

**HUM 102: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

**SPRING 2022**

**MIDTERM TAKE-HOME ESSAYS**

1. Please **answer TWO (2)** of the following essay questions. Each essay should be between 1200-1500 words. Each answer is worth fifty percent (50%) of the assignment grade;
2. All answers must be **double-spaced** and typed in Times Roman 12 font;
3. This is an open-book assignment. You can consult your course readings, lectures, and class notes to write your essays. You can, but do not have to, consult outside materials;
4. You will be graded on your mastery of the course materials, and your own independent and critical thinking. Please ***provide citations any texts that you quote*** from the readings or outside source. ***I am interested in your views and answers, written in your own words***;
5. Any evidence of plagiarism from readings, outside sources, or another student’s answers will be penalized; The cut-off point for the “Similarity Report” of your submission should be less than 10%.
6. The take-home assignment will have to be submitted by 11:30 p.m. **on Sunday, March 20, 2022, in the Turnitin software**. Note that Turnitin will not accept any submission at any time after this deadline.

Please answer **Two (2)** of the following questions:

1. According to Aristotle, how can logic be used to arrive at truth or certainty of knowledge. First describe, with examples, what Aristotle means by terms, categories, and statements. Then, thoroughly explain the requirements for a good (that is, valid *and* sound) argument by discussing Aristotle’s method of deduction. In the process, explain what a syllogism means, and how Aristotle makes use of syllogisms to arrive at valid arguments. How does Aristotle distinguish between valid and invalid arguments? Explain Aristotle’s method of identifying invalid arguments with the use of counter-examples (Illustrate your answer with examples). Finally, what does Aristotle mean by “first principles”? Explain why Aristotle considers them necessary and how he relies on inductive method to arrive at these first principles.
2. Discuss Al-Farabi’s conception of knowledge, and how one can arrive at the absolute certainty of knowledge by means of philosophical understanding or prophetic revelations. You can first provide a detailed explanation of Al-Farabi’s discussion of the differences between religion and philosophy. What is the role of religion in his understanding, and why is it important for those who do not have philosophical understanding (or revelation) of the absolute certainty of knowledge, including the knowledge of God? Discuss the different faculties of the soul outlined by Al-Farabi. What is the Active Intellect, and how does the Active Intellect provide the basis for philosophical understanding of absolute certitude of knowledge? And, what is the Imaginative Faculty and how does it provide the basis for revelations as a means of absolute knowledge. Finally, discuss how both philosophy and revelations serve as the basis of absolute knowledge in Al-Farabi’s understanding.
3. Discuss Plato’s Theory of Forms and its relationship to the Form of the Good. In other words, you could first talk about his goals or motives behind developing the Theory of Forms. Next, you could discuss why he finds it important to distinguish between knowledge and opinion. Next, sketch his three lines of argument for the existence or reality of the forms: epistemological, metaphysical, and semantic. Next, draw Plato’s Divided Line and carefully explain what each of the part mean. What are the relationships between the metaphysical and epistemological sides of the Divided line. Use examples to show what Plato means when he says that a visible thing “participates” in its form. Finally, what does he mean by the “higher forms,” and why does the Form of the Good occupy the highest point ion the Divided Line.
4. Plato, Aristotle, Al-Farabi, and Descartes all equate knowledge with certainty. Discuss what each of the philosophers mean by knowledge and certainty, and how one can arrive at certain knowledge. In other words, first outline the meaning and importance of knowledge and certainty in their respective philosophical theories. Next, discuss the different methods by which each philosopher arrives at their respective understanding of the certainty of knowledge. Finally, compare and contrast their different approaches and explain which of these approaches make the most sense to you.
5. Descartes philosophical meditations are founded on his extreme doubts about knowing anything for certain. What are these doubts that beset Descartes, and how does he construct his “method of doubt” to question everything? Use examples to illustrate some of his doubts and whether you are inclined to agree with the nature of these doubts. For example, aren’t you strongly inclined to think that you are currently sitting in front of a table and reading a book? Why or why not? What could you to doubt this? Next, discuss the method of doubt that Descartes devises. Why and how does come to doubt his senses, the physical world, and even the mathematical truths? What does he aim to discover by this method? What conclusion does he reach by means of this method? Finally, discuss what he means by “clear and distinct” ideas, and how these can provide the foundation for all certain knowledge.

*I wish you all the best in the exam!*