PHILOSOPHY 101: Quiz #1 Solutions

February 15, 2011

1 Chapter 1 — Fill-in the Blanks

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using the appropriate vocabulary from chapter 1.

1. An argument is a collection of statements, one of which is called its conclusion, which is supposed to be supported by its premises.

2. As described in chapter 1, logical analysis proceeds in (at least) two stages. When faced with an argumentative passage, one must first interpret (or reconstruct) the argument in the passage. Only then can one proceed to the second stage, which is called evaluation.

2 Chapter 1 — Short Answer

According to the text, you can evaluate an argumentative essay in terms of (*i*) the rational (or, logical) strength of its argument, (*ii*) its rhetorical power, and/or (*iii*) its literary merit. State clearly the main things that go into each of these three types of evaluation.

The solutions given below are exactly the answers Feldman gives on page 401 of the text.

(*i*) An argument has rational strength when its premises provide good reasons to believe its conclusion.

(*ii*) An argument has rhetorical power when (actual) people tend to be convinced or persuaded by it.

(*iii*) An argument (or a written passage containing an argument) has literary merit when it is well written.

3 Chapter 2 — Fill-in the Blanks

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using the appropriate vocabulary from chapter 2.

1. One should be careful not to confuse sentences, which are just bits of language, with statements, which are (maximally precise) assertions about the world that are either true or false and not both.

2. According to the Objective Theory of Truth, every statement (but, not necessarily every sentence) has exactly one truth value, which is determined by objective features of the world that it describes, and *not* by what people think about the statement in question.

4 Chapter 2 — Short Answer #1

What mistake is made in the following claim?

> The statement that there are an odd number of pebbles in Pebble Beach is neither true nor false, since no one knows how many pebbles there are in Pebble Beach.

This is also a HW #2 problem, so I can't post the solution yet…

5 Chapter 2 — Short Answer #2

One objection to (OTT) not mentioned in the text or in class concerns statements about the future. Consider a critic of (OTT) who says that statements about the future do not have a truth value. For example, the statement

> The Yankees will win the World Series in 2013.

does not have a truth value until the time (fall 2013) comes, and we see whether or not the Yankees do win the 2013 Series. How could a defender of (OTT) respond to this objection? Is the response a good one?

> Careful, this is a very subtle philosophical issue! Does (OTT) say that all statements *currently* have exactly one truth-value? Or, does (OTT) allow that the truth-values of certain statements are *not yet* determined (although, of course, whenever their truth-values do *become* fixed, they become fixed to *precisely one* value)? Defenders of (OTT) might claim that all statements about the future of the world *do currently* have (unique) truth-values. But, this route entails *logical determinism* — the view that all future states of the world are *already* (and, *have always been*) determined. Charitably, then, I would allow the (OTT) defender to take the alternate route described above. Note: this has nothing to do with what can or can't be *known*. It has only to do with which states of the world are *currently determined* (or, *fixed*).