for the number of problems identified within the

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