

## Guiding Questions for Reading and Discussion

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PHIL 1301: Introduction to Philosophy

*Nota Bene:* The numbers on the left refer to the week and then either part one or part two of the aforementioned week in the following convention: WW.PP, such as 03.02 for Week 3, Part 2.

For MW and TR sections, parts one and two refer to explicit days of class — e.g., part one on MT and part two on WR. For MWF sections, part one is extended into W, and part two begins W and ends F. When possible, MWF sections will finish part one M and begin part two W, leaving F for questions, exploration, and growth. This extra time has yet to happen as content is plentiful.

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02.01-03.01    Henri Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics” [1903], in *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2007 [1946]), 133-69.

Bergson is a French philosopher known for intuitionism and was widely popular. Here is a link to an article with some biographical information on Bergson. The level of summarization in this article is not detailed enough to answer the prompt below, which needs to be answered with the primary source’s specific argument, but reading it as well may help you to understand and to develop your answer:

["Henri Bergson, Celebrity" by Emily Herring \(2019\)](#)

### Exam Essay Prompt (verbatim):

*How does the intuition of concrete duration prove that I am connected to everyone else and everything else in existence?*

In your answer, include, *with personal examples*:

- a) the distinction between intuition and analysis;
- b) the intuition of/to oneself in unity and multiplicity, in totality and detail;
- d) the capacity of intuition vs. images vs. concepts to communicate duration;
- c) the distinction between elements and parts;
- e) the outward, listening movement from self to world/others; and
- f) at least one image or metaphor from Bergson’s text, such as:

- (i). sketch of the tower of Notre Dame
- (ii). the color orange on a spectrum with red and yellow
- (iii). psychological studies
- (iv). a ball moving through the air, in motion along a curve

Core Guiding Questions:

- 2. What is it like to experience the intuition of concrete duration, including the memory of one's own concrete duration as well as the concrete duration(s) of others?
- 3. How do we harmonize with our own concrete duration? How do we listen in order to augment and to dilate ourselves and our imaginations to others' concrete durations and to their lived perspectives?
- 4. Which is clearer to the mind: intuition or analysis?
- 5. How are elements different from parts? Reference the argument about psychological studies isolating a specific element of consciousness.
- 6. How am I connected to others through the intuition of concrete duration?

Additional Guiding Questions:

- 7. Why does motion come before stasis? A curve before a point? An integral before a differentiation?
- 8. What is the significance of the analogy of the artist in Paris sketching the tower of Notre Dame?
- 9. Between which two extremes does metaphysics operate?
- 10. Did concrete duration begin with my birth? Will it outlive me?
- 11. What is the significance of the analogy of orange as one shade amidst many in a manifold, one shade on a fluid and notch-less continuum between shades across the visible light spectrum?

**03.02 Intuitionism, In-Person Bluebook Essay Exam, 45min.**

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04.01 Plato, *Apology*, in *Five Dialogues*, second edition, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 21-44.

Plato is a Greek philosopher known for writing in dialogue (e.g., conversational) format and for following on the tradition of Socrates. Socrates is known for being executed in defense of the philosophical life and for inquiry as Socratic method.

- 1. How is Socrates able to confidently (i.e., with “serene spiritual and moral beauty of character”) face whatever may come his way, including his probable

death-sentence and impending death?

2. Why can no one harm Socrates, and how is this inability to be harmed related to the human soul's virtue?

04.02 Plato, *Republic*, excerpts from Books I, II, and IV, in *The Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, assoc. ed. D.S. Hutchinson, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 971-73, 998-1002, 1052-77.

1. Why is listening important to personal wellbeing? (Book I; pp. 972-73)
2. What determines virtue? How can objects have different virtues from humans? [arete]
3. Would someone be happy with the Ring of Gyges? (Book II; pp. 998-1002)
4. How does the tripartite soul relate to the just city? (Book IV; pp. 1059-77)

05.01 Plato, *Republic*, excerpts from Books VI and VII, in *The Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, assoc. ed. D.S. Hutchinson, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 1127-55.

1. How does the Form of the Good illuminate experience? (Book VI; pp. 1127-30)
2. Is the visible or the intelligible realm of being clearer to the mind? (Book VI; pp. 1130-32)
3. How is the instrument [organ] of learning revealed through the Allegory of the Cave? (Book VII; pp. 1132-55)

05.02 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books I, II, and VIII, second edition, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999), xiii-xxviii, 1-30, 121-23.

1. How does eudaimonia mean happiness but not hedonistic/egoistic pleasure?
2. How does "the mean" of virtue allow just action to depend on history/context?
3. What are the three types of friendship, and which type is most ethical/just?
4. What are the roles of habit and practice in the formation of enacted virtue?
5. Why must reason be enacted, and how does this enacted reason relate to a diversity of pleasures unique to each activity, pleasant in the doing itself?

**End of Ancient Philosophy Unit; exam w/ Modern Philosophy, end of Week 8.**

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06.01 René Descartes, First Meditation, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies* [1641], ed. John Cottingham, trans. John Cottingham (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013 [1986]), 12-15 .

1. What is the goal of The Protagonist of the *Meditations*?
2. Why does doubt function the same as disproving inherited beliefs?
3. Why does The Protagonist not have to doubt every single belief individually?
4. What are the three reasons for skepticism of all inherited belief?
5. How is the Evil Deceiver a rhetorical device without argumentative work?

Descartes, Second Meditation, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 16-23.

5. Why can I not doubt *cogito ergo sum*, or *I am thinking, therefore I exist*?
6. How do we know the wax is the same wax after changing form through melting?
7. How does our judgment-perception of the automatons prove that all sense perception is actually and has always actually been mental judgment?
8. What does this say about our perception, cognition, and mind in relation to the world we believe is external to us? In other words, are our worlds truly external?
9. Is our belief that worlds are external to us sufficient evidence to prove they are?
10. Are there any experiences which do not count as thinking or mental activity [in the Second Meditation]? Can we access non-thinking reality, non-thought?

06.02 Descartes, Third Meditation, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 24-36.

1. How do I know God exists, and why does it lead to the Cartesian circle?
2. What is the Cartesian Circle?
3. What is clarity and distinctness?
4. What is the difference between objective and formal reality?
5. Why must there be at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect?
6. How does Descartes go from qualitative to categorical justification?
7. What is the relationship between *henosis* and the natural light? What is the relation between *henosis*, the natural light, and clarity and distinctness?
8. Do we resolve the Cartesian Circle differently if understanding is partaking of God?
9. How is rationalism different from empiricism?

07.01 Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part III (e.g., Preface, Definitions, and Propositions 1-3), in *Philosophy of Benedict de Spinoza*, New Edition, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Tudor Publishing, Co., 1936), 127-35.

1. How does affect refer to emotion, gesture, mood, feeling, impact, cause, effect, capacity, potential, power, and knowledge all at once?
2. How does affect get at self-other all at once in the simultaneity of (i)affecting-(ii)being-affected, i.e., (i)being-affected-(ii)affecting?
3. How does affect offer conceptual constructions for a non-linear and zonal metaphysics, i.e., how does affect allow us to think about environments and systems of causation more fluidly and flexibly as a field rather than as causal 'arrow' or throughline? Use an example.
4. How does individual and environmental historicity impact affect and freedom?

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 1940.

5. What is *weak* messianism? How does it differ from *strong* messianism?
6. How can the dead speak again (through re-interpretation)?
7. What do we owe to the dead and the suffered?
8. How do history and interpretation impact affect? How does affect impact history and interpretation?

Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza, The Velocities of Thought," Seminar 15 (March 31, 1981), 1-10.

9. What are Deleuze's two types of power? (external power which delimits our energies and opportunities [sometimes away from danger]; and internal capacity which enables/empowers us)
10. To which two general emotions do these two types of power correlate in direct experience, according to Spinoza? (joy and sadness; wild winds and depressions)

Brian Massumi, *Politics of Affect* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), vii-xii (Preface), 1-12 (Ch. 1 excerpt, interview by Mary Zournazi [2001]).

11. How does Massumi bring Spinozan affect into process-relational thought?
12. What real-world impacts does affect theory have? What crises does affect theory (e.g., Spinoza, Benjamin, Deleuze, Massumi, Whitman) resolve or inform?
13. How can understanding historicized zonal process affect aid global well-being?

Justin Hill, "Absorption, Contemplation, and Affection: Benjamin, Adorno, and Spinoza on Critical Aesthetics," *Dialogue: Journal of Phi Sigma Tau* (October 2019).

14. How does Benjamin argue that passive absorption is more effective than active contemplation, which Adorno nevertheless defends?
15. How does Spinozan affect theory defend Benjamin's position from Adorno's critique?

07.02

Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: *What is Enlightenment?*" [1784], trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), available originally from the New York Public Library (NYPL) at [https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/kant\\_whatisenlightenment.pdf](https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/kant_whatisenlightenment.pdf).

1. What is enlightenment, for Kant?
2. What produces enlightenment?
3. What is the difference between the public and private uses of reason?
4. Why is it always a violation of human rights to set down a set of rules that can never be questioned, altered, revised, or rewritten?
5. What does the monarch owe to its people regarding freedom of reason/thought?

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: with On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*, third edition, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993 [1785]), iv-xiii (Foreword and Introduction), 1-17 (Preface and First Section).

6. What is a good will?
7. Instead of happiness, what is the purpose of reason?
8. What is duty?
9. What is respect?
10. There are five formulations of the categorical imperative; these five are different ways of saying the same principle that cannot be put directly into words in only one way. What are the two forms of the categorical imperative related to universal law and end-in-itself? Explain what these two formulations in particular emphasize and signify. Also explain how they are derived from other aspects of the argument, a priori.
11. What is the difference between a priori and a posteriori? Why is this significant to the definition of a good will as well as to the transition from respect (respect for what?) to respect for universal law as such, i.e., universalizability of all my actions?
12. What is the difference between means and ends?

08.01

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapters 1 and 2, in *The Classical Utilitarians: Bentham and Mill*, ed. John Troyer (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), 94-115 (incl. Jeremy Bentham on "Push-Pin versus Poetry")

for context).

1. What is hedonism?
2. What is the difference between instrumental and intrinsic goods?
3. How is utilitarianism different from consequentialism?
4. What is general utilitarianism?
5. How is act-utilitarianism different from rule-utilitarianism?
6. What are the two difficulties of utilitarianism?
7. What is an example of how/when utilitarianism is unfair to the individual / violates individual rights?
8. What is the utility monster?
9. What is the prisoner's dilemma?
10. What is Roko's basilisk?

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**08.02      Ancient / Modern Philosophy, In-Person Bluebook Essay Exam, 45min.**

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09.01      William James, "What Pragmatism Means" [1904], in *Selected Writings*, ed. G.H. Bird (Vermont/London: Everyman, 1995), 3-19.

1. How does pragmatism hinge on the functionalist account of meaning?
2. How is the genetic theory of truth different from universal claims of truth?
3. How does pragmatism differ from both rationalism and empiricism?
4. How does Jamesian pragmatism critique rationalism's religiosity?
5. How does Jamesian pragmatism critique empiricism's non-religiosity?
6. How does pragmatism allow for new developments in religious experience?

09.02-10.01      John Dewey, "The Live Creature," *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee [Penguin Group (USA) Inc.], 2005 [1934]), 1-19.

1. Why are museums an unacceptable starting point for a pragmatist account of art and of aesthetic experience?
  - 1a. Why are works of art more than just objects but are rather also *an* experience in themselves (*an* experience comes back as a backbone, meaningful, sturdy notion in Ch. 3)?
  - 1b. How does mind-body dualism separate art from everyday experience and thereby estrange the live creature from intrinsic spiritual fulfillment?
  - 1c. What role do museums play in this propagation of dualism? How do

museums separate art from everyday life and reinforce mind-body dualism?

2. How do the rhythms of disintegration and consummation between the live creature and its environment produce esthetic experience?

2a. Why does Dewey turn to the live creature for the starting point of esthetic experience and of a philosophy of art (where philosophy must be communicated via discourse, may be a theory, may be an experience or state of affairs, etc.)?

3. How does emotional sense in direct experience produce but also absorb intellectual, linguistic symbolism?

3a. In what ways does this passage show that our actions and decisions are esthetically-motivated in so far as our attention is captured by esthetic interests?

10.02-11.01 Dewey, "The Live Creature and 'Ethereal Things,'" *Art as Experience*, 20-35.

1. What is the difference between mere recognition and esthetic perception?

2. Why is art primary to science, i.e., why is science merely a handmaiden to the arts?

3. What is art's relation to material and etherial things?

4. How does art's capacity for emotional resonance and affection across diverse bodies and histories provide the foundations for a common civil life of democracy and for sharing being/existence/consciousness/experience?

5. How is animism related to esthetic experience?

6. How does reasoning require deflection and abeyance of objections in favor of intuition and imagination?

7. How does esthetic perception require acceptance of half-knowledge?

11.02-12.01 Dewey, "Having an Experience," *Art as Experience*, 36-59.

1. How is *an* experience different (from inchoate experience)?

2. Why can the esthetic not be sharply marked off from intellectual experience?

3. What is required for a stone rolling down a hill to have *an* experience?

4. How are emotions related to experiences?

5. What are the common patterns of every experience?

6. What gives meaning?

7. What kind of intelligence does the artist require?

8. How are the production and the perception of artworks interwoven?

9. How do artworks make themselves?

10. What three traits are required of the artist?

11. How is perception also a form of doing/making (through surrender)?

12. How do emotions permeate their material occasions?

13. Which characteristics of experience are dominant in esthetic experience?

14. What do James's birds' flights and perchings symbolize/represent?



15. When (i.e., under what conditions) is an object peculiarly and dominantly esthetic?

**12.02 American Pragmatism, In-Person Bluebook Essay Exam, 45min.**

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13.01 Jean-Paul Sartre, "Introduction," *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Routledge Great Minds, 2014 [1939]), 1-14.

1. Why is phenomenology better suited than psychology to offer a complete account of human-reality, the world as synthetic totality, and self-conscious subjectivity (i.e., consciousness)?

13.02 Sartre, "I. The Classic Theories," *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, 15-28.

1. What is the finality of emotion?
2. Why are James's peripheric theory and Janet's intellectualist theory of emotion similarly inadequate solutions to the mind-body problem, for the same reason?
3. What is Sartre's alternative, which is an adaptation of Janet's theory?

"II. The Psychoanalytic Theory," *ibid.*, 28-34.

4. Why is the psychoanalytic theory of emotion as an unconscious resolution of drives, urges, impulses, or tensions still inadequate?

14.01-02 Sartre, "III. Outline of a Phenomenological Theory," *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, 34-61, and "Conclusion," *ibid.*, 62-64.

1. How does emotion as a transformation of the world imply and provide evidence for the reality of the magical world, i.e., for the world as fundamentally magical?

15.01 Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life" [1995], in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 25-33.

1. What is *A Life*?

2. What is the significance of the example from Charles Dickens? Why does everyone lose their sense of self to save the degenerate rogue's life? Whose perspective is *A Life*? If we are entangled in strange ways, how does this interact with solipsism?

Deleuze, "Zones of Immanence" [1985], in *Two Regimes of Madness: Gilles Deleuze Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007 [2001]), 266-69.

1. TBD.

15.02 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne O'Byrne (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000 [1996]), ix, xi-xvii, 1-21.

1. What is being-with?  
2. How is each individual a unique access to the origin of existence and therefore each uniquely able to teach us something about the meaning of life?

Nancy, "Of Divine Places" [1986], in *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Michael Holland (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 110-50.

1. TBD.

16.01 Reading Day. (No class.)

16.02 **Continental Philosophy (Final), In-Person Bluebook Essay Exam, 45min.**

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*Final grades available within two weeks under normal, non-exigent circumstances.*