

UNIVERSITE BENBOULAIID -BATNA 2-
FACULTE DES LANGUES ETRANGERES
DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

Année Universitaire 2020/2021

Module : Sciences Humaines et Sociales

Niveau : 1ère année/ Semestre II

Unité : Découverte

Coefficient: 01

Crédit: 02

Mode d'évaluation : **EXAMEN**

Teacher

AMMARI H.

Contact information

Email: h.ammari@univ-batna2.dz

Office: N° 04-Departement of English-

Brief Introduction to Philosophy

DEFINITION

The word philosophy is derived from the two Greek words, *philo (to love)* and *sophia (wisdom)*. So, Philosophy means, love of wisdom. Wisdom consists of an in-depth understanding of facts and events, their interrelations and interconnections, and also their consequences and implications. This calls for the knowledge of the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of things. Philosophy deals with three fields of inquiry: metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. Metaphysics is the study of reality. Epistemology is the study of knowledge. Axiology is the study of values.

Greek Philosophy

The earliest Western philosophers were Greeks. They spoke dialects of the Greek language. They were familiar with the Greek poems of *Homer and Hesiod*, and worshiped Greek Gods like *Zeus, Apollo, and Aphrodite*. They lived not on the mainland of Greece, but in outlying centers of Greek culture, on the southern coasts of Italy or on the western coast of what is now Turkey. They flourished in the sixth-century B.C, the century which began with the deportation of the Jews to Babylon. These early philosophers were also early scientists, and several of them were also religious leaders.

In the beginning wisdom covered all branches of human knowledge and there was no distinction between **philosophy and science**, between theoretical sciences and practical sciences, between human science and natural sciences.

The earliest thinkers in the Western philosophy were the **pre-Socratic philosophers** and they lived before **Socrates (469–399B.C.)**. These pioneering thinkers posed several questions and they wanted to know what holds everything together so that Earth and everything in it does not fly apart. The Pre-Socratic philosopher's central concerns were what is the nature of ultimate reality or the world? What is the relationship between the one and many? What is the nature of change? How did the universe begin?. The Pre-Socratic thinkers **rejected mythology and poetry of Homer** (the famous Greek poet **Homer**, author of the **Iliad** and **the Odyssey**, put many myths into writing) and **Hesiod** (a Greek poet who lived about 700 B.C.). They avoided the pseudo-science of divination, where one tries to know the minds of gods. The early philosophers used reason, logic, evidence, argument, and sense experience. The pre-Socratics questioned Homer's poetic accounts of the gods. They also questioned Hesiod's contention that heaven and Earth consisted of a god and goddess locked in an embrace until their son forced them apart. The aim of the first philosophers was to find natural, or scientific, explanations instead of supernatural, or divine, explanations for the world and its processes.

The original Western philosophers lived in **Miletus**, a Greek town in Ionia located **Athens**, Greece, in 600 B.C. The **Milesian philosophers** were known as natural philosophers because their aim was to find **natural** instead of **supernatural explanations** for the world and the way it works. They were also known as the first materialists. They wanted to find out if there was a source from which all things came and to which all things returned. The Milesians wanted to understand the laws of nature. These pre-Socratic philosophers discovered that change is possible only if there is some permanent source or substance that causes the world to exist. Without this permanent substance, each change would completely replace another, and nothing could be held together. These natural philosophers wanted to understand change and permanence by studying nature itself, not by reading or listening to stories about the gods. They speculated that all things arise from the same substance, take different forms at different times, and then return again to the same substance. This pre-Socratic reasoning shows a major shift

from the mythical explanation for **the origins of the cosmos**. Only fragments of what these natural philosophers said and wrote have survived. In fact, most of our information about the pre-Socratics comes from the writings of **Aristotle**, who lived two centuries later. According to him, the first philosopher in the Western world was **Thales**.

