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)