

Information on midterm exam Philosophy 1 Spring, 2007

The midterm exam takes place in class at the regular class time on Wednesday, May 2. This will be a closed-book, closed-note exam. No use of class materials or notes will be permitted at any time during the exam. We will supply paper; please do not bring blue books.

Tarun Menon will hold a pre-midterm office hour Monday 2:30-3:30 IN HSS 8037. His email address is tmemon@ucsd.edu. Arneson's office hour is Tuesday 2-3.

The exam will cover all course readings up to and including the reading for Monday, April 30. The exam will require you to answer some short-answer questions and a single essay question. On both the short-answer and essay portions of the exam, you will have some choice as to which questions to answer.

Short-answer questions

The short-answer questions will be drawn from the list below.

1. According to some critics, the overall main argument of Descartes's *Meditations* is unsatisfactory because Descartes is reasoning in a circle—the “Cartesian Circle” as it is called. State the circular argument that the critics are accusing Descartes of asserting.
2. State Descartes's argument for the existence of God in Meditation 5.
3. Descartes uses an example involving a piece of wax in Meditation 2. What is the argument he is making here?
4. Toward the end of his essay “Evil for Freedom's Sake,” David Lewis considers what he calls the “selective freedom” argument. State the argument and explain how the argument, if sound, would defeat the free-will defense against the argument from evil.
5. Meditation 3 of Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* seeks to establish the claim that God (an all-perfect being) exists. State the main line of argument for this claim that Descartes develops in this Meditation.
6. According to Grunbaum, what serious reason, worthy of our consideration, for rejecting the claim that the world is created and sustained by a God with the traditional attributes does Freud advance?
7. In Meditation 2 Descartes arrives at a starting point for knowledge, a belief that he is incapable of doubting (he has an unshakeable conviction of the truth of the belief). What is this belief and how does Descartes establish its certainty?
8. In his essay “The Argument from Design, Robert Hambourger suggests that modern developments including the theory of evolution by natural selection do not decisively defeat the argument from design. What considerations does he adduce to support this suggestion?
9. In the reading labeled “The Wager” Pascal poses a decision problem and advances a solution to it. What is the decision problem and what is his proposed solution?

10. State Robert Adams's distinction between a theoretical argument and a practical argument concerning the claim that God exists. Summarize one practical argument concerning the claim that God exists that he advances.

11. In the Discourse on Method Descartes states that he found all of the subjects that he learned at school intellectually unsatisfactory except mathematics. What according to Descartes is so specially satisfactory about mathematics, such that it is suited for the role of foundation for knowledge?

12. In "Kierkegaard's Arguments against Objective Reasoning in Religion," Robert Adams finds three arguments in Kierkegaard's writings against reasoning objectively to provide a justification for religious faith. Adams argues that one of these three arguments is a bad argument, that the remaining two are "not so easily disposed of," but that they proceed from a conception of religious faith that he finds problematic. State any one of these latter two arguments and indicate what Adams finds problematic about the conception of religious faith it presupposes.

13. At the beginning of Meditation 6, Descartes writes, "It remains for me to consider whether material things exist." What resolution of this issue does Meditation 6 propose? What argument does Descartes offer in support of the view he takes of this issue in Meditation 6?

14. According to Kierkegaard, what is the difference between an individual being related to the Christian faith objectively and subjectively?

15. In Meditation 4, Descartes confronts this difficulty: If a God exists who is all-perfect and not a deceiver, how is it possible that humans are likely to be deceived by the evidence of their senses and more generally to believe many falsehoods? Describe Descartes's response to the difficulty.

16. In "Evil for Freedom's Sake?" David Lewis announces that his aim is not to debunk free-will theodicy but rather to show the pertinent arguments end in deadlock. What exactly is the "deadlock" position reached at the end of his essay? What balance of considerations drives to this

Essay questions.

On the actual exam, two of these four questions will be posed, and you will be asked to answer one of the two posed questions.

1. In separate course readings Blaise Pascal and Soren Kierkegaard present arguments concerning the possibility of establishing by reason the claim that God exists or the claim that we should believe that God exists. State their main arguments. Are they opposed or mutually supportive? How so? Either press a criticism against one of their arguments or defend one of their arguments against a significant criticism.

2. In "The Watch and the Watchmaker" William Paley presents a version of the argument from design intended to support the claim that God exists. In "The Argument from Design" Robert Hambourger presents what he says is an improved version of this argument. State Paley's main argument and Hambourger's main argument and explain how they differ. Is Hambourger's version superior to Paley's version? Is Hambourger's argument successful? In each case, state your reasons for your answer.

3. What is the method of doubt that Descartes proposes to follow in Meditation 1? What according to Descartes is the state of his knowledge at the end of Meditation 1? What arguments lead him to this state? Is Descartes making some mistake in supposing it makes sense to extend

doubt as widely as he claims? For example, can you really doubt that you have two hands in front of your face when, as you think, you place two hands in front of your normally sighted unmasked eyes in clear daylight? Why or why not?

4. In Meditation 6 Descartes discusses “the Real Distinction between Mind and Body” and argues to the conclusion that “I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it.” (The “Cogito” discussion in Meditation 2 also contains some of Descartes’s ideas concerning the nature of the distinction between mind and body.) According to Descartes, what is the nature of mind and body and how are they distinct? State his argument to the quoted conclusion two sentences back” and attack or defend the argument.