

The Modern/Post-modern Shift

3000 Years of Western Philosophical History in Outline

	Middle Era	French Revolution 1789	Modern Era	Fall of the Berlin Wall 1989	Post-Modern Era
	Greeks – Renaissance Reformation – Enlightenment		Industrial Revolution – Colonialism Consumerism – Individualism		Data Explosion (Computers/Internet) Single Superpower Era
The Nature of Truth and Knowledge	- Truth, Right and Wrong are seen as absolutes, passed down from on high. Knowledge is also passed down through hierarchy and time.		- Truth, Right and Wrong can be determined reliably through human reason. Knowledge is a product of human reason and progress. Everything is ultimately 'knowable'.		- Deep mistrust of absolute Truth. Truth, as well as beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and is determined by individuals or small groups, not society as a whole. We can only truly know through personal experience.
Focus of Loyalty	- Loyalty is hierarchical, owed to those above you.		- Loyalty and Commitment to common ideals and identity are valued. Institutions are needed, trusted and worthy of loyalty.		- Formal Hierarchies, Institutions & Structures are deeply suspect. Only networks (communities) of those who share interests, values and meaningful experience are worthy of loyalty.
Nature of Authority	- God is the highest Authority. Authority is conferred from above.		- Authority is largely Knowledge-based, distributed through the structure of institutions.		- Authority is Experiential & earned, not conferred. Story & Action must match – no tolerance for hypocrisy.
Orientation to the World	- Fatalistic; God determines the outcome; we have little to say.		- Human nature is basically good. Orientation is basically optimistic and outward looking.		- Orientation is less confident (more worried) and more inward looking.