

Midterm Study Guide Phil 14: The Nature of Reality

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Instructions

Please bring a bluebook or two and a couple of pens. Please also bring your student ID. You will not be allowed to talk, use any books or notes, or use any electronic device.

The topics and issues below give you a list of material that we either went over in class or that was in the readings or both. Study them carefully. The midterm exam will consist of three parts. The first part will be ten or so multiple-choice questions. The second will consist of three or so short-answer questions where I expect a paragraph or so as answer. In the third part, you will find two or so essay questions which will require a few paragraphs to answer adequately. For most questions in the second and third parts, you will be given a choice, i.e. you don't have to answer all questions.

God

- deductive arguments in general (in particular: validity and soundness)
- a priori vs. a posteriori
- Avicenna's metaphysics: modality
- Avicenna's proof for the existence of God and objections to it
- Aquinas's argument from motion
- first cause argument
- Aquinas's third way: contingency and Hume's criticism
- Anselm's ontological proof
- Gaunilo's perfect island
- Rowe's objection to Anselm's proof
- inductive arguments in general
- design argument and Hume's criticism
- probabilistic design argument
- likelihood or confirmation principle
- fine-tuning argument
- natural and human evil
- argument from evil, the problem of evil
- responses and their discussion (in particular Leibniz, Voltaire, free will, Mackie)
- the problem of good
- logical vs. evidential problem of evil

Causation and Laws of Nature

- the problem of causation
- John Snow and the great cholera epidemics of 1848-9 and 1853-4
- correlation and causation
- rationalism and rationalist conception of causation
- Hume's critique of rationalist conception
- Hume's positive accounts (there are two in fact; in connection with this study contiguity, priority in time, constant conjunction, causation as habits of association, regularity, projectivism)
- criticisms of Hume's theory (in particular, but not exclusively, by Venn and Ducasse)
- Ducasse's analysis of causation and its problems
- observation and optical illusions (look particularly at penetrated vs. non-penetrated distinction)
- Michotte's experiments
- laws of nature: accidental generalizations vs. laws of nature
- counterfactual support as indicative of lawhood
- thought experiments: X -particles and Y -fields
- Humean response to this thought experiment

Mind

- organic and mechanical world view
- the trouble with minds (consciousness, subjectivity, intentionality, incorrigibility)
- the mind-body problem
- monism vs. dualism, Taylor's classification
- Descartes's interactionism
- property argument for dualism (cf. Churchland)
- knowledge argument for dualism
- arguments against dualism (cf. Churchland)
- philosophical behaviourism and its problems
- identity theory
- tokens and types
- functionalism
- inverted spectrum argument against functionalism and responses to it

- imitation game and Turing test
- syntax and semantics
- theses of strong and weak AI
- Searle's Chinese room argument
- replies to the Chinese room (systems, robot, brain simulator, combination, other minds)
- the Churchlands' argument against the Chinese room

Personal identity

- qualitative vs. numerical identity
- the soul answer (and responses to it)
- (refined) spatiotemporal continuity and the prince and the cobbler
- psychological continuity and the case of Guy Fawkes
- duplication problem for both continuity views
- Dennett: the self as the center of narrative gravity
- multiple personality disorder