

SECOND EXAM STUDY GUIDE

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Intro Philosophy

- Wednesday, May 10, 9:00 am (in our usual classroom)
- Closed-book, closed notes
- Worth 30% of your course grade

This exam will only cover the material since the midterm—epistemology and ethics.

The exam will contain some true/false or multiple choice type questions, some short-answer/short essay questions, and an argument extraction (i.e., extracting and evaluating a numbered-premise argument from a short paragraph).

It will stress understanding rather than memorization (for example, you don't need to memorize the numbered-premise arguments on the handouts). However, it is important that you be familiar with the main concepts, theories, arguments, objects, and replies that were discussed in the readings and in class. I might, for example, ask you something like this: "What does it mean to say that morality is objective? What was one of the main arguments against this view that we discussed in class (no need to present it in numbered-premise format)? What was one objection to that argument we discussed?"

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.

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 usually don't contain the justifications for, or the objections to, the premises—we discussed these justifications and objections in class. So if you don't have good class notes, you probably should find someone who does.

Here is a summary of the main things to know.

1. Descartes method of doubt: what it is, what it is supposed to accomplish. Foundationalism and basic beliefs. Basic beliefs according to Descartes must be certain/undoubtable.
2. Descartes's dream argument.
3. Skeptical arguments in general. Other skeptical hypotheses (The Matrix, Russell's past hypothesis).
4. Descartes's cogito argument. The things that Descartes thinks can't be doubted.
5. Descartes's attempt to build up from his foundations, via a proof of God's existence (we said little about this; all you need to know is that this is what his strategy was).
6. Chisholm's "problem of the criterion".
7. Methodists versus particularists versus skeptics. Examples of methodists (e.g. Descartes and Hume), examples of particularists (Moore, and Chisholm himself).
8. Moore on reasoning "backward" rather than "forward" with an argument.
9. Chisholm's criterion: perception and memory are innocent until proven guilty.
10. The difference between convincing a skeptic (very hard and perhaps impossible—although Rinard disagrees) and remaining unconvinced by a skeptic.
11. Plantinga's main claim: belief in God is properly basic.
12. Plantinga's critique of "classical foundationalism".
13. The "great pumpkin" objection, and Plantinga's reply to it.
14. Externalism versus internalism.

15. Rinard's argument: skepticism about the external world leads to skepticism about the past, which leads to skepticism about complex reasoning, but that is self-undermining since the argument for skepticism about complex reasoning is itself a complex argument.
16. The basic concepts of value theory. Branches of value theory (ethics, aesthetics, etc.). Ought versus good. Branches of ethics (normative ethics, axiology, etc.)
17. Basics of normative ethics: critique of the golden rule and of "rules-ism". Utilitarianism: its appeal, and its problems.
18. Objective versus subjective.
19. Arguments against the idea that ethics is objective: the argument from democracy, the argument from tolerance, and the argument from atheism.
20. Distinction between giving to charity being admirable but optional versus being obligatory. Singer's argument that we must give a great deal (analogy with the drowning child). Questions about this argument: how much does morality demand? "If everyone did it" arguments.
21. Wolf's criticisms of moral saints. The distinction between morality and "individual perfection".
22. The right-to-life argument against abortion. The difference between typical challenges to the argument and Thomson's: Thomson challenges the assumption about rights and obligations.
23. The violinist example and what it's supposed to show.
24. Thomson on the limits of rights: preconditions and demands.
25. Consent and the modified violinist example.
26. Marquis's deprivation account of what makes killing wrong in general. Application to the case of abortion.
27. Marquis, contraception, and abstinence.