

PHI 171 – PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY – FALL 2014

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EXAM STUDY GUIDE

This exam study guide is organized in five sections, as follows:

- A: names of philosophers and historical periods;
- B: arguments and ideas;
- C: terminology;
- D: questions testing your understanding of the material;
- E: analysis of a philosophical quotation.

A. Be familiar with the following philosophers and their historical period:

Ancient:

Heraclitus; Parmenides; Zeno; Aristotle; Lao-Tze; Confucius; Buddha

Medieval:

St. Augustine; St. Thomas Aquinas; St. Anselm; Al-Gazhali

Modern:

Descartes; Voltaire; Blaise Pascal

19-20-th century:

Nietzsche; Clifford; James; Turing; Russell; Wittgenstein; Putnam; Singer; Churchland; Chalmers, Jackson; Rawls; van Inwagen

B. For each of the above philosophers, you should **either** remember one or more philosophical arguments which we have studied in class **or** at least know something notable about their philosophical ideas.

C. You should have a firm grasp of the following **terminology**:

paradox; incompatibilism; determinism; free will; philosophy of mind; syntax vs. semantics; qualia; neuron; reductionism; physicalism; panpsychism; consciousness; agnosticism vs. atheism; a priori vs. a posteriori; belief vs. knowledge; skepticism; foundationalism; difference principle

D. The following questions will help you review the course materials:

TIME AND CHANGE

- Why does St. Augustine say that time only exists in the mind?
- Why does St. Augustine say that the present does not exist?
- What is Einstein's argument that simultaneity is relative?
- Why is Einstein's relativity not merely psychological or perceptual?
- What is the difference between time-as-block and time-as-flow? Which one offers the most accurate description of time?
- What is Parmenides' argument against change?
- In what sense did Zeno help Parmenides? Why are Zeno's arguments called paradoxes?
- What is the paradox of the dichotomy? How would a mathematician respond?

FREE WILL AND THE FUTURE

- What is Aristotle's sea-battle argument?
- What is the difference between "lack of free will" and "determinism"?
- What is the "warrior gene"? Does it matter for the question of free will?
- What do Libet's and Haynes' experiments show? Do they disprove free will?
- What is van Inwagen's argument that free will and determinism are incompatible? What definition of "free will" does he use in his argument?
- Give some examples of possible definitions of "free will"? Which ones are obviously incompatible with determinism and which ones aren't?
- What is a definition of free will that is not incompatible with determinism?

MIND, CONSCIOUSNESS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- What are brain states?
- What are qualia? What's so special about them?
- Jackson offers an argument against physicalism. What is the argument?
- What is the easy problem of consciousness? And the hard problem?
- Why is panpsychism an answer to the hard problem of consciousness?
- What is the Turing test?
- What is the Chinese Room Argument?

GOD AND SUFFERING

- What is the definition of God according to St. Anselm? What role does the fool play in his argument? What objection does Gaunilo raise?
- What is St. Thomas' definition of God?
- What is an infinite regress? Why is it bad?
- What is Hilbert's hotel? Why did we mention it in class?
- What is the difference between the cosmological and the ontological proof? Which is a priori? Which is a posteriori?
- What is the problem of evil and suffering?
- What are some common responses to the problem of evil?
- What does Voltaire say about the Lisbon disaster?
- Do Clifford and James disagree? What are their arguments?
- What is Pascal's wager? How would an atheist respond to Pascal's wager?

BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKEPTICISM

- What is the Malignant Genius Hypothesis? What role does it play in Descartes' *Meditations*?
- In what sense are the Brain in a Vat Hypothesis and the Malignant Genius Hypothesis similar?
- What is Descartes' Archimedean point? In what sense is the "I exist" a certainty?
- How do Russell and Nietzsche respond to Descartes' "I exist"?
- What is Descartes' philosophical project in the *Meditations*?
- What is the difference between foundationalism and the web of beliefs?

- Descartes and Wittgenstein offer different responses to skepticism. How do they respond to skepticism? How do their responses to skepticism differ?
- What does it mean that Descartes' response to skepticism is a foundationalist one? What does it mean that Wittgenstein's response is more along the lines of the idea of a "web of beliefs"?
- What is Putnam's response to skepticism, and in particular, what is his response to the Brain in a Vat Hypothesis?

THE GOOD AND JUSTICE

- What is the point of the drowning child example? What does it tell us about our attitude toward poverty?
- How would Peter Singer respond to the objection that it is better to teach people how to fish rather than give them fish?
- When are inequalities justified according to Rawls? What is the difference principle?
- What is a minimum income? Does it solve the problem of inequalities and incentives?

E. You should be able to read, understand, and analyze a philosophical quotation.