

Study Guide for *Objectivism Through Induction*

by Dr. Leonard Peikoff

Lecture One

- Why does every field of knowledge depend on induction as a methodology for reaching knowledge?
- What purpose of cognitive efficiency is achieved by using the inductive method?
- Why does rationalism in effect represent a shortcut?
- How does the polemical approach undermine one's ability to induce?
- Taking the example of the law of cause and effect, what would be the rationalistic way to derive the principle?
- How does working down from a standard definition help one get to concretes?
- Make a list of things you might observe on a "causality walk."
- How do you know when you have made enough observations?
- How does integration of inductions act in a reciprocal way?
- Complete the thinking assignment described by Dr. Peikoff, to induce "man's basic means of survival is reason."
- Describe the "reduction" and "genus" methods.

Lecture Two

- Identify three factual pieces of knowledge one would have to have already grasped to begin inducing the "means of survival."
- Why is it important to reduce a concept like "reason" back down to the facts before attempting to induce a proposition that contains it?
- What is the connection between the three steps or stages of induction of this principle?
- How directly observable should the facts be for inductions of principles like this that are closer to the perceptual level?
- Is there a necessary order to the kinds of observable facts that one lists when enumerating items for an induction? Why or why not?
- Explain the methodological value of contrast when it comes to the process of induction.
- How does the contrast point fit in relative to the genus method?

- What differentiates identifying reason as man's means of survival with the similar point about reason being man's only means of knowledge?

Lecture Three

- Why does the validation of egoism, or any principle in epistemology or ethics, presuppose free will? And why does it assume the knowledge of it?
- How is the standard definition of egoistic behavior as relating to the beneficiary of one's action insufficient to understanding the full concept of egoism?
- Why is it necessary to find some common denominator among all kinds of values before one can know what is actually an individual's welfare?
- Why is it not possible just to take any values being pursued as the concrete material?
- Explain how action is essential to understanding the concept of value.
- Why is it necessary to answer the "to whom," "how," and "for what" questions about value before the question of who should benefit? How does this contrast with other approaches?
- Why is it acceptable and even expected for an early induction of the idea of value those things which are merely conventional values? How does one correct this if needed?
- Using three or four basic values, demonstrate the way you might pull out a common denominator as a starting point. Why would saying "happiness" not be acceptable?
- Why is it important to differentiate between principled versus unprincipled instead of egoist versus altruist?

Lecture Four

- Explain the importance of inducing the contrast of altruism from the same types of concretes.
- How does considering the widest scale application of these contrasts help clarify the issue?
- What kind of conclusion is available when you attempt to integrate the inductions considered so far in this course?
- What is the difference between validating the virtue of justice and the value of justice more generally?
- Explain how one can get to the perceptual level about the human need to evaluate or judge things generally.
- Why is action necessarily tied to the basic judgments we make?
- What are the crucial steps to get from judging inanimate things to other men?

- How does the analogy of food and nutrition help clarify judging men and their actions?
- How does one move from evaluating people as being immediately good or bad in a local context to finding more general principles about their characteristics?
- What is the contrast or genus approach to the need for judging?

Lecture Five

- Explain the bridge between judging and acting on judgment of inanimate things and the introduction of the action context in judging people.
- Why is it important to identify the range of patterns possible in a given context to be able to induce a concept, using Dr. Peikoff's example of judgment and a child in school?
- How do we proceed to bring in the concept of "deserved" in our induction of judgment?
- Explain how the future versus past perspective in regard to justice is a false alternative.
- What is the difference between making mistaken egoistic choices and still being egoistic and choosing bad values and claiming egoism?
- How does the unit perspective apply to the process of induction?
- Why do concepts in epistemology presume instances of them before inductive processes identifying them?
- Why is the fact of fallibility not sufficient to explain the need for objectivity?
- What facts about the mind do you need to have before you can even confront the problem of error?
- How is concept formation different from induction?

Lecture Six

- Describe the origin of the distinction between percepts and concepts in early Greek philosophy.
- What crucial step or observation did Aristotle introduce in this distinction?
- Identify and explain what Aristotle had to learn to understand how to answer Plato's misconception of concepts.
- What method did Aristotle use to grasp the process of forming concepts? Why was this so unique?
- What did the early Greek thinkers have to observe about ideas to get them to the starting point for discovering logic?
- What steps did Aristotle have to take to form his concept of logic?

- Why is the question of form so important?
- What are the steps between understanding validity and understanding proof?
- What are the relevant contrasts to objectivity?

Lecture Seven

- How did Ayn Rand's modern perspective allow her to grasp more fully the role of order in knowledge as a step in understanding objectivity?
- What role does the observation that knowledge is integrated play in the generalization about the structure of knowledge?
- How does measurement in knowledge acquisition push forward the process?
- Describe the inductive observations one would make to realize that consciousness has identity.
- How did Ayn Rand approach the main questions of concept formation?
- Explain the importance of the spiral theory of knowledge.
- How does Ayn Rand's theory of concept formation allow for a new perspective on the question of the objectivity of knowledge? In contrast to what other views?
- Why does Rand's use of "method" in place of "logic" in her definition matter?
- What is the significance of Rand's reformulation of objectivity?
- How can we use the genus method here to differentiate this reformulation?

Lecture Eight

- How can a rationalist approach produce both the position that force necessarily invalidates the mind and the position that thinking is still possible even under force?
- Why is it necessary to show that force negates specific conclusions of the mind before you conclude that it is anti-mind in principle?
- Explain how the first stage of inducing that force is evil can easily become the misidentification that all frustrated desires are examples of force.
- How does one go from recognizing that force frustrates achieving selfish values to understanding that it negates one's ideas?
- Provide a unique example of an everyday choice you might make that could illustrate how force could negate the specific knowledge behind that choice.
- What steps are required to proceed from force as against specific conclusions to force as a negation of the faculty of reasoning as such?

- How would a false theory of concept formation, say, that it happens by revelation, would lead to mental paralysis?
- Why does every act of force not negate the mind and make thinking impossible?
- How does circumscribing force not work in isolation?
- What is the difference between thinking about something while experiencing force versus thinking about what someone who is forcing you either wants you to or wants you not to?

Lecture Nine

- What is the inductive method of “meeting in the middle” that Dr. Peikoff describes? Why is it a useful approach on some topics? Which ones specifically?
- What are the differentiating factors of sexual pleasure versus other pleasures?
- Explain the two basic types of pleasures and give some examples of each.
- Why does contrasting sex with work and art help us understand it better?
- What differentiates the pleasure of sex and work?
- What differentiates the pleasure of sex and art?
- In what way can we observe the opposite mental and physical experience of sex? What kinds of evaluations are part of that?
- Why are the broadest evaluations about self and reality necessarily a part of the experience of sex?

Lecture Ten

- What is the importance of the valuer in understanding the nature of value?
- What does it mean that the good is an aspect of man’s relationship to reality?
- What might have Ayn Rand known about values, her own values specifically, long before she understood the nature of concept formation?
- Expound on what it means to say that ethics is hypothetical. How does that apply to the status of values? What might it leave out?
- What does it mean to have an ultimate goal that is tied to or mandated by reality?
- If one reached the induction of life as the standard of value, show how it would be necessary to re-examine all values to understand the objectivity of values. How did Ayn Rand integrate these values with her discovery of life as the standard?

- How would one integrate the understanding of the objectivity of concepts with that of values? What is the analogy that ties the two together?
- What is the vital importance of the principle of the objectivity of values? In contrast to what?
- Why are causal connections so important to inductions?

Lecture Eleven

- Why do we have to start our understanding of the arbitrary with the generalized observation that some ideas have a basis? What does this mean about the concept?
- Provide three original examples of statements with a basis and three without.
- Why is it not self-evident that a claim is baseless?
- When does a series of statements become a basis for believing a claim? What factors would apply?
- Why is it not actually possible to refute an arbitrary claim?
- What part of someone making an arbitrary claim can be reasoned about?
- Explain the difference between being unable to think about a specific topic and mental paralysis as a result of arbitrary claims.
- How is rejecting the arbitrary without thought actually protecting your need to think?
- Why is simply asking someone “why” they are asking a question a method to determine whether it is arbitrary or not?

Lecture Twelve

- You should review and complete the answers to the provided final exam before listening to this session.