

Phil. 126 S24 Final Exam: Directions & Qs

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Final version, 4/28/24—same as draft handed out in class on 4/24, but for an additional brief paragraph added to the end of the Directions, and small changes to questions 6 and 7.

Directions: Our final exam will be on Monday, May 6, at 2:00 p.m., and will for some reason be in the Davies Auditorium (seating capacity: 265!).

You will have to answer three of the below nine questions on the final exam, and no question will be asked that is not listed below. You won't know until the time of the exam which questions will appear on the question sheet, but there will be some choice, and the test will be structured so that you can safely neglect to prepare an answer for one of the nine questions. Some possibilities (ordered from nastiest to nicest): a) I choose four of the below nine questions to appear, and you must choose three of those four to answer; b) I choose six of the below questions to appear, I divide those six questions into three groups, and you are instructed to answer one question from each group; c) all nine of the below questions appear, and you can choose any three of them to answer. There are also lots of other possibilities, but you know this (well, insofar as you can know something based on assurances from me): you will be asked nothing that's not on the below list of questions, and to be safe, you must prepare to answer each of them, except for one.

You are, of course, encouraged to make use of both your books and notes in preparing for the exam, but at the time of the exam, you will have to write your answers from memory, without the aid of books or notes. Bluebooks will be provided at the exam. You will have two-and-a-half hours to complete the exam, but I would expect that a good job could be done in two hours. [Fine print: Yale regulations state: "Final examinations normally last either two or three hours but, in either case, students are permitted to take an additional half-hour before being required to turn in their answers. This additional time is given for improving what has already been written, rather than for breaking new ground." Our exam officially lasts for 2 hours. That, plus the half-hour of extra time, which is perhaps used wrapping up your work, yields the total of 2-1/2 hours that you have before work must be turned in. Bottom line: Your work must be turned in by 4:30, and at that point, your half-hour of extra time has already been used.]

You may find that answering some of these questions well will require you not only to remember what you read and were told, but to actually think about the issues.

Added on 4/28: I will now specify that you will get the chance to answer question 7. You won't get stuck with it if you don't want to answer it: It is still the case that you can safely neglect to answer any single question, including #7. It will appear as an option. Knowing that, you know that if you put in the work to prepare a good answer to it, you will get a chance to make use of that work and write that good answer.

1. Under what conditions do we act freely, according to Locke? Can we act freely on Locke's view if we are causally determined to act as we do by forces over which we have no control? Explain what you take to be the most important objection to Locke's account of free action, and evaluate his account in light of that objection.

2. Explain and critically evaluate Locke's case against innate principles and ideas in Book One of his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

3. Briefly explain Berkeley's account of the nature of physical objects ("bodies"). Someone might object to this account by claiming that, on it, Berkeley cannot successfully draw a "distinction between realities and chimeras" (Principles, section 34). Explain and critically assess Berkeley's attempt to draw the distinction in question, and evaluate the force of the objection in light of Berkeley's attempt to meet it.

4. Briefly explain, in paragraph form, the Humean argument we have discussed to the conclusion that I have no good reason to believe that my eraser will fall when released. One might think that Kant's claim that we have synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and his defense of that claim, provides a defense against that Humean argument. At what point in the Humean argument might Kant's claim be thought to provide relief, and how? Do you think that

Kant's claim and his defense of it provide for a successful response to the Humean argument? Discuss, defend, explain.

5. In what way, according to Hume, do the ideas one is capable of having relate to the impressions one has had? What arguments does Hume give for this claim? How would/does Reid respond to these arguments? Are Hume's arguments successful? Are Reid's responses successful? Explain and defend your answer.

6. [If this question appears on the final, it will have both the a) and the b) endings, so you will be able to choose which to answer.] Are "liberty and necessity" compatible, according to Hume? Explain why he gives the answer he gives, and include in your explanation an account of what, according to Hume, we do/can/should mean by saying that our voluntary actions are done of "necessity," and an explanation of Hume's "hypothetical" [p. 63 in our textbook: "Now, this hypothetical liberty...", last sentence of the third-to-last paragraph of Part 1 of sect. 8 of EHU] account of "liberty." Also, either

a. critically evaluate Hume's account, or his reasons for it, in light of what you take to be the strongest objection to it.

or

b. explain how Reid objects to Hume's account, and critically evaluate Hume's account in light of Reid's objection.

7. On Reid's account of the perceptual process, sensations often naturally produce in us perceptual beliefs about material objects (where the content of those perceptual beliefs does not involve any similarity between how the material objects are construed and the sensations by which we come to have those perceptual beliefs, and so does not render the beliefs subject to Berkeleyan attack on that score). Briefly explain how this process works, according to Reid, and explain and critically evaluate Reid's answer to the skeptic who would pointedly ask why in such a case we should believe what our nature leads us to believe? [As it happens, your instructor wrote an account of Reid's response to this skeptic, which write-up should largely overlap with the account given in lecture on 4/10. If you would like to use it in preparing, this write-up (from an old paper) is available from our course web page, right below the link to the handout for 4/10. You can use it freely in preparing your explanation of Reid's response (there's no issue of stealing the writer's (my) ideas, as there might be in writing a course paper), though, since you will be writing from memory, there will be no expectation that you will use actual quotations from Reid in your explanation. This can be a good exercise in whether you can well explain Reid's answer from memory, given some written, and not just spoken, help – and then go on to critically discuss it.]

8. Kant describes himself as an "empirical realist" but a "transcendental idealist." What does this mean? Why does Kant hold these positions?

9. Explain Kant's reasons for thinking that "Space does not represent any property of things in themselves" (B42, p. 176) and for making a similar claim about time (see esp. B49, p. 180 of K). Compare Kant's position with a position that agrees with Kant that space and time are *a priori* "forms of sensible intuition," but according to which real objects, things in themselves, really have spatial and temporal properties -- a position according to which we are *a priori* set up to discern spatial and temporal properties that the things in themselves really have. Which position -- Kant's, or some form of the opposing position I've just described -- is more rational and/or defensible? Explain and defend your answer.