

PERSISTENCE EXAM STUDY GUIDE

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Intro Metaphysics

- Monday, November 7, in-class
- Closed-book, closed notes

The format will be a mixture of true/false or multiple choice type questions, on one hand, and short-answer/short essay on the other. The short answer section will mostly focus on theories and arguments discussed in class, but I may also ask you to extract, explain, and evaluate a numbered-premise argument from a short paragraph.

It will stress understanding rather than memorization. For example, you don't need to memorize the exact wording of the numbered-premise arguments on the handouts. However, you do need to know the ideas of those arguments, and the main objections we made to them. Similarly, you need to be familiar with the main concepts and theories that were discussed in the readings and in class. I might, for example, ask you something like this: "What does the brain theory of personal identity say? What was the main argument against it that we discussed in class (no need to present it in numbered-premise format)?"

To prepare for the exam, the handouts will be useful. They contain the main theories and arguments we discussed, as well as the main concepts. But familiarity with the handouts won't be enough. For example, although the handouts contain many arguments, they rarely contain the justifications for or the objections to the premises that we discussed in class. So if you don't have good class notes, you probably should find someone who does.

Below are examples of short essay questions I might ask. Present your answers concisely. If you use philosophical jargon, explain it. For example, if you use the term 'The Body Theory', you must define it. Important: be sure you know how to present, explain, and evaluate arguments (see the assignment sheet for paper #1). When you present arguments, it isn't important to word them exactly the way I do, but the basic meaning and logical structure should be the same.

1. Informally discuss the problem of existing in the afterlife.

2. Clarify the nature of identity over time. Distinguish between identity and similarity; distinguish different senses of “is the same as”.
3. State Leibniz’s Law, explain why Leibniz’s Law *seems* to imply that change is impossible, and say why that isn’t in fact true.
4. Describe the Aristotelian theory of identity over time, including the notions of substance, form, essential and accidental properties, matter, etc.
5. What is the Body theory? Explain the brain-swap objection against it.
6. What is the prince and the cobbler argument against the Body and Brain theories?
7. Present Locke’s memory theory, and explain the Brave officer argument against it. What is the modified Lockean theory, and how does it fix the problem?
8. What is the psychological theory?
9. Present the first half of the duplication argument against the psychology and brain theories. Explain how the “no-branching” modifications to those theories solve the problem.
10. Present the the second half of the duplication argument, against the modified psychological and brain theories. What is Parfit’s response to the argument? (It was, in essence, that when a person is “duplicated”, that person stops existing; but nevertheless that isn’t bad for that person. Continuing to exist doesn’t have the significance we usually assume it has.)
11. What is dualism, and how does it solve the duplication problem?
12. What is one argument against dualism? How might a dualist respond?
13. Explain “perdurance”, the idea that things are made of temporal parts.
14. How might one use Leibniz’s Law to argue for perdurance?
15. Explain the antinomy of the statue and the lump of clay.

16. Explain the antinomy of Tibbles and Tib.
17. What is the temporal parts solution to the antinomies?
18. What is the just-matter theory, and how does it solve the antinomies?
What is one objection to the just-matter theory?
19. What is nihilism, and how does it solve the antinomies? What is one
objection to nihilism?