The Philosophical Calling

On Wednesday, 8/31, we will focus on what philosophy is.


What would it be like to be “philosophical” (in the sense of these definitions) as we respond to the issues and problems we encounter?

1) Let’s say you have begun thinking about whether there is intelligent life on other planets (or in other solar systems). You are really perplexed, and would like to resolve this issue. What would a philosophical approach be?

2) As you may know, Congress has discussed different schemes to reform Medicare and keep the system from going bankrupt. One scheme controls costs by requiring Medicare recipients to use HMOs instead of their own personally chosen physicians, another scheme raises taxes, another would require wealthy retirees to pay a greater portion of their health costs, and so on. Let’s say you are a Congressman and want to determine which one to support. What would a philosophical approach be?

3) Let’s say you have moved to another country. You don’t want to do anything that is morally wrong. What would a philosophical approach be?

As you think about the nature of philosophy, can you see any difference between

-- being philosophical and being logical
-- being philosophical and being objective
-- being philosophical and being honest?

In class we will discuss these questions, as well as reflect on the question of whether or not you believe Socrates should have been convicted and sentenced to death.

Written Assignment #1 -- Due in class Wednesday, 8/31
Briefly respond to the following question. If you had been on Socrates’ jury, would you have voted that he was guilty? Why, or why not?