Philosophy 101

(1/27/11)

- I just noticed that *we've already completed chapter 1*!

- Here is the breakdown of the sections of Ch. 1 (now covered)
  - *Chapter 1* of Feldman's *Reason & Argument* (sections):
    - [*Arguments & argument analysis*]
    - [*Reason, rhetoric & argument analysis*]
    - [*Ways people deal with arguments*]
    - [*Impediments to good reasoning*]

- And, here are the (remaining) sections of chapter 2:
  - Truth and Correspondence to the Facts [into this already]
    - Clarifying the Correspondence Principle (CP)
    - The One Truth Value Principle (OTV)
  - Rational Belief [this topic will take some time to develop]

Homework #1

- **HW #1 was assigned *last* Thursday**.
- **It is due *next* Thursday: 2/3/11**.
- **It consists of these 5 problems**:
- **(1) p. 8: #4, (2) p. 14: #2, (3) p. 14: #4, (4) p. 20: #4, (5) p. 22: #5**.
- Now, I'll say more about the formatting, structure, *etc*., of your homeworks…

Homework #1 (Cont'd)

- Please write the answers to all homework questions **carefully and legibly**.
- Ideally, you'll **type-up** your homework solutions.
- Write your **name at the top-right of first page**. If there are mutliple pages, **please staple**.
- Answers should be **complete** & **self-contained**.
- **Feldman's answers** to starred exercises (at the end of the book) **are good starting points** for how you should be present your solutions.
- **Complete sentences** (and paragraphs), please.

Homework #1 (Cont'd)

- Here is an example starred exercise (#1 on p. 32).[32]

***1.** The following sentences all contain the word "true," or a variant. In some of the sentences "true" is used in the sense of "corresponds to the facts," and in others it has a different meaning. Indicate which sentences use true in the sense described in the text. For those sentences in which it has a different meaning, explain what that meaning is.

a. Everything stated in my history book is true.
b. He's a true friend.
c. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
d. Your bicycle will run better if you true the wheels.
e. He truly believes that things will turn out well.

Homework #1 (Cont'd)

- Feldman's answers are fine as models here. I'd say:
  - (a) In this sentence, the word "true" has the same meaning as it does in the text/class.
  - (b) In this sentence, the word "true" means something like "loyal" or "genuine" — which is ***not*** the same meaning as in the text/class.
  - (c) Here, "tell *the truth*" means "assert ***only*** statements that you ***believe*** to be true". And, "tell the *whole* truth" means "assert ***all*** (relevant) statements that you ***believe*** to be true". These are ***not*** the same meaning as in the text/class.

Homework #1 (Cont'd)

- Here are models answers for #1 (cont'd):
  - (d) In this sentence, the word "true" means "properly aligned", which is ***not*** the same as the meaning of "true" we are assuming in class.
  - (e) In this sentence, "truly" means something like "really". It is just used to *emphasize* that he does in fact *believe* that things will turn out well (i.e., that his belief is *sincere*). This is ***not*** the same as the meaning of "truly" we are assuming in class.
- Note the use of complete sentences here. [It wouldn't even hurt to *re-state* the sentences…]

Homework #1 (Cont'd)

- Here is another starred exercise from Feldman:

***3.** Could different sentences ever be used to express the same proposition? If so, give some examples. If not, explain why not.

- The answer is "yes". Different sentences can be used to express the same proposition. For instance, consider the following two sentences:
  - "Snow is white."
  - "Schee ist weiß."
- Both of these sentences express the proposition *that snow is white*. Of course, they are different sentences (*not just different sentence* ***tokens****, but different* ***types***!).

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts III

- **More on Sentences *vs* Propositions/Statements**
  - We need to be a bit more careful in our talk about sentences and statements/propositions.
  - First, we need to make a distinction between **sentence types** *vs* **sentence tokens**.
  - A *sentence token* is a concrete utterance or a concrete written usage of a *sentence type in a particular context.*
  - For instance, consider the following sentence *type*:
    - "I am at Rutgers."
  - When ***I*** utter/use a *token* of this *sentence type*, I am (thereby) asserting a *proposition* with the content: *Branden is at Rutgers*.

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts III

- **More on Sentences *vs* Propositions/Statements**
  - But, when *President McCormick* utters a token of the type "I am at Rutgers.", ***he*** is asserting a ***different*** *proposition,* which has the following content: *President McCormick is at Rutgers*.

  - Thus, not only can different sentences be used to express the same proposition, but the same sentence (*type!*) can be used to express different propositions, in different contexts.

  - What matters are the *thoughts (a.k.a., propositions, statements, contents*) that are *expressed*, *not* sentences that express them.

  - When we examine an argumentative passage, we are looking at *a bunch of sentence tokens*, which have been written in a particular context. Those sentence tokens *express propositions*.
    - The *arguments* in such passages are made up of the *propositions expressed — not the sentence tokens used*.

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts IV

- **Calrifying (CP)**
  - My initial rendition of (CP) involved sentences & statements (that is, *sentence tokens* and *the propositions they express*).

    - Because *the propositions* are the bearers of truth and falsity, we should express (CP) *just* in terms of *propositions*.

  - So, a better rendition of (CP) would be the following:

    - (**CP**) A proposition is true just in case it describes things are they actually are. A true proposition corresponds to the facts. A proposition is false just in case it fails to describe things as they actually are. A false propositions does not correspond to the facts.

    ➡ Our first job as *reconstructors of arguments* is to *determine what propositions are expressed in an argumentative passage*.

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts V

- **The One Truth Value Principle: (OTV)**

  - There are *two* **truth values**: **truth** and **falsity**.
  - And, *each proposition has exactly one truth value*. That's (OTV):

    - (**OTV**) Every proposition has exactly one truth value — it is either true or false, but not both.

  - Note: (OTV) says nothing about whether anyone *knows* what the truth value of a proposition happens to be. It just says that every proposition *has exactly one truth value*.

    ★ "The number of people on the island of Manhattan at noon on January 25, 1652, was even."

  - There may be no way to *know* whether the proposition expressed by sentence (★) is true. *Not* a problem for (OTV)!

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts VI

- **Truth and Falsity are *Independent of Attitudes***
  - Whether a proposition is true or false is *independent of people's attitudes toward that proposition*.

  - People may have various feelings or thoughts about a proposition. The truth value of said proposition does not depend on any of these thoughts or feelings.

  - You might think that the following is a counterexample:

    - (P) John does not like the New York Yankees.

  - Granted, it *is true* that John's attitudes ***about the Yankees*** are relevant to whether (P) is true or false.

  - *But*, it is *not* true that *John's attitudes* ***about* (P)** are relevant to whether (P) is true or false. So, (P) is no counterexample.

Truth and Correspondence to the Facts VI

- **Truth and Falsity are *Independent of Attitudes***
  - There are some sentences that may look like they express counterexamples to this independence thesis. For instance:
    - (Q) John hopes that (Q) is true.
  - Now, it *appears* that the truth value of the *sentence* (Q) *does depend on John's attitude toward the sentence* (Q).
  - But, this is not (yet) a counterexample to the independence thesis — since *that* is a thesis about ***propositions***.
  - We will not discuss self-referential sentences in this class (that's an advanced topic in semantics and logic).
  - But, you may want to ask yourself: *what proposition is expressed by the sentence* (Q)? [Perhaps *none* is!]

Rational Belief I

- **Belief, disbelief, and suspension of judgment**
  - There are three **cognitive** (or **epistemic**) **attitudes** one can take toward a proposition. These are the following:
    - **Belief**. If you conclude that a proposition is true, then the appropriate attitude toward that proposition is *belief*.
    - **Disbelief**. If you conclude that a proposition is false, then the appropriate attitude toward that proposition is *disbelief*.
    - **Suspension of Judgment**. If you are *unable to reach a conclusion* concerning the truth-value of *p*, then the appropriate attitude toward *p* is *suspension of judgment*.
  - **Note:** Belief (and disbelief) *come in* ***degrees***. You may be *certain* that *p* is true, or you may only be *highly confident* that *p* is true. These are both *varieties of believing that p is true*.