

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Faculty of Arts and Science

APRIL 2012 EXAMINATIONS

PHL201H1S
Introductory Philosophy
Prof. Hutchinson

Duration – 2 hours

No Aids Allowed

All three Parts of the exam are required.
Each Part is of equal value.
All questions are of equal value.

Part 1. Descartes questions. Attempt *either* 1A *or* 1B.

1A: What are the differences, according to Descartes, between humans and beasts? How do these differences factor into your self-understanding of being human?

1B: “If there still are men who have not been sufficiently persuaded of the existence of God and of their soul by means of the reasons I have brought forward, I very much want them to know that all the other things of which they think themselves perhaps more assured, such as having a body, that there are stars and an earth, and the like, are less certain” (Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, Part Four). Comment on this and other passages where Descartes ranks the items of knowledge in terms of their certainty; and do you agree with his ranking?

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Part 2. Rousseau questions. Attempt *either* 2A *or* 2B.

2A: What are the differences, according to Rousseau, between humans, in their original and pre-civilized condition, and other animals? How do these differences factor into your self-understanding of being human?

2B: “It is to this ardor for making oneself the topic of conversation, to this furor to distinguish oneself which nearly always keeps us outside ourselves, that we owe what is best and worst among men, our virtues and vices, our sciences and our errors, our conquerors and our philosophers, that is to say, a multitude of bad things against a small number of good ones” (Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Part Two). Comment on this and other passages where Rousseau laments the zeal for distinction and the alienation that together characterize the corrupted state of modern humans.

Part 3. Comparative questions. Attempt *either* 3A *or* 3B.

3A: Compare and contrast Aristotle’s account of the development of the arts and sciences among humans with Rousseau’s account. What philosophical lessons should we contemporary humans draw from this sort of information and speculation about pre-history?

3B: For both Aristotle and Descartes, the mathematical sciences have a particular affinity with philosophical inquiry. Explain the connections that they saw between these fields of inquiry, comparing and contrasting the ideas of Aristotle and Descartes about what exactly these connections are.