

Final Exam for Introduction to Philosophy

Topic I: Philosophy of Religion

1. Which of the following **best** matches Anselm's Ontological Argument for the existence of God?

- A. If God were not perfect, he wouldn't exist. Therefore, since God is perfect, he does exist.
- B. Existing is part of being perfect, and God is perfect, therefore God exists.
- C. Nothing can be greater than God, but since anything that exists is greater than anything that doesn't exist, if God didn't exist then something would be greater than Him. Therefore, God must exist.
- D. Anything that exists has to come from something greater than it. Therefore, since some things that are not perfect exist, they must come from something that *is* perfect. That something is God.

2. Which of the following is **not** a possible (good) objection to the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God?

- A. It is possible that there is an infinite regress of causes. That is, rather than there having been some first cause, it might be that each thing is/was caused by something before it, and that chain of events goes back infinitely.
- B. Why doesn't the argument that all things are caused also apply to God? If God is supposed to be the First Cause because everything is caused, then don't we need to ask what caused God?
- C. If there was a single First Cause of everything, then there would be a single chain of events traceable back to God's first action, and that chain would be a series of single events. If that were true, then two things could never happen at the same time. But they do, so there must have been more than one First Cause, and that couldn't be God.
- D. The Cosmological Argument succeeds to an extent, it proves that there must have been some First Cause that was not itself caused, but that could have been anything, it isn't necessarily an intelligent God.

3. William Paley suggests that if we were to find a watch on the ground, having no idea what it was, we would be able to tell that it was the sort of thing that must have a designer. It is equally apparent, he claims, that the universe must also have had a designer. One objection to this is that the universe is not perfect, and thus could not have been created by a perfect God. Which of the following responses **fails** to meet this objection?

- A. Yes, the universe is imperfect, but that is part of its design. God designed the universe for us (and perhaps other sentient beings) in such a way as to allow us to see the difference between good and bad and to choose between right and wrong. If the universe was perfect, we would be missing out on something.
- B. If I design something, its imperfections can come either from me as a designer or from the materials I have available for use. It could be, then, that God was working with imperfect materials when He created the universe, rather than that He is imperfect.
- C. We cannot really be sure that the universe is imperfect, because although we can tell that it was designed, we cannot tell what it was designed **for**. To say that the universe is imperfect is to say that we understand its purpose, which we do not.
- D. None of these responses fail to meet this objection; they all address the objection to varying to degrees.

4. In answering which of the following questions would William James say we should be **least** influenced by our “passional nature?”

- A. What is the answer to this question?
- B. Is there a God?
- C. What should I have for dinner?
- D. Is it wrong to eat meat?

5. Which of the following is a **not** a possible (good) objection to Pascal’s Wager?

- A. The wager doesn’t really work the way Pascal thinks since the options are not just God vs. no God, but no God vs. all of the possible Gods there might be.
- B. Even assuming there is only one possible God, there might be a worse than 50% chance that God exists, in which case the numbers might not work out in my favor if I chose to believe in Him.
- C. Many people believe that God only rewards those who have genuine faith, not those who would believe in Him just to gain entry into Heaven.
- D. Belief doesn’t work like that; we are not capable of forcing ourselves to believe anything we want, just because that belief might have better consequences for us.

Topic II: Epistemology

6. Which of the following is **not** something Descartes would be likely to say about “A Brain in a Vat?”

- A. At the end of the story, the author says that he has considered having the people in the clinic remove his brain just so he can be sure that he *is* a brain in a vat. But this would still not be definitive, because it could be that he never was a brain in a vat and is dreaming not only the initial experience but also the later experience of having his brain removed voluntarily.
- B. The author won't be able to keep this up for very long; it's too difficult constantly questioning whether he is really a brain in a vat. It may bother him from time to time, but eventually he's just going to have to start living his life again.
- C. The author may not be sure of much, but at least he can continue to be certain that he exists, whether it is as a real person, a brain in a vat, or something else entirely.
- D. None of the above; all of these are consistent with Descartes' arguments.

7. Which of the following **best** explains what Gettier was doing in his paper?

- A. He provided examples that demonstrate that it is possible to believe something true without being justified in that belief.
- B. He provided examples that demonstrate that it is possible to be justified in believing something that is true, but to nevertheless fail to come to believe it.
- C. He provided examples that demonstrate that it is possible to be justified in one's belief in something true, but nevertheless to fail to know that it is true.
- D. He provided examples that demonstrate that it is possible to know that something is true, but to nevertheless fail to be fully justified in one's belief in it.

8. According to the Rationalist, certain things can be known *a priori*. Which of the following is **least** likely to be considered *a priori* knowledge?

- A. $2 + 2 = 4$.
- B. Murder is wrong.
- C. Every event has a cause.
- D. The sun sets in the West.

9. Plato—a Rationalist—argued that we have a concept of Perfect Justice even though we have never seen a Perfectly Just society. He makes this point in the context of a larger argument for what position?

- A. That before we were born we had innate knowledge of a "Form" of Justice—an abstract entity that is Perfect Justice which we forget but may come to understand again during our lifetimes.
- B. That through our experiences we can come to know what is just or unjust in various societies, and then can generalize to an understanding of what it would be for a society to be Perfectly Just.
- C. That all humans have in their minds a particular conception of Justice that affects how our minds shape the world around us. We can never come to understand anything about that world in itself, but we can come to understand how our minds shape that world.
- D. That one culture might see one sort of society as Perfectly Just, while another culture might disagree. But both would be correct, because what is truly Perfect Justice is relative to the society in question.

10. What was the point of Descartes' wax example?

- A. To answer the question of why we seem to perceive objects outside of ourselves more clearly than we perceive our selves.
- B. To demonstrate that perception involves judgement, not just the senses.
- C. To demonstrate that we are not really sure it is the same piece of wax after it is melted.
- D. A and B.

Topic III: Mind/Body and Determinism

11. Miller's original formulation of the memory criterion of personal identity is that we are identified by stretches of consciousness connected up through memory. Weirob objects that this criterion is circular, because what makes a memory of doing something a **genuine** memory is that you were the person who did that thing. Cohen responds by explaining that what makes memories genuine is not that you are the person who did what is remembered, but that the memory is caused in the right sort of way. Which of the following cases **best** demonstrates that in addition to avoiding the charge of circularity, Cohen's understanding of genuine memories vs. merely "apparent" memories is superior to Miller's?

- A. Recent research has demonstrated that certain animals have much more robust memories than we originally thought. Crows, for example, will hide their food and recall not only *where* they hid that food, but which other crows were around when they hid it, so that they only dig in places those other crows already know about.
- B. A drug was recently discovered that seems to allow the victims of various sorts of abuse to no longer identify emotionally with their memories of that abuse. They continue to remember that the abuse happened, but are not connected to that memory in the same way.
- C. It is known that people often seem to remember events that happened to them at a young age after being told about these events later in life. These memories are not actually memories of the event, but "apparent" memories formed, perhaps through the person identifying with themselves in the story they have been told.
- D. There are interesting cases of limited amnesia, where people continue to remember that particular events in their pasts happened but cannot remember those events from their own first-person perspective. Thus, for example, one such patient would look at a picture from his brother's wedding and know that it is a picture of his brother's wedding. Yet, looking at himself in the picture, he will ask, "Why do I have a perm?"

12. Imagine that Weirob lasted a bit longer and while they took a break from arguing, Cohen read “A Brain in a Vat” to her. After finishing the reading, he says:

“You know, I think that story has suggested a new argument to me. According to you, Weirob, if the main character’s brain was taken out and put into a vat, then the thinking entity that would result would have either no personal identity or would be identical to the new brain/vat system. Either way, it would no longer be the main character. This is obviously absurd, and thus personal identity cannot be bodily identity.”

Which of the following would be **least** likely to be Weirob’s response?

- A. That doesn’t seem so strange. This new entity would be living an entirely different, fake life controlled by whoever put it into the vat. Why would we think it was the same as the person from whom the brain was taken? I see no reason to think this is a challenge to the view that personal identity is bodily identity.
- B. No, it could still be the same person. The brain is a part of one’s body, and is (in this story) the only part remaining that has the relevant capacities for consciousness. Thus, personal identity would go with the brain in this case and personal identity is still bodily identity.
- C. That is strange, certainly, but think of the alternative. If we accept a view other than bodily identity and allow that this is the same person as before, what’s to prevent the scientists from putting someone else’s brain into the original body? If that happened, we would have two of the same person—one walking around as before and one in the vat!
- D. None of the above; Weirob would be equally likely to give any of these responses.

13. The correct answer to Question 12 was C. Why?

- A. We know that scientists are not really able to put someone’s brain into someone else’s body, so Weirob would be least likely to make a counterargument that rests on the occurrence of such an implausible event.
- B. The response is confused; even if we reject bodily identity the brain in the vat still can’t be the same person.
- C. The response is confused; Weirob is still applying the bodily criterion to the body with the new brain.
- D. Stop trying to trick me, you liar! C is not the correct answer; I put A, B or D and **that** was the correct answer.

14. The Hard Determinist believes that we are causally determined and are thus not morally responsible for our actions. Which of the following would a Hard Determinist be **least** likely to say after reading "Harrison Bergeron?"

- A. If we care about equality, then the world in "Harrison Bergeron" might make a certain amount of sense. Since no one is responsible for what they do—good or bad—we might want to make sure that people are not rewarded for being born beautiful or talented. Of course, since we're causally determined, we have no real control over whether or not this sort of world comes into being.
- B. It was wrong of Harrison to interfere with his society's way of doing things and he deserved to be punished. After all, he should have remembered that society is the way it is because of causal factors, nothing more; since we're causally determined, we have no real control over whether or not this sort of society comes into being.
- C. We might care about equality, but the world in Harrison Bergeron seems too extreme. Since no one is responsible for the talents and abilities they are born with, it seems strange that they should have to suffer (have weights tied to them, have loud noises going off in their heads every 20 seconds) for having those talents and abilities. Of course, since we're causally determined, we have no real control over whether or not this sort of world comes into being.
- D. A Hard Determinist might be comfortable saying any of the above.

15. Which of the following statements does **not** accurately represent Ayer's views on causation?

- A. The idea that causation involves a sort of "transfer of power" is mistaken.
- B. We come to believe that one thing causes another by seeing that those two events (or types of events) are constantly correlated.
- C. It is a mistake to think that all cases of causation are cases of constraint.
- D. For an action to be genuinely caused, it must be made through the use of someone's free will.

Topic IV: Ethics

16. Given the views presented in Don Marquis' article on the wrongness of abortion, which of the following positions would he **most** likely endorse?

- A. Since it is wrong to end the lives even of fetuses, it is wrong to end the lives of adult humans. Thus, euthanasia—at least active euthanasia—is never permissible.
- B. People who have terminal illnesses no longer have the sorts of futures the possession of which makes killing wrong, thus active euthanasia—at least voluntary euthanasia—is permissible in such cases.
- C. Just as abortion is wrong only because of its effect on the community—especially the mother and father—euthanasia is wrong because it has similar effects on the community and the family members of the person euthanized.
- D. It is wrong to kill persons, and both fetuses and the terminally ill are still persons, thus abortion and euthanasia are both wrong.

17. Which of the following positions on active vs. passive euthanasia is **most** in line with the Utilitarian view of morality? Remember: a Utilitarian is a Consequentialist concerned only with utility (happiness).

- A. If we can prevent someone from suffering without doing something as bad or worse, then we should. Since we have a duty not to kill and thus killing is always worse than letting die, then, we should endorse only passive euthanasia.
- B. People should be able to do what they want with their lives, thus as long as it's voluntary, active euthanasia is permissible under almost any circumstances (perhaps with the exception of persons who are not fit to make decisions about their own lives, such as children or the mentally ill).
- C. In most cases, active euthanasia will have no morally relevant effects different from passive euthanasia other than that it will prevent more suffering. Therefore, active euthanasia will often be preferable to passive euthanasia.
- D. Passive euthanasia is permissible to reduce suffering. However, taking a life—no matter what the reason—has a negative effect on one as a moral person, and since the right action is defined by the one that the moral person would take, active euthanasia is wrong.

18. Nick is operating his trolley one day and discovers that his brakes are out. Down the tracks a short way are five individuals who will be killed if the trolley reaches them. The only way to prevent the trolley from hitting them is to switch the trolley onto a side-track. On that side-track is a single person who will be killed if the trolley is switched onto that track. What would Peter Singer **most** likely say that Nick should do in this case?

- A. If Nick can prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing something of comparable moral worth, he should. Since the death of five is worse than the death of one, Nick should turn the trolley onto the other track.
- B. If Nick turns the trolley onto the other track, then Nick becomes morally responsible for the death of the one, whereas if the five die, it is just an unfortunate accident. Therefore, Nick should not turn the trolley so as to avoid becoming morally responsible for a death.
- C. It doesn't matter what Nick does. In either case, he is killing someone, which is wrong. It doesn't matter whether he kills one or kills five, it is a moral tragedy.
- D. Running over the five would probably make a much cooler noise and there would be a lot more gore than if Nick only ran over the one, so he should keep the trolley on this track and have a more enjoyable afternoon.

19. Nick is standing on a bridge overlooking some trolley tracks. He sees a trolley coming down the tracks and, making use of his encyclopedic knowledge of trolleys, determines that its brakes are out. He sees that there is a worker on the tracks who will be killed by the trolley if it is not stopped. Workers, Nick knows, are paid extra because of the dangers of working on these tracks. Being a rather small fellow, Nick knows that he can do nothing himself to stop the trolley. However, he sees that on the bridge with him is a rather large man. This man recently returned from Alaska, where he was helping to clean seals who had been involved in oil spills. As partial thanks for his work, the Mayor invited this man to have lunch here on the bridge, where there is a lovely view. Nick is trying to decide whether to allow the trolley to continue on and kill the worker or to push the large man off of the bridge, which would kill the man, but stop the trolley. Which of the following might James Rachels say about this situation?

- A. I have argued that killing is no better nor worse than letting die, and thus there is no right answer about what Nick should do here. Either way, someone dies, and that is all.
- B. Nick should allow the trolley to continue on and allow the man on the tracks to die, rather than killing the man with him on the bridge.
- C. Rachels might say either of these things.
- D. Rachels would not say either of these things.

20. Someone raises the following objection to active euthanasia:

"It is true that people who are terminally ill no longer have futures-like-ours, and so there is really nothing **inherently** wrong with killing them, at least if it is at their request. However, active euthanasia should still not be allowed because of its effect on the doctors. Killing terminally-ill people might make them take killing in general less seriously and make them more likely to kill in other circumstances. Thus, we do not want to encourage doctors to kill at all."

How would Don Marquis **most** likely respond to this objection?

- A. There is no reason to think this would be a problem if we really accept the "future-like-ours" view of the wrongness of killing. If we understand that what makes it wrong to kill people in general is that they have futures-like-ours, then killing things that do not have such futures, whether they be terminally-ill patients or trees, should have no effect on us because we understand how the cases are different.
- B. This objection is just like Kant's objection to being cruel to animals. Kant says that we have no duties to animals, but that "he who is hard in his dealings with animals becomes hard also in his dealing with men." But this would only be true if those men didn't genuinely believe that those animals are not persons, as Kant believes they are not. Since the terminally-ill are no longer full persons, this case is directly analogous; if we acknowledge that they are not full persons, then our dealings with them should not affect our dealings with normal, adult humans.
- C. It may be true that killing the terminally-ill would make doctors more likely to kill in other circumstances, but this does not mean that we should not still consider making active euthanasia legal. The benefits we get from active euthanasia—that the patient suffers as little as possible—may outweigh the costs of monitoring doctors for signs that they are becoming dangerous to other, non-terminal patients.
- D. [I usually put something silly here—perhaps a reference to an inside joke from over the course of the semester.]