Final Exam Topics
Philosophy 306, Fall 2019

The exam will require you to respond to 3 short essay questions (answers should be about 4-5 bluebook pages apiece). I will give you 8-10 questions from different sections of the course. You will choose 3 to respond to (from different sections). The exam will be closed note and closed book.

Ideally, going into the exam, you should have a good grip on the following topics. I will not directly ask you about anything from the optional reading list, but you can certainly bring this material in if it helps you to answer the prompt.

Week 1-3

[Godfrey-Smith Ch. 1-2, van Fraassen, Sober, Carnap*]

- The demarcation problem

- van Fraassen's definitions of realism and anti-realism (about scientific theories)

- The underdetermination of theory by evidence

- The three central theses of logical positivism: the verificationist theory of meaning, the analytic/synthetic distinction, and the sense/senseless/nonsense distinction

- The positivist critique of metaphysics and ethics

- Sober's definition of reductionism

- The multiple realizability objection to reductionism coming from Putnam and Fodor

Week 4-5

[Godfrey-Smith Ch. 3, 14, Lecture Notes, Harman, Goodman*]

- The difference between deductive and inductive reasoning

- Hume's problem

- Reflective Equilibrium

- Grue Problem

- Inference to Best Explanation

- Bayesian Confirmation Theory

Week 6-9

[Godfrey-Smith Ch. 5-6, 8-9, Roush, Weisberg & Muldoon, Kuhn*, Longino*]

- Normal Science v. Revolutionary Science

- Skeptical Meta-Induction

- Roush's reliabilist response

- The critique of logical positivism coming from history, sociology, and feminist philosophy of science

- Social Epistemology

- Weisberg and Muldoon's epistemic landscape models

Week 10-13

[Godfrey-Smith Ch. 12-13, Worrall, Ney, Maudlin, Feynman*]

- The No-Miracles Argument

- Structural Realism

- The Quantum Measurement Problem

- Possible solutions: hidden variables, collapse, many-worlds interpretations

- Scientific Explanation: covering law, causal, unificationist models

- Maudlin's thesis linking laws, causation, counterfactuals