

Mid-Term Exam

Due Date: Saturday, March 24, 2018 (end-of-day)

The Purpose

- The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate comprehension of the course readings by comparing and contrasting different concepts and philosophical methods.

General Instructions

- Use standard formatting: Times New Roman, 12-point font, regular margin sizes.
- Upload one document (docx or pdf) to Canvas assignment “Final Exam.”
- Two essays. Each essay should be 700 – 1000 words

Two Short Essays	40 pts each x 2 = 80 pts
Total Value of Exam	= 80 pts

Citations

- **Each essay should include at least three important quotations.**
 - Quote = exact word-for-word re-typing of a portion of the course reading.
 - Parenthetical citations = the name and page number provided in parentheses after a quote or paraphrase of the text.
 - There should be citations for every reference to a substantial point made by an author. But paraphrased citations by themselves do not count as one of the three minimum quotes.
 - In other words, your answer should not read as if it is just based off of your notes.
- **Use standard MLA parenthetical citations**
 - whenever you quote the text or
 - whenever you paraphrase the text.
- Example MLA parenthetical citations
 - **“This is the quoted passage” (Author’s Last Name ##).**
 - “So what treatment do I deserve for being such a benefactor?” (Plato 33L).
 - Don’t use the editors’ names in your citations.
- No Works Cited Page
 - Because you should only be using readings covered in our course.
 - If there is an outside source that you think would benefit one of the answers, then ask me before writing the exam.
 - Otherwise, **outside sources are not permitted**.

Working with Others

- You’re encouraged to discuss the exam with classmates before you have begun writing.
- Once you begin writing your exam, do not discuss the exam with anyone else, though you may ask/email questions to me. I will provide feedback and address any major confusions (even if I won’t provide answers).

Essay Questions and Instructions

- Answer two (2) of the following problems, from two different groups.
 - In other words, *you need to choose one problem from two different groups of questions*. There are three groups of problems: you will ignore one of the groups.
- Each essay should be 700-1,000 words.
- Number each essay, but do not waste space retyping the question.
- The problems are outlined in bullet points, but ***your essays should be in essay form***.

Group 1: (Answer NO MORE THAN ONE of the following questions):

Problem 1) Plato on the Philosophical Method (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*)

- Answer at least two of the following arrowed bullet points:
 - Why was Socrates critical of Euthyphro's definition(s) of piety?
 - How does Socrates understand wisdom in the *Apology*?
 - How does Socrates attempt to persuade people in all three dialogues?
 - How does Socrates understand goodness in the *Crito* dialogue?
- Examine similarities and differences between the dialogues that you are discussing.
- Evaluate Socrates's arguments: do you find them persuasive? Why or why not?

[If you do Problem 1, address all of the circled bullet points in the order you choose and in essay form.]

Problem 2) Grau's "Bad Dreams, Evil Demons, and the Experience Machine" and Plato's *Crito*

- According to Grau, is reality valuable beyond our conscious experience of reality?
 - How does Grau justify his answer?
- Compare Grau's argument to Socrates's discussion of goodness in the *Crito*.
 - Are there any important similarities and/or differences between Grau's and Socrates's arguments?
- Evaluate whether you find Grau's argument persuasive. Explain why or why not.

[If you do Problem 2, address all bullet points in whatever order you choose and in essay form.]

Group 2 (Answer NO MORE THAN ONE of the following questions):

Problem 3) Anselm's, Aquinas's, and Pascal's arguments concerning God's existence

- Compare and contrast two (and only two) of the above philosophers' arguments concerning God's existence.
- Note at least one strength and one weakness of both arguments.
- Which argument do you believe is stronger? Why?
 - Do you find either of the arguments persuasive? Why or why not?

[If you do Problem 3, address all bullet points in whatever order you choose and in essay form.]

Problem 4) Wang Chong's OR Antony's critique of religious belief

- Apply either Wang Chong or Louise Antony's arguments (but not both) to either Anselm, Aquinas, or Pascal:
 - Briefly summarize either Anselm's, Aquinas's, or Pascal's argument concerning God's existence.
 - Explain how Wang Chong or Antony might respond to the argument.
- Do you find Wang Chong's or Antony's response persuasive? Why or why not?

[If you do Problem 4, address all bullet points in whatever order you choose and in essay form.]

Group 3 (Answer NO MORE THAN ONE of the following questions):

Problem 5) Descartes and Zhuangzi on skepticism

- Why does Descartes imagine an “evil demon” at the end of Meditation I?
- Explain one of Zhuangzi’s arguments for skepticism.
- How do the skeptical arguments fit into each philosopher’s larger arguments?
 - Be sure to discuss important similarities and differences between Descartes’s and Zhuangzi’s uses of skepticism.
- Which form of skepticism, if either, do you find valuable? Explain why or why not.

[If you do Problem 5, address all bullet points in whatever order you choose and in essay form.]

Problem 6) Hume and Descartes on knowledge

- Explain Hume’s account of the cause and effect relationship.
 - What role does habit/custom play in Hume’s account?
- Why does Descartes refer to himself as a “thinking thing” in Meditation II?
 - What lesson does Descartes draw from the wax example?
 - How might Hume respond to the wax example?
- Evaluate which account of human knowledge you find more persuasive. Explain why.

[If you do Problem 6, address all bullet points in whatever order you choose and in essay form.]