

A Pedagogical Case for Ethics First and Epistemology Last in Intro Phil:

Against Foundationalist Topic-Sequencing in Introduction to Philosophy Courses

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- **“Foundationalist” Topic-Sequences**
 - e.g.: **Unit 1: Epistemology**, Unit 2: Metaphysics, ...[much later]: **Ethics**
 - Common
- **Intro Phil education:**
 - **Content**
 - **Skills/Methods**
- **Case from Skills/Methods Development** (for opening with Ethics)
 - Option A: Opening Unit: **Skills/Methods** (e.g., logic) **without** Phil Content
 - Turns-off some students (risks locking-in disengagement)
 - Option B: Opening Unit: **Skills/Methods** **with** Phil Content
 - **Which Content?**
 - Since Skills/Methods throughout course, the **Opening Unit should be...**
 - the one most conducive to **Skills/Methods** development
 - = unit whose concepts students have **most facility** with & are generally most **familiar** with
 - = **Ethics**
 - **vs. Epistemology**
 - e.g., conceptual analysis: cases of ‘knowledge’ vs. ‘fairness’
 - **Learning unfamiliar methods using unfamiliar content**
 - Inclusion considerations
- **Case from Engagement** (for opening with Ethics)
 - Content students are **most predisposed** to engage—i.e., **Ethics**—should come **first**
 - Set engagement **precedent**
 - Content **less predisposed** to engage—e.g., **Epistemology**— should come **later**
 - Receive biggest engagement **boost from experience and Skill/Method** development during course
- **Considering the Cases from Skills/Methods Development & Engagement, Intro Phil should open with Ethics and cover Epistemology last**

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How Far into Intro Phil Textbooks until the Ethics Chapter? Average = 56%

E.g., if Ethics is the 3rd chapter out of 4, total, then Ethics starts 50% of the way into the textbook (not 75%). The **sample** consists of Intro Phil textbooks in the online catalogues [May 2020] of Cengage, McGraw-Hill, Oxford University Press, and Routledge. Excludes chronological textbooks (e.g., 1st ancient, 2nd medieval, etc.). Amount of primary source readings (i.e., is a “reader”) does not affect inclusion.

Author / Textbook	%
Adler & Elgin / Philosophical Inquiry: Classical and Contemporary Readings (2007)	43%
Allhoff, Mallon, & Nichols / Philosophy: Traditional and Experimental Readings (2012)	70%
Baronett / Journey into Phil.: An Intro. with Classic and Contemporary Readings (2016)	60%
Bowie, Michaels, & Solomon / Twenty Questions: An Intro. to Philosophy (7 th ed.) (2011)	67%
Cahn & Eckert / Philosophical Horizons: Introductory Readings (2 nd ed.) (2012)	80%
Cahn / Exploring Philosophy (2017)	47%
Cahn / The World of Philosophy (2018)	71%
Chrisman et. al / Philosophy for Everyone (2 nd ed.) (2016)	25%
Cunning / Everyday Examples: An Introduction to Philosophy (2015)	13%
Davis / Stories of Philosophy (2019)	83%
Falzon / Philosophy Goes to the Movies: An Introduction to Philosophy (3 rd ed.) (2014)	33%
Feinberg & Shafer-Landau / Reason & Responsibility: Rdngs...Problems of Phil. (2017)	83%
Gendler, Siegel, & Cahn / Elements of Philosophy (2007)	20%
Hallman / Traversing Philosophical Boundaries (4 th ed.) (2012)	50%
Kessler / Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader (9 th ed.) (2016)	0%
Litch & Karofsky / Philosophy through Film (3 rd ed.) (2014)	55%
Miller & Jensen / Questions that Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy (2009)	74%
Mitchell / Roots of Wisdom: A Tapestry of Philosophical Traditions (2019)	67%
Perry, Bratman, & Fischer / Introduction to Philosophy (2018)	57%
Pojman / Philosophy: The Pursuit of Wisdom (5 th ed.) (2006)	71%
Pojman & Fieser / Introduction to Philosophy (2007)	83%
Pojman & Vaughn / Philosophy: The Quest for Truth (2019)	55%
Pritchard / What is this thing called Philosophy? (2015)	0%
Rachels & Rachels / Problems from Philosophy (2012a)	77%
Rachels & Rachels / The Truth About the world (2012b)	83%
Rauhut / Rdngs. on the Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy (3 rd ed.) (2009)	71%
Rosen et. al / The Norton Introduction to Philosophy (2 nd ed.) (2018)	57%
Schick & Vaughn / Doing Phil.: An Intro. through Thought Experiments (6 th ed.) (2019)	71%
Sober / Core Questions in Philosophy (7 th ed.) (2020)	100%
Solomon & Higgins / The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy (2013)	64%
Solomon, Higgins, & Martin / Introducing Philosophy (2015)	77%
Timmons & Shoemaker / Knowledge, Nature, and Norms (2014)	100%
Vaughn / Great Philosophical Arguments (2011)	86%
Vaughn / Philosophy: Here and Now (2018)	22%
Velasquez / Philosophy: A Text with Readings (2017)	67%
Warburton / Philosophy: Basic Readings (2 nd ed.) (2014)	14%
Washburn / Philosophical Dilemmas (2013)	0%
AVERAGE	56%