History of Western Philosophy

1. The Theory of the Forms
2. The Nature of Virtue and Vice
3. The Cogito ( “I think, therefore I am” )
4. The Categorical Imperative
5. Thomas Aquinas, Natural Law

* In the Theory of the Forms, Plato writes about the real forms which are different from the natural world, we perceive. The real forms are something which cannot be recognized by us and the natural world is just a shadow of those real things. In the “Allegory of the Cave”, prisoners, who are never been outside of the cave, are being confronted with shadow images, which they believe, are the only things to exist. For them, it is the natural world, a world of forms.
* The Nature of Virtue and Vice is the Aristotelian theory of one’s moral character. The point of the greatest virtue is the “golden mean” which is between an excess and a deficiency of someone’s character.

For example: recklessness = excess

courage = virtue

cowardice = deficiency

* “Cogito, ergo sum” points out the importance of the human mind in Descartes’ Dualism, Body and mind are from different substance and according to Descartes, “ humans can live without a body but not without a mind.” Human beings are non-existent if the mind is not present.
* The Categorical Imperative is the most important aspect in Kantian ethics. It promotes the principles of universal law, free will, and the treatment of rational human beings as not merely means. Kantian ethics is about good moral actions which are not concerned with the outcome.
* Thomas Aquinas ethics is based on Christian ethics which contains natural law. This law is the human participation in eternal law from God and is made up of reason. Natural law teaches one to preserve live and the human inclination to do so. It also speaks about procreation and the meaning and values of marriage which ensure family life and children.