

PHIL 251: 501-509: Introduction to Philosophy (Daniel, Fall 2008)
Mid-Semester Exam

This exam has three questions. Your answers to each question (in 300 words or less) should be in essay form and address each philosopher's position using the five steps of critical thinking discussed in Chapter 1:

1. What is the issue at hand and how do the thinkers differ in their positions on it?
2. What are each thinker's reasons or arguments for adopting his position?
3. What objections can be raised against their arguments?
4. What could be their replies to those objections?
5. What are the implications of adopting the competing positions?

After you finish your answer, go back and read over it to make sure you have not left anything out. Each of your answers will be evaluated on a scale of 5 (best) to 1 using the following rubric:

1. The Issue At Hand and Positions Adopted

5. You have identified exactly what the issue is and why it is an issue and stated clearly how the philosophers differ in their attempts to resolve it.
4. You have identified the issue but could have done better in explaining why it is an issue. Nonetheless, you have indicated nicely how the philosophers differ in their attempts to resolve it.
3. You have identified the issue but have not explained why it is an issue. You have also indicated how the philosophers differ on the issue but you need to have been clearer on what their claims mean.
2. You have not really identified the issue or explained why it is an issue. Also, even though you indicate how the philosophers differ on the issue, you should have said more about how their understanding of the issue affects their different positions.
1. You have not indicated or explained what the issue is or how the philosophers differ on their attempts to resolve it.

2. The Arguments

5. You have clearly stated the arguments the philosophers adopt in support of their views without simply repeating their initial claims. You have also indicated how those arguments apply to the issue and how the strategies used in each argument differ from one another.
4. You have given the arguments the philosophers adopt in support of their views, but you could have been more explicit about how those arguments apply to the issue and how their arguments differ from one another.
3. Even though you were clear about ____'s arguments, you were not so clear about ____'s arguments. Plus, you could have been more explicit about how the arguments by these thinkers apply to the issue and how their arguments differ from one another.
2. Your discussion of the arguments provided by these thinkers was basically a restatement of their positions, not a clarification of their reasons for adopting those positions: you

needed to make a sharper contrast between each thinker's position and his arguments. Plus, you could have been more explicit about how their arguments differ from one another.

1. Your discussion of the arguments provided by these thinkers was basically a restatement of their positions, not a clarification of their reasons for adopting those positions. You needed to make a sharper contrast between each thinker's position and his arguments. Plus, you did not show how their arguments differ from one another.

Objections

5. You identified clearly all the major objections to each thinker's position and argument, and you indicated how those objections are related to one another for each thinker.
4. You identified some objections to each thinker's position and argument, but you should have indicated how those objections are related to one another for each thinker.
3. You identified a standard objection to each thinker's position and argument, but you did not show how that objection really goes to the heart of each thinker's position.
2. Even though you identified a standard objection to _____'s position and argument, your objection to _____ missed the point of his position and argument. If you had shown more clearly how the objections to the thinkers were related to one another, you would not have made this mistake.
1. The objections you raised against each thinker did not really address the point of his position or argument.

Replies to the Objections

5. You indicated clearly how each thinker could respond to all the major objections to his position and argument, and you indicated how those replies are related to one another and central to each thinker's defense of his position.
4. You indicated how each thinker could respond to some (but not all) objections to his position and argument, but you needed to indicate how those replies are related to one another and central to each thinker's defense of his position.
3. You indicated how _____ could respond to a standard objection to his position and argument, but you did not show how _____'s reply addresses objections to his position and argument. Plus, you needed to show how each thinker's replies reinforce their positions.
2. The replies you provided addressed standard objections to each thinker's position only indirectly. They did not reinforce the point of his position or argument by explaining more extensively what each thinker's position or argument really is.
1. The replies you provided did not really address the standard objections raised against each thinker; nor did they reinforce the central positions and arguments of the thinkers.

Implications

5. You indicated clearly how adopting each thinker's position would have implications for other aspects of philosophy and our lives.

4. You indicated how each thinker's position would have some implications for how we live our lives, but you did not provide much information on how these positions have any bearing on other philosophic issues.
3. You indicated how ____'s position would have some implications for how we live our lives, but you did not show how ____'s position would make a difference in our lives, nor did you provide much information on how these positions have any bearing on other philosophic issues.
2. You only hinted at the implications of both thinkers' positions for how we live our lives and how their positions relate to other philosophic issues.
1. You did not really say anything about the implications of the thinkers' positions for how we live our lives and how their positions relate to other philosophic issues.

Each question is worth 10 points toward your semester grade (total: 30 possible points). Since each question includes consideration of the five critical-thinking steps, and each step is graded on a five point scale, the total number of possible test points is 75. However, because the test is worth only 30 total points, your final grade for the exam will be the total test points x 0.4.

Even though the test is open-book, open-note, open consultation, you are to write your own answers in your own words. If we see that the wording on the exams that you and another student turn in is the same, we will consider both as examples of cheating. You must turn in your exam in print or as a .doc or .pdf attachment to an email message to your TA **no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 10.** The TA email addresses are on the syllabus.

The Exam

1. How could Socrates' methodic search for meaning in life (Ch. 2) be used both to support and to undermine Sartre's claim that human beings have no essence (Ch. 4)?

To answer this question you must:

- explain how Socrates relates his method to his search for the meaning of life, how Sartre relates his claim that humans have no essence to the meaning of life, and how Socratic method can be used to support and undermine Sartre's claim.
- explain why Socrates thinks his method is necessary for finding meaning in life, why Sartre claims that human beings have no essence, and how Socratic method can be used both to support *and* undermine Sartre's claim.
- indicate objections that could be raised against Socrates' claim and arguments, objections against Sartre's claim and arguments, and objections against the claim that Socratic method can be used both to support and undermine Sartre's claim.
- indicate how Socrates could respond to objections to his position, how Sartre could respond to objections to his position, how Socrates would reply to his method being used (ambiguously) to support and undermine Sartre's position, and how Sartre would explain why Socratic method could be used both to support and undermine his position.
- indicate how adopting each thinker's position would have implications for other aspects of philosophy and our lives.

2. How could Plato and Descartes use their dualistic views of reality (Ch. 5) to explain the appeal of both determinism and libertarianism (Ch. 4)?

To answer this question you must:

- describe Plato's dualistic view of reality and Descartes' dualistic view of reality, and indicate how their dualisms might have relevance to determinism (which you must briefly explain) and libertarianism (which you must also briefly explain).
- explain why Plato adopts a dualistic view of reality, why Descartes adopts a dualistic view of reality, and how such dualistic views might appeal to proponents of determinism, on the one hand, and libertarianism, on another.
- indicate objections that could be raised, respectively, against Plato's and Descartes' claims and arguments, and against your proposal that a dualistic metaphysics can be appealing to determinism, on the one hand, and libertarianism, on another.
- show how Plato could respond to objections to his claim and arguments, how Descartes could respond to objections against his claim and arguments, and how you would respond to objections against your claim that that a dualistic metaphysics can appeal to determinism, on the one hand, and libertarianism, on another.
- indicate how adopting a dualistic metaphysics has implications not only regarding the freedom question but also regarding other aspects of philosophy and our lives.

3. How does Hume's theory of the self (Ch. 3) depend on his theory of knowledge (Ch. 6) in a similar way to how Kant's theory of the self (Ch. 3) depends on his theory of knowledge (Ch. 6)?

To answer this question you must:

- describe Hume's theory of the self and his basic theory of knowledge, and Kant's theory of self and his basic theory of knowledge.
- explain how Hume's theory of the self is based on his theory of knowledge, how Kant's theory of the self is based on his theory of knowledge, and how these two relations are similar.
- indicate objections that could be raised, respectively, against Hume's basing his theory of self on his theory of knowledge, against Kant's basing his theory of self on his theory of knowledge, and against thinking the two relations are similar.
- show how Hume could respond to objections to basing his theory of self on his theory of knowledge, how Kant could respond to objections to basing his theory of self on his theory of knowledge, and how you respond to objections against thinking the two relations are similar.
- indicate how adopting, respectively, either Hume's or Kant's theories of self and knowledge has implications regarding other aspects of philosophy and our lives.

Commonly misspelled words:

argument	its	Sartre	libertarian	independent
judgment	their	therefore	perceive, deceive	explanation
your, you're	exist	existence	cause & effect	separate, etc.