

## B.5 Final Exam Study Guide

The final examination will take place on Tuesday December 11th, and will be two hours long, from 8:00 to 10:00. It will start at 8:00 sharp, and stop at 10:00 sharp. It is closed books, closed notes. I will provide blue books.

The examination consists in TWENTY short questions. You will have to answer FIFTEEN of them.

The questions will be chosen out of the list below. They are short and simple. Your answer should share both qualities. That said, you should aim at explaining yourself fully. Concretely, you should not expect to be able to answer with just one sentence. More than one page, on the other hand, is probably too much. Always define the technical terms you use. Always provide examples to illustrate your point.

The questions are meant to check your knowledge of the material covered in class. You are not asked to know more than what was said in class and what is in the course notes.

### **REVIEW SESSION: Sunday 12/10 at 7:40 in Siegel Hall 202.**

1. Define – Make sure to give examples:
  - (a) metaphysics
  - (b) epistemology
  - (c) rationalism
  - (d) empiricism
2. Explain Montaigne's statement that all the profit of human's pursuit of knowledge over the centuries reduces to have learned their ignorance?
3. List the various reasons why the senses are inadequate according to Montaigne
4. Explain why the beginning of Descartes' *Discourse* sounds ironic. Do you think the text can still be said to defend the idea of reason's being shared by all human beings?

5. What is the method of induction?
6. Explain how Descartes justifies that he rejects as false “*all* the opinions which [he] had formerly accepted” (my emphasis) even if he does not know for sure that they are all false in the First Meditation.
7. To what aim does Descartes decide to reject all his beliefs as false?
8. What is foundationalism?
9. What is Descartes’ argument for not trusting his senses in the First Meditation?
10. What is the Dream argument?
11. What kind of knowledge does the hypothesis of an evil genius serve to reject in the First Meditation?
12. Explain how, according to Descartes in the Second Meditation, the proposition “I think I exist” resists the argument of the evil genius.
13. Explain how Descartes is led to the conclusion that he is “a thing which thinks”. Explain how this conclusion can be challenged.
14. Explain the argument of the piece of wax in Descartes’ *Meditations*.
15. On what grounds does Descartes accept as a “general rule” to take as true everything of which he has a clear and distinct perception? Explain the limitations of the certitude of a clear and distinct idea.
16. Why does Descartes need to prove the existence of God? Why does Descartes need to prove that God is not a deceiver?
17. Explain how Descartes argues for the existence of God on the basis of the study of the various kinds of ideas we have.
18. Explain the Ontological argument. Explain how it can be challenged.
19. What is the cause of error for Descartes?
20. How can Descartes’ theory of error be consistent with the idea of God as an all-powerful all-good God?

21. In what sense is indifference the lowest grade of freedom according to Descartes?
22. How does Descartes restore the certainty of mathematical notions?
23. Explain the Cosmological Argument. Explain how it can be challenged.
24. Explain what the Cartesian Circle is. Give one way out of it.
25. Explain to what extent Descartes restores his trust in the teachings of nature, i.e. in what our senses tell us concerning the external bodies?
26. How does Descartes restore his trust in the existence of the external world?
27. What kind of thinking do we share with animals according to Leibniz?
28. Explain what is a truth of reasoning and a truth of fact for Leibniz. How do they relate to the Principle of Contradiction and the Principle of Sufficient Reason?
29. How does the nature of God imply that we must not only accept but also be entirely satisfied by the Creation?
30. What view on freedom does Leibniz endorse in *Discourse on Metaphysics*? How does it compare with Descartes?
31. What is the lazy argument? How does Leibniz respond to it?
32. How does Leibniz explain the appearance of disorder and evil within God's most perfect creation?
33. According to Leibniz, is it possible that you be not a student at IIT this semester? More precisely, in what sense, if any, would it be possible? Explain how the fact that you are a student in IIT this semester is, according to Leibniz, contingent even if it could be proved a priori by a super-mind.
34. How do you understand Leibniz's claim that every substance is like "a mirror [...] of the whole world"?
35. Give at least five characteristics of Leibniz's notion of individual substance.

36. In what sense, if any, are we free within Leibniz' metaphysics?
37. In what sense, if any, are we responsible for our actions within Leibniz' metaphysics?
38. Do Leibnizian substances interact? How does Leibniz explain the appearance of a causal interactions in what we observe of the world?
39. Explain what pre-established harmony is.
40. Does Berkeley think that matter exists? On what grounds?
41. Does Berkeley think that the physical world exists? On what grounds?
42. What objection does Berkeley raise against the idea that primary qualities are really in external objects, whereas secondary qualities are only in our minds?
43. How does Berkeley prove the existence of God?
44. According to Berkeley, does the moon exist when we do not look at it? Why or why not?
45. According to Berkeley, what is the world made of? Is it real? Is it objective?
46. Explain how Berkeley argues that his philosophy is an antidote against scepticism.
47. Explain how Berkeley argues that his philosophy is the most compatible with common sense.
48. What is Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas? Define both terms and explain the difference between them. Give an example.
49. What is the Copy Principle? Explain with an example.
50. How does the Copy Principle function as a criterion of meaning?
51. Explain the thought experiment about a person who has never seen a particular shade of blue. Why does it constitute an objection to Hume's theory of ideas? How can Hume answer?

52. What are the three principles of connexion between ideas, according to Hume? Give some example for each one.
53. Explain the difference between relation of ideas and matters of facts. Give examples of each. What principle does Hume take to be the base of all our reasonings on matters of fact?
54. Explain Hume's argument that our expectation that the sun will rise tomorrow cannot be grounded on any reasoning, either a priori or a posteriori. If we accept this, what are the consequences for our knowledge of the physical world? of laws of nature?
55. According to Hume, by which process do we come to expect that objects of similar appearance will have similar effects?
56. What makes us believe in an idea according to Hume? Remember that the will was an essential part of belief for Descartes: does Hume agree on this point with Descartes?
57. Explain why we cannot derive our idea of power or necessary connection either from our sense-impressions of external objects, or from the operations of the mind, i.e. the operations of the will
58. Where does our idea of power and necessary connection come from according to Hume?
59. What are the two definitions of cause according to Hume? How do you think these two definitions relate to each other? Is there one correct definition of cause?
60. Why does Hume think that we are not aware of the self in our experience, and have no idea of the self? What effect (if any) do you think Hume's "no-self" doctrine has upon Descartes' cogito?
61. Why does Hume think that it is a mistake to attribute identity over time to some object (such as a ship), and why do we make this mistake?
62. Why does Hume think that, strictly speaking, the "identity, which we attribute to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one," and that the mind is best compared to a republic or commonwealth?

63. What are Hume's arguments against Cartesian doubt? Do you agree with him?
64. To what extent does Hume doubt the existence of the external world? On what grounds? To what extent does he accept the existence of the external world? On what grounds?
65. What are Hume's arguments against excessive scepticism?
66. What is Hume's "mitigated scepticism"?
67. How does Kant characterize the "secured path of a science"? Which domains of knowledge have reached the status of science?
68. Explain what Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in metaphysics consist in.