

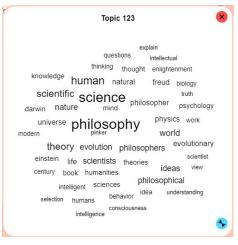
## Philosophy bridges outward from the academy through controversial social debates rather than concrete events or activities.

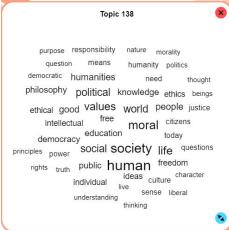
While the academic humanities often travel beyond the university into wider public interest through events, activities, practices, and objects (e.g., books) publicized through the media that the public can "do" (see our research reported in KF-5-8), the philosophy discipline may be an exception. Analyzing our Collection 1 (83,324 articles in U.S. news media mentioning "humanities") with the aid of a topic model (C-1.250), we find that philosophy instead gets taken up and understood in public discourse through controversial, values-oriented topics.

In our model, the word *philosophy* heavily co-occurs in humanities-oriented topics with *history* and *literature* (e.g., topic <u>52</u> on academic news and business), though it typically shows up less frequently. Where *philosophy* stands out is in the following two topics: <u>123</u> (philosophy of science) and <u>138</u> (values in society and education). Articles associated with these topics center on polemical questions of *knowledge*, *truth*, *morals*, and *democracy* in contexts ranging from string theory to metaphysics to social values, including the role of the humanities in cultivating freedom and democracy.

Unlike topics related to history and literature, however (e.g., 196 on book events), there are no public-oriented topics on philosophy events. This suggests that in public conversation philosophy is a more "abstract" discipline than history or literature with fewer concrete or material manifestations such as obituaries of famous or ordinary people interested in philosophy, public lectures on philosophy, etc., to ground it.

Researching the public profile of philosophy in the media leads us to ask: if the humanities are to bridge out of the academy to society by being something the public can "do," how can philosophy be more "do-able"? What kinds of events or programs could academic philosophers create to engage the public?





Topics #123 and #138 viewed in TopicBubbles.

Document collection studied: <u>C-1</u> (<u>start page</u>)
Topic model studied: <u>C-1.250</u>. (250-topics)

Interesting sample topics: 123, 138

Evidentiary documentation: Documentation node

[TBD]; WE1S report