

Philosophy 101

Review

May 1, 2014

Review of Inductive Skepticism

Inductive Inference

- Inference in which the truth of the premises increases the probability of the truth of the conclusion
 - the greater the probability of the conclusion, given the premises, the *stronger* the inductive argument
- Unlike deductive inference, the conclusion of an inductive inference may be false even when the premises are true

Induction & Knowledge

- Inductive inference not only *justifies* our beliefs, it often seems to provide *knowledge*
 - Commonsense knowledge about the future, the unobserved, or probability all rely on induction
 - scientific methodology employs induction to generate its conclusions

Induction and Regularity

- Inductive inferences tend to focus on *regularities*
 - e.g. causal reasoning: similar causes entail similar effects
- We form beliefs based on our experiences of regularity, but are these beliefs justified?
- Does the fact that some regularity has been experienced many times provide any *justification* for beliefs concerning unobserved instances, future events, or probabilities?

The Uniformity Premise

Uniformity: Nature is uniform in that similar effects always follow from similar causes according to exceptionless general laws

The Uniformity Premise

- What justifies Uniformity?
 - Not *deductively* justified
 - Not *inductively* justified
 - Uniformity is meant to justify induction, so justifying Uniformity via induction would be viciously *circular*

The Skeptical Conclusion

- There is no justification of inductive inference
- Beliefs based on induction are not justified/rationally held
- Since knowledge requires justification, we don't have inductively based knowledge

Exam Review

Time & Place

- BEAD E103
- Friday, May 9: 10:00 to 12:00 noon
- <http://registrar.unl.edu/final-exam-information-spring>

Format

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- ① Argument extraction (2, 10 pts)
- ② Definitions (4, 3 pts)
- ③ Multiple choice (14, 2 pts)
- ④ Short essay (2, 20 pts)

Argument Extraction (Pick 2 of 3)

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- ① What's the conclusion of the argument?
- ② What support does the conclusion have?
- ③ What material is essential to the argument and what is extraneous?
- ④ Is the argument valid?
- ⑤ Is the argument sound?

Argument Extraction (Pick 2 of 3)

We see that some things lacking cognition, viz., natural bodies, act for the sake of an end. This is apparent from the fact that they always or very frequently act in the same way in order to bring about that which is best, and from this it is clear that it is not by chance, but by design, that they attain the end. But things lacking cognition tend toward an end only if they are directed by something that has cognition and intelligence, in the way that an arrow is directed by an archer. Therefore, there is something intelligent by which all natural things are ordered to an end – and this we call God. (Aquinas, "The Fifth Way")

Argument Extraction (Pick 2 of 3)

- ① If something always or mostly acts for the best, then it acts for an end.
- ② Natural beings always or mostly act in the same way in order to bring about the best.
- ③ \therefore Natural beings act for an end (modus ponens, 1, 2).
- ④ If natural beings act for an end, then they are directed by something that has cognition and intelligence.
- ⑤ \therefore Natural beings are directed by something that has cognition and intelligence (modus ponens, 3, 4).
- ⑥ We call the director of natural beings "God" (definition).

Definitions (Pick 4 of 5)

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Physicalism: Everything that could exist is either physical or depends on the physical

Inductive Inference: Inference in which the truth of the premises makes probable the truth of the conclusion

Multiple Choice (14 questions)

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- Mackie's error theory
- Williams on ethical skepticism & science/ethics divide
- Camus & Nagel on absurdity of life
- Cartesian skepticism & Moore's Proof
- Skepticism about induction

Short Essay (Pick 2 of 3)

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- Mackie's error theory
 - difference between ethics & meta-ethics
 - error theory
 - two arguments for the error theory
 - replies to Mackie's arguments

Short Essay (Pick 2 of 3)

- Cartesian Skepticism & Moore's Proof
 - What is the skeptical argument?
 - What is Moore's argument?
 - What role does epistemic closure play in each of the arguments?
 - What problems come with accepting Moore's proof?

Short Essay (Pick 2 of 3)

- What is the argument for skepticism about induction?
 - What is inductive inference?
 - What is the connection between the experience of regularities, inductive inference, and belief formation?
 - What is the 'Uniformity' premise?
 - Why inductive inference unjustified?