

## **“The philosophical life” – an essentially contested concept**

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The concept of “the philosophical life” is central to Philosophical Practice, both logically and historically; logically because Philosophical Practice is about philosophizing in and on the life one lives; historically because philosophical practitioners – since Achenbach and even beyond, since Sokrates – have used this concept (in different variations) to make sense of the philosophical examination of life in Philosophical Practice.

Nevertheless, in this presentation I will argue that the concept of “the philosophical life” is essentially contested, i.e. essentially involves disputes about its proper significance. Drawing on analyses of the concept of “the philosophical life” in Philosophical Practice-literature – through the “glasses” of (among others, but most notably) Hannah Arendt and Charles Taylor – I will argue that the philosophical life is not only a matter of the cultivation of philosophical ideas and practices, but extends to asking “difficult questions” that are neither a mere prelude to inquiry nor peripheral to it, but central to it. Thus, the philosophical life should not be understood as a matter of living a certain philosophy (e.g. a systematic set of beliefs and values), whether this is the philosophy of a certain tradition or one’s own, more or less “private” one. Rather, we must treat the question of what it means to live a philosophical life as a radically open question, i.e. a question that needs to be raised continuously in life rather than a question that is answered before one engage in life.