**Philosophy Term Test I: Lecture Note Synthesis**

**Week I: Descartes and the Scientific Revolution**

1. Science dictated by Aristotelianism to that point

- Geocentrism

- Motion: Substances are compounds of matter (body) and form (characteristics that describe body); change occurs when one form is lost and replaced with another

- Demonstration: Deriving theorems from self-evident, unproven axioms

2. Scientific Revolution brought challenges to Aristotelianism

- Heliocentrism: Copernicus

- Mechanical Philosophy: theory that the natural world operates mechanistically, all that is needed to explain change are mathematically quantifiable properties; Galilean corpuscularianism – ultimate material constituents are indivisible bodies whose mechanical interaction produce phenomena

- Observation/Experiment: Bacon’s *New Organon*, against Aristotelian deductive inquiry that would change to fit any objections; Supported using observation/experiment as a means to inductive inquiry

3. Descartes and the Scientific Revolution

- *Discourse on Method­* – search only for what is undoubtedly true, remove false beliefs

- Four rules: never accept anything as true that is not obviously true, divide difficulties into as many parts as possible to better resolve them, start with the simplest things and work up, be assured of omitting nothing

**Week II: Descartes’ *Meditations***

1. Introduction

- Objective: establish firm foundation for knowledge and science by ridding oneself of false beliefs

- Three tenets of Cartesianism: foundationalism – all knowledge is derived from basic, indubitable truths, rationalism – not all knowledge is derived from the sense, dualism – mind and body are distinct, wholly separate substances and a human being is a union of mind and body

2. *Meditation* I: Radical Doubt

- Raze everything to the ground through process of radical doubt

- Seems to have acquired beliefs from different sources: sense experience/empirical observation (I have a body, snow is white), rational intuition (2+3 = 5, everything crimson is red)

- Two forms of knowledge – *a priori* (does not rely on evidence provided by sensory experience), *a posteriori* (relies on evidence provided by sensory experience)

- Two skeptical scenarios – The Dreamer (casts doubt on everything he believes on the basis of what he is currently perceiving *a posteriori*), The Evil Genius (casts doubt on everything, whether *a priori* or *a posteriori*)

3. *Meditation* II: Certainty

- *Cogito* argument – I am doubting the existence of everything; if I am doubting, then I exist; so, I exist \*only insofar as I am a thinking thing\*

- Wax argument for rationalism – Wax continuously alters perceptible features, but same wax remains; essence of wax cannot include perceptible features; So what it is to be wax is to be an extended thing; However, the essence of body cannot be discerned from “confused” perceptions, only perceived by the mind – Perception is a mode of thought

4. *Meditation* III: Next Steps

- Knows he is a thinking thing

- Posits that everything he clearly and distinctly perceives is true

- Doesn’t know source of his ideas

- Cannot prove that either skeptical scenario is not true in reality

**Week III: Cartesian Dualism and Its Early Critics**

1. *Meditation* V: Rationalism and Knowledge of God

- In support of *a priori* knowledge – what I clearly and distinctly perceive could be false only if God were a deceiver; God is not a deceiver; So, if I clearly and distinctly perceive something, then that thing must be true

- Ontological argument – Clearly and distinctly perceive God as supremely perfect being; Supremely perfect being must exist; So, a supremely perfect being exists

2. *Meditation* VI: Dualism and the Refutation of Skepticism

- Existence of Body – Clearly and distinctly perceive that mind could exist apart from body; So, mind and body can exist apart from one another; Nature teaches me that I am united with a body; Nature teaches me that my sense perceptions are caused by external bodies; So, bodies exist – I am united with a body and I am embedded in a world of bodies

- What nature teaches – Nature teaches me to make certain judgments; These judgments could be false only if God were a deceiver, which he is not; So, if nature teaches me something, then that thing is true

3. The Cartesian Circle

- Arnauld’s Objection: I know that God is not a deceiver only if I know my clear and distinct perceptions are true; I know my clear and distinct perceptions are true only if I know God is not a deceiver

- Descartes’ Response: Distinguish – (1) What I can be certain of because I clearly and distinctly perceive it now, (2) What I can be certain of because I now remember clearly and distinctly perceiving it in the past; Argue – I don’t need to know God is not a deceiver to be certain of (1), I do need to know God is not a deceiver to be certain of (2)

- Cavendish’s Materialist Objection: There is only one kind of matter

**Week IV: Discovery of the Mind-Body Problem: Elisabeth of Bohemia & Malebranche**

1. Materialist Objections to Cartesian Dualism: Margaret Cavendish and Elisabeth of Bohemia

- Elisabeth’s Argument: Anything that can move a body has either extension or materiality; Anything that has extension or is material is a body; Mind is not a body; So, mind cannot move a body

- Descartes’ Reply: We have a primitive notion of ourselves as union of mind and body, led to accept mutual interaction; Would be a confusion to suppose mind moves body in same way as bodies move another

2. Malebranche’s “Occasionalist” Dualism

- Malebranche’s Argument for the Inefficacy of Body and Finite Mind – We judge that the intent causes the action; These judgments are correct only if we perceive a necessary connection between cause and effect; Judgments are based on constant conjunction, not perception of necessary connection; Judgments are incorrect

- Neither body nor will is true cause because we can conceive the cause not being responsible for alleged effect

- Natural causes are not true causes, merely occasional causes acting through the force and efficacy of God’s will

- True cause: cause whose presence necessitates its effects

- Occasional cause: cause whose presence determines operation of true cause (God’s will)

**Week V; Leibniz’s Critique of Occasionalism**

1. Leibniz’s Critique of Occasionalism

- Leibniz’s Argument: Satisfying explanation of natural world should (a) explain how it results from God’s will and (b) explain how it is reasonable, given what nature is, for God to operate in the way He does; Occasionalism accomplishes (a); Occasionalism fails to accomplish (b); So, occasionalism does not offer a satisfying explanation of the natural world

- Natural Law: Consequence of God’s general or universal will

- Miracle: Consequence of God’s particular will to violate general laws he has established

- Leibniz on miracles: if God generally wills that he always acts so as to preserve immutable order of justice, distinction between natural law and miracle collapses; Miracle is any act of God that surpasses forces he gives to creatures

- Pre-established harmony – Interaction is only apparent; Rather, each substance is spontaneously expressing and perceiving the universe from its own distinctive point of view; There is, however, a harmony in the coordination of substances put in place by God at the moment of creation; Hence, although one substance cannot actually produce a sensation in another, the private, spontaneously produced perceptions of each coincide, so that (e.g.) the one has the sensation of pushing at the same time as the other has the sensation of being pushed

**Week VI: Idealism, or Berkeley’s Empiricist Critique of Matter**

1. Berkeley’s Idealism

- Empiricism: All knowledge derives ultimately from the senses

- Berkeley: All ideas present in the mind are either: sensory impressions, combinations of sensory impressions, perceptions of the operations of one’s own mind; SO, no innate ideas and no non-sensory ideas

- Esse is percipi: The existence/being of sensible objects is just their being perceived by a mind, sensible objects are nothing but collections of ideas

2. Berkeley’s Arguments for idealism

- There are no mind-independent primary qualities – qualities our ideas of which resemble mind-independent features of bodies (shape, size, texture); Secondary qualities – qualities which do not resemble mind-independent features of bodies (color, flavor, sound) – If secondary qualities are mind-dependent, then so are primary qualities

` - A property is mind-independent only if it can be conceived of independently of mind-dependent properties; No primary quality can be conceived of independently of secondary qualities; Secondary qualities are mind-dependent; So, primary qualities are mind-dependent

- Sensible qualities (color, motion, etc.) are relatives and so mind-dependent

- No object can have contrary properties at the same time and in the same respect; Sometimes objects are perceived as having contradictory properties relative to different perceivers; If no object can have contrary properties at the same time and in the same respect, the only way that objects can be perceived as having contradictory properties is if those properties were in fact mind-dependent ideas of a perceiver; Even primary qualities are relative in this way; So, primary qualities are mind-dependent ideas of a perceiver

- The abstract notion of matter is incoherent

- Have to actually imagine something, can’t just keep it as completely abstract – so abstraction is meaningless

- Unperceived sensible objects are inconceivable

- To establish the existence of matter, it is sufficient to be able to conceive of a sensible object existing without the mind; It is self-contradictory to suppose that one can conceive of something that is un-conceived; So, we have not demonstrated the existence of matter

3. Arguments against Berkeley

- Samuel Johnson – I refute it thusly – ap lapidem fallacy

- Mary Shepherd – Two modes of perceiving: Berkeley conflates idea and what idea represents; Perception is (1) Conscious Awareness and (2) Noticing external world