Philosophy 120F

Final Exam Study Guide

The following are things you should know and be able to explain with the help of your notes and the readings. Sub-bullet points indicate a topic that is closely related to the major bullet point they are underneath, and you should know how they relate.

* The Problem of Evil
	+ Free will response
		- “Natural evils” objection to the free will response
	+ “Greater good” response to the problem of evil
* The Ontological Argument
	+ “Island Objection”: parody the argument with “island” swapped for “being”
* William Paley’s Design Argument for the existence of God
* Pascal’s Wager
	+ The difference between a pragmatic reason and a theoretical reason
	+ Objections to Pascal’s Wager:
		- Is this genuine belief?
		- Does God want you to believe out of self-interest?
		- *Which* god should we believe in?
* The First Cause Argument and Bertrand Russell’s response to it
* Bertrand Russell’s response to the Design Argument
* The Moral Argument for Deity and Bertrand Russell’s response to it
* Argument for the Remedying of Injustice, and Bertrand Russell’s response to it
* The Natural Law Argument and Russell’s response to it
* The Justified True Belief account of knowledge
	+ Gettier’s counterexamples to the Justified True Belief account
* Descartes’s First and Second Meditations
	+ General picture of what Descartes is trying to do in his meditations
	+ “I think therefore I am”, and the role this plays in his meditations
* Descartes’s Third Meditation
	+ The Cartesian Circle
		- Cause Principle
		- Clear and Distinct = True
* Descartes’s Fourth Meditation
	+ How Descartes accounts for errors in judgment
		- Will and Understanding
* Descartes’s Sixth Meditation
	+ Cartesian Dualism
	+ How Descartes salvages his beliefs
* Hume’s distinction between ideas and impressions
	+ Hume’s “Copy Principle”
	+ How Hume thinks we get the idea of God
	+ The basis of Hume’s aversion to metaphysics
* Hume’s relations of ideas vs. matters of fact
	+ How Hume thinks we gain knowledge of matters of fact
	+ How Hume thinks we gain knowledge of cause and effect
* Salmon’s Problem of Induction
	+ What induction is
	+ What the problem of induction is
		- The principle of the uniformity of nature
		- The problem with circular justifications
			* Counterinduction
			* Using a crystal ball to predict the future
	+ Hypothetico-Deductivism
		- How it tries to avoid induction
		- How it fails to avoid induction
	+ Popper’s Deductivism
		- How it tries to avoid induction
			* Concepts of falsifiability, corroboration
		- How it fails to avoid induction
	+ Probabilistic Approach
		- Ordinary language “dissolution” of the problem of induction
		- Why Salmon thinks this fails
	+ Reichenbach’s pragmatic justification of induction
		- Shortcomings
* Russell’s Argument from Analogy for Other Minds
	+ Why the inference to other minds is defeasible
* Ryle’s outline of the “Official Doctrine” of mind
* Ryle’s arguments against the Official Doctrine
	+ Category mistakes
	+ Ryle’s argument from analogy against the Official Doctrine
	+ Ryle’s epistemic argument against the Official Doctrine
	+ Ryle’s pragmatic argument against the Official Doctrine
	+ Ryle’s conception of the relationship between the mental and the physical
		- Logical behaviorism
* Churchland’s eliminative materialism
	+ Folk psychology vs. neuroscience
		- Identity Theory of Mind and it’s failure
			* Intertheoretic reduction (e.g. thermodynamics to statistical mechanics)
			* Why a reduction of folk psychology to neuroscience is unlikely
	+ Arguments for eliminative materialism
		- Explanatory and predictive failures of folk psychology
		- Inductive lesson from conceptual history
	+ Arguments against eliminative materialism (and Churchland’s responses)
		- Introspection
		- Possible incoherence of asserting “mental states do not exist”
		- The failings of folk psychology have been exaggerated
* Jackson’s view in “Epiphenomenal Qualia”
	+ Physicalism
	+ Knowledge argument against physicalism
		- What qualia are
	+ Modal argument against physicalism
		- Philosophical zombies
	+ Epiphenomena – what they are
	+ Why Jackson thinks qualia have to be epiphenomenal
	+ Arguments against epiphenomenalism (and Jackson’s responses)
		- Causal efficacy of qualia is obvious
		- Natural selection would not select for epiphenomena
		- Epiphenomenalism is just *weird*
* Searle’s Chinese Room thought experiment
	+ Turing Test
	+ What it is supposed to show
	+ Understanding vs. simulated understanding
	+ Replies (and Searle’s responses)
		- Systems reply
		- Brain simulator reply
		- Robot reply
* Bernard Williams’s thought experiments about switching bodies
	+ The question of personal identity
	+ The bodily continuity criterion of personal identity
	+ The mental continuity criterion of personal identity
		- Which thought experiment supports which criterion, and why
* Dennett’s “Where Am I?”
	+ Dennett’s stance on the question of personal identity
		- Chris’s interpretation: the utility of the *concept* of “personal identity” runs out when we get very far from ordinary contexts
* What free will is (and how it’s different from political freedom)
	+ Van Inwagen’s argument against the existence of free will
		- Determinism
			* No-Choice Principle
		- Indeterminism
* Frankfurt’s argument against the Principle of Alternate Possibilities
	+ Determinism + Principle of Alternate Possibilities = No Moral Responsibility
	+ The Jones4 counterexample to the Principle of Alternate Possibilities
	+ Frankfurt’s Revised Principle of Alternate Possibilities
* The Trolley Problem and its various modifications
	+ Utilitarian treatment
	+ Deontological/Kantian treatment
* The point of searching for a general ethical theory: to decide the hard cases (maybe)
* *How* we evaluate ethical theories
* Utilitarianism
	+ The principle of utility and how it is used to render particular ethical judgments
	+ Mill’s “proof” of the principle of utility and what’s wrong with it
		- Equivocation about the word “desirable”
* Problems with Utilitarianism:
	+ The Utility Monster
	+ Average or Total Utility?
		- Problem with Average: remove people dragging down the average
		- Problem with Total: earthworm case
	+ Justifying punishment
	+ Hooking everyone up to a morphine drip might be utility-maximizing
	+ Obligations to specific people (like family members)
* Kantian ethics
	+ Actions in accordance with duty vs. actions from the motivation of duty
	+ Categorical imperative (first and second formulations)
		- Why promise-keeping is a duty
		- Why telling the truth is a duty
		- Why it’s a duty to develop your natural talents
* Problems with Kantian ethics:
	+ Nazi Germany
	+ “One thought too many”
* Differences between the questions “What is the meaning of life?” and “What makes a life meaningful?”
* Susan Wolf’s answer to the question, “What makes a life meaningful?”
	+ The Blob, the Useless, and the Bankrupt, and how they figure into Wolf’s proposal
* Surprise Examination (PBF p. 830)
* Newcomb’s Problem (PBF pp. 832-833)