

Phil 106: Second Take Home Midterm

Fall, 2022

Instructions

Due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas, by 11:55pm Monday, November 14 (in PDF or any format easily converted to PDF, e.g. MSWord, OpenOffice, L^AT_EX, RTF, plain text).

Answer any *one* of the questions listed below in 2–3 pages (double spaced).

The questions are keyed to different sections of the reading, with the idea that each question is raised most centrally in a certain section. However, you can and should use material from anywhere in the text where it’s relevant to the answer.

Because this is an exam rather than a paper, I will give priority to accuracy over originality in grading. However, all the questions do require some thought; they can’t simply be read out of the texts. Moreover, in many (if not all) cases the “correct” answer is unavoidably a matter of interpretation: in such cases it would be safest to reproduce what I said in class, but it will also be acceptable if you’re clearly following some other reasonable interpretation. And, of course, as usual, your answer must be “original” in the sense that it is your own work. (If you use any outside source — which I *don’t* recommend — you must cite it.)¹

Since we read the B edition only, please base your answer on the B edition text (where there are differences). You can cite it by the B-edition page number (e.g., “B112”).

You can find answers to some commonly asked questions about my assignments and grading in my FAQ (<https://people.ucsc.edu/~abestone/courses/faq.html>).

¹If you have any questions about policies on plagiarism and related issues, please see https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct.

Questions

1. (Transcendental Deduction, part I) A deduction, according to Kant, establishes the legitimacy or “objective validity” of a concept — that is, it explains how we know that the manifold of appearances can be synthesized (by the imagination) in such a way as to be unified by that concept. Explain (1) why, according to Kant, we don’t normally need a deduction of empirical concepts; (2) why, if we do want a deduction of an empirical concept, it will be what Kant calls an “empirical deduction” — that is, roughly, an account of how we acquired the concept in the first place; and (3) why an alleged empirical deduction of a *pure* concept (for example, of one of the categories) would not be a deduction at all.
2. (Transcendental Deduction, part II) Assume that every representation of mine can at least potentially be accompanied by the representation “I think”: that is, that every representation involves a rule which is applied to a certain case, but which could equally apply to other cases. Explain why Kant would call this “the analytic unity of apperception” (remembering that “apperception” means self-consciousness). Why does this presuppose that I can represent (determine, refer to) some single *object* via the representation “I”? Why would Kant call that “the synthetic unity of apperception”?
3. (Schematism) Explain why an empirical concept, such as the concept *dog*, does not apply directly to sense impressions: why the sense impressions I receive from any particular dog are never a pure and complete case of the rule that makes up the concept. What role does the faculty of imagination play in allowing such a concept to be applied? (In what way does the imagination “produce” an image for unification by the understanding?) How does this involve a “schema”? Give another example which shows the role of the imagination and its schemata in the case of mathematical concepts. Why is there a special problem with there being schemata for pure concepts of the understanding, such as the categories?
4. (System of Principles) The Highest Principle of All Synthetic Judgments is, roughly, that the appearances must be such that they can all be thought together as mine (in the synthetic unity of apperception). What does this have to do with the categories, and with the schemata of the categories? How does it rule out certain synthetic judgments — for example, “Some event has no cause” — as, not self-contradictory, but *empty*? Why do such purported

synthetic judgments undermine themselves, even though their predicate (e.g. “non-caused”) does not contradict their subject (e.g. “event”)? (Hint: in a successful categorical judgment, the predicate concept is applied to some possible *object* by means of the subject concept.)

5. (Phenomena and Noumena) The Transcendental Analytic has shown that all the objects of our knowledge are phenomena: that is, they are *objects* (of a cognitive faculty) only insofar as they *appear* (are given in sensible intuition). Kant (as I understand him) then entertains an objection along these lines: doesn’t this mean that we do, after all, know *something* about noumena: that is, about things which are objects of our understanding directly, *without* the mediation of a sensible intuition? Explain why this objection might arise: that is, why the conclusion of the Transcendental Analytic might seem to have that implication. Explain further why, if this were correct, it would imply that the categories apply, not only to the objects of experience, but to objects in general.

6. (Amphiboly) Consider the concepts of *identity* and *difference*. Explain why we must be able to apply them to objects if we are to think of those objects under concepts (for example, to think of an object as *cinnabar*, or as *some cinnabar*, or as *this cinnabar*). How, according to Kant, can we actually apply these concepts (of identity and difference) to objects: that is, what makes two objects different? (Hint: how is space involved?) Why would that not work, according to Kant, if the objects of our knowledge were noumena?