

Central Teachings of Stoicism

Ethics (how to act toward others)

Physics (order of the universe)

Logic (rational critical thinking; questioning)

Virtue (Four Central Virtues: To be Wise, Just, Courageous, Moderate)

Character (integrity, virtuous, moral strength)

Tranquility (contentment, peacefulness, balanced, centered)

Seek Happiness (“good-demon” – self and social)

Reason (practical philosophy)

A Philosopher is a “doctor of the soul/mind”

Nature-centered (everything a part of the universe, the All)

“Fortune” (goddess of chance, luck, fate/Greek Tyche—holds a rudder)

Cosmopolitan perspective (one single community)

Unity in society (equality, justice: balancing right relationships)

Apatheia (not controlled by emotions)

“Stoicism is a Hellenistic eudaimonic philosophy, which means that we can expect it to be influenced by its immediate predecessors and contemporaries, as well as to be in open critical dialogue with them. These includes Socratic thinking, as it has arrived to us mainly through the early Platonic dialogues; the Platonism of the Academic school, particularly in its Skeptical phase; Aristotelianism of the Peripatetic school; Cynicism; Skepticism; and Epicureanism. It is worth noting, in order to put things into context, that a quantitative study of extant records concerning known philosophers of the

ancient Greco-Roman world (Goulet 2013) estimates that the leading schools of the time were, in descending order: Academics-Platonists (19%), Stoics (12%), Epicureans (8%), and Peripatetics-Aristotelians (6%).

Eudaimonia was the term that meant a life worth living, often translated nowadays as “happiness” in the broad sense, or more appropriately, flourishing. For the Greco-Romans this often involved—but was not necessarily entirely defined by—excellence at moral virtues. The idea is therefore closely related to that of virtue ethics, an approach most famously associated with Aristotle and his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Broadie & Rowe 2002), and revived in modern times by a number of philosophers, including Philippa Foot (2001) and Alasdair MacIntyre (1981/2013).”

“Zeno established the tripartite study of Stoic philosophy comprising **ethics, physics and logic**. The ethics was basically a moderate version of Cynicism; the physics was influenced by Plato’s *Timaeus* and encompassed a universe permeated by an active (that is, rational) and a passive principle, as well as a cosmic web of cause and effect; the logic included both what we today refer to as formal logic and epistemology, that is, a theory of knowledge, which for the Stoics was decidedly empiricist-naturalistic.”

“For the Stoics “nature” was synonymous with “god.”

“Indeed, it is because of this and other passages that Ferraiolo (2015), for instance, concludes that: “metaphysical doctrines about the nature and existence of God, and a rationally governed cosmos, are rather cleanly separable from Stoic practical counsel, and its conductivity to a well-lived, eudaimonistic life. Stoicism may have developed within a worldview infused with presuppositions of a divinely-ordered universe ... but the efficacy of Stoic counsel is not dependent upon creation, design, or any form of intelligent cosmological guidance.”

“On balance, it seems fair to say that the ancient Stoics did believe in a (physical) god that they equated with the rational principle organizing the cosmos, and which was distributed throughout the universe in a way that can be construed as pantheistic. While it is the case that they maintained that an understanding of the cosmos informs the understanding of ethics, construed as

the study of how to live one's life, it can also be reasonably argued that Stoic metaphysics underdetermined—on the Stoics' own conception—their ethics, thus leaving room for a “God or Atoms” position that may have developed as a concession to the criticisms of the Epicureans, who were atomists.”

source: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy