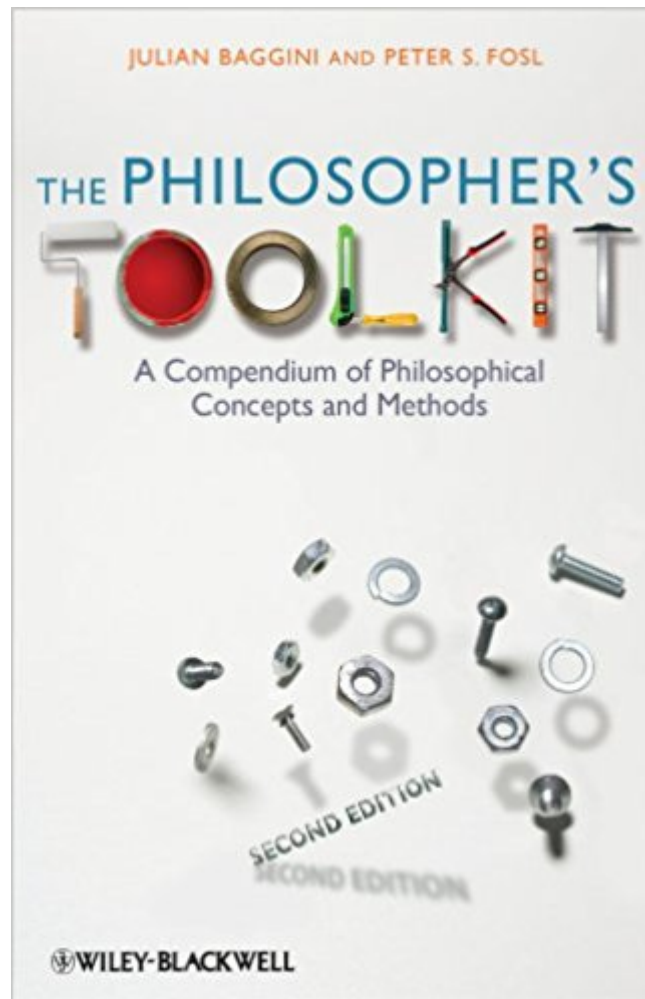


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The Philosopher's Toolkit: A Compendium Of Philosophical Concepts And Methods



Synopsis

The second edition of this popular compendium provides the necessary intellectual equipment to engage with and participate in effective philosophical argument, reading, and reflection. Features significantly revised, updated and expanded entries, and an entirely new section drawn from methods in the history of philosophy. This edition has a broad, pluralistic approach--appealing to readers in both continental philosophy and the history of philosophy, as well as analytic philosophy. Explains difficult concepts in an easily accessible manner, and addresses the use and application of these concepts. Proven useful to philosophy students at both beginning and advanced levels.

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Customer Reviews

I've been reading philosophy for about 6 years now, and in many cases I would have to modify that verb with "valiantly trying to". I could probably count on one hand the number of times that, coming across an unfamiliar term or concept, one of my three philosophy dictionaries has clarified the issue for me and allowed me to continue with the text with the same level of confidence I had had before I came across the term. Take for example Kant's analytic/synthetic. The dictionary will tell you what it means. But you still might not understand it. Either the dictionary defines it using other terms and

references you don't understand, sending you winding through scores of other entries on a goose chase and only ending up with a web of interconnected ideas floating somewhere above the current state of your understanding and no bridge between, or the dictionary gives you a perfectly good definition, but no context as to why anyone would care to make a distinction that really just seems so obvious, and then write a book about it. The Philosopher's Toolkit is the bridge I've needed. The ideas are stated in much simpler language than any dictionary, and also give a context for every idea so you can understand why it matters. I even bought a couple of books from the recommended reading lists at the end of each section (starred for how easy they are to understand). I'd call this volume essential. At the time of this review, there were 11 reviews, all of them 5-star. This is the 12th. Enough said.

Fearing Alzheimer's at age 73, I set my mind to stay fit, exercise regularly, and eat the recommended diet. Photography is my hobby. Learning and doing photography helps to exercise my brain. But I was looking for something more. I found it . . . a study of philosophy. I love to argue peacefully (and win because of superior reasoning). Even arguing me against myself is one of my favorite pastimes. (For example, does anything exist that was not caused to exist by prior events?) The Philosopher's Tool kit has been written for old duffs just like me - and, I guess, also for young College students who want to improve their thinking ability. Just reading a few arguments catches and holds my attention. With false arguments, criticisms, and solutions so close together, I get a rush of satisfaction. When thumbing through the headings I feel sure that this is a great book to start my study. If I have any criticisms after finishing it I will amend this review.

'The Philosopher's Toolkit: A Compendium of Philosophical Concepts and Method' is exceptional. It is incredibly in-depth, covering many of the important aspects that make philosophy such a beautiful thing. The book is structured so as to allow the reader to approach the subject of philosophical argumentation much like any student who is new to the subject would. Starting from the beginning, the opening chapter is titled: 'Basic Tools for Argument', which is composed of twelve sections, each one covering particular topic. The next chapter is titled: 'More Advanced Tools' and is composed of ten sections. Chapter three is titled: 'Tools for Assessment', and is made up of twenty-six sections which cover different fallacies, dilemmas, and other examples of faulty reasoning. Chapter four, which is made up of nineteen section, is titled: 'Tools for Conceptual Distinctions'. The next chapter is titled: 'Tools for Historical Schools and Philosophers', and is made up of ten sections. Number six is titled: 'Tools for Radical Critique', which is made up of eleven

sections and covers different critiques on many important and influential concepts and ideals. The last chapter is titled: 'Tools at the Limit', and is made up of ten sections. This book is a blessing, and can serve a variety of purposes for its owner. Regardless of whether it is to be used as an introduction to philosophical argumentation, or as a quick source of referral regarding key concepts and definitions of basic philosophical terms. So long as it is put to good use, it will arguably be one of the best investments that the buy ever makes. I Highly recommend it!

A couple of weeks ago I started reading a book about epistemology. Now, I'm training to be a scientist and the last time I had any contact with philosophy was 10 years ago, while in high school. So when I started reading counter-examples that involved deceit and impossible situations (fake barns, aliens, twin Earths, etc.), I couldn't understand how that could be sound reasoning. Fortunately, I came across this book. Baggini and Fosl do a great job at explaining things to the uninitiated. Their style is humorous, which makes it easy to read. The ideas flow clearly with a good use of examples and anecdotes (the exception may be the chapter on Lacanian critique). The overall structure, the cross-referencing and the final website and podcast lists are quite useful. I'm not sure if I can tackle the epistemology book yet, but I now know what to read next.

I have read many introductions to philosophy aimed at laymen & this is by far the best I've seen. Everything is explained very clearly, referencing the relevant concepts after each explanation, great book recommendations, even some great online references. This one does just about everything right.

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