

# **Study Guide for**

## ***Objectivism: The State of the Art***

by Dr. Leonard Peikoff

### **Lecture One**

- What problem does doing philosophy as an adult create?
- What implications does it have in approaching the question of understanding the structure of a philosophy?
- Choosing one specific point from each of the fundamental fields of philosophy, explain why each is logically dependent on the others.
- Why is there a logical necessity in the order of learning philosophy?
- How does the spiral theory of knowledge help us understand the difference between adult integration and childhood learning?
- What are the things that one must know prior to beginning to understand the field of epistemology?
- Why does Dr. Peikoff believe that these topics belong in an anteroom?

### **Lecture Two**

- What is the difference between an implicit grasp and explicit knowledge?
- What is missing from an implicit grasp of some item of knowledge?
- Why is it necessary for identity as an axiom to be learned prior to the axiom of consciousness?
- What step comes between grasping existence as an axiom and grasping identity as an axiom?
- Describe the difference between an axiomatic concept and an axiom proper.
- What other concepts of axioms are necessary to grasp before grasping the primacy of existence?
- How does this observation help to answer the historical belief in a clash between consciousness and reality, or the mind/body dichotomy?

- At the level of metaphysics, what is an absolute?
- How does a child grasp the contrast to metaphysical absolutes?
- Why does the grasp of the metaphysical versus to the man-made lead to the grasp of volition?
- What are the two basic metaphysical errors prominent in the world?

## Lecture Three

- Why can everything in epistemology be reduced to the injunction “be objective”?
- In what context does the concept of objective first arise? Why is it necessary?
- How does a concept unite both existence and consciousness?
- Contrast the unification of these two with the opposed views that consider concepts as arising from only one or the other.
- Why does one’s view of concept formation determine one’s whole theory of knowledge? Explain with an example.
- What moral and political consequences does intrinsicism lead to? Explain using real examples.
- What moral and political consequences does subjectivism lead to? Explain using real examples.
- What does it mean to have a non-automatic conformity to reality?
- Under the objective approach to abstractions, what is the role of method?
- What is the difference between objectivity and honesty?

## Lecture Four

- Why is logic only appropriate for a conceptual consciousness?
- If logic is non-contradictory identification, what is it that cannot be contradicted?
- What kinds of contradictions can exist in a process of thinking?
- What gives rise to the need for integration as a key process of thinking logically?
- Why is internal consistency not sufficient for something to count as good knowledge?
- What is the definition of proof?
- What gives rise to the need for reduction as a key process of thinking logically?

- What metaphysical fact demands that concepts be integrated in order to be logical?
- How does one evaluate that a new belief is consistent with one's knowledge?
- Why can some knowledge only be grasped via other knowledge?
- What is the relationship between reduction and proof? Explain using an example.
- Why is a deduction from true premises not sufficient for proof?
- What about Ayn Rand's philosophy gives rise to her unique approach to logic?
- What fact about man's life initially suggests the need for principles?

## Lecture Five

- Why does human survival require long-range action?
- How is it possible for an action to be morally neutral but not neutral generally?
- Describe how all human actions have survival consequences.
- Why do negative actions not always immediately result in destruction of values?
- How does one determine how long-range one's action should be?
- What means does a human consciousness use to reduce vast data down into a graspable whole?
- What is the result of unit reduction in thinking about human choices and actions?
- In ethics, what is the cognitive benefit of previous conceptualization of the problems of survival?
- What does it mean to say that a principle is a general truth on which other truths depend?
- Using an example, explain the difference between a generalization more broadly and a principle specifically.
- Are principles ends or means? What are the consequences of each answer?
- What does it mean, specifically, to have a code of values?
- Using examples, explain how principles are necessary for success in life more generally.
- Why does one evasion necessarily lead to destruction of all knowledge?
- Why must principles be absolutes?

## Lecture Six

- What is the difference between compromises of details and principles? Give a unique example of each.
- Why does the issue of compromise reveal that a principle is always the guide to action?
- Why is there no “no man’s land” between contrary principles?
- If the evil is ultimately powerless, why does it have the “upper hand” in its interaction with the good?
- What does it mean that values are not values if obtained by fraud?
- Using an original example, explain why a single lie becomes progressive and totalizing.
- Why were the ancient Greeks correct to say that “virtue is one”?
- If a liar is never found out, why is it still not in his interest to do so?
- What is the flaw in the trade-off view of virtue?
- When attempting to use the trade-off approach, what are the two ways of accounting for value?
- Why do both methods for accounting for value in this approach ultimately prevent a proper evaluation of the value?
- Why does the value-balancing approach necessitate emotionalism?
- When is it proper to use a trade-off approach?
- How does irrational action detach a goal from the realm of evaluation?
- How does the principled approach answer the idea that the end justifies the means?
- When can one say that there is one end that determines the means?
- What is a contextual absolute in regard to principles?