Phil. 106: Kant

Take Home Final

Instructions

Answer any *three* of the following questions, 2–3 pages for each answer, for a total of 6–9 pages. You may hand in your answers early if you like, but all answers are due by Tues., June 7th. Please e-mail to the instructor (`abestone@ucsc.edu`) and cc Gabe (the grader), in PDF or a format easily convertible to PDF (e.g. MSWord — `.doc` or `.docx` both fine —, plain text, or RTF).

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.)

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").

Questions

1. (Intro to the Dialectic/Concepts of Pure Reason) Give an example of a categorical syllogism. Explain how the major premise (like any judgment) expresses knowledge on a condition, and how the minor premise subsumes something under that condition. What is the condition (in your example)? Give an example of a prosyllogism which has the minor premise of the first syllogism as its conclusion. In what sense does the prosyllogism establish a "higher" condition — part of an "ascending" series of conditions? What would a first, unconditioned condition look like in this case?

2. (Concepts of Pure Reason) According to the "highest principle of all synthetic judgments," "every object stands under the necessary conditions of

synthetic unity of the manifold intuition in a possible experience" (A158/ B197, p. 194) — where "synthetic unity" is the function of the understanding (A79/B104, p. 112). Very briefly: what actually guarantees that objects fulfill these conditions? In a transcendental illusion, what kind of guarantee does reason demand instead (hint: it is a kind of *object*)? Why does this mistaken demand lead the understanding to apply the categories in a *transcendent* way. That is: why does it lead the understanding to try to think, through the categories, something which could, in principle, never be an object of experience?

3. (Paralogisms) Consider the syllogism on p. 371 (B410–11). Kant says that it involves a *sophisma figurae dictionis*: that is, a fallacy of equivocation. Give another example of a syllogism which displays this fallacy. Where is the equivocation in your example? What phrase must be used equivocally in Kant's example? Why, based on Kant's text, might you think that the specific term used equivocally is "thought"? If you can, make a case that the term used equivocally is actually "subject."

4. (Antinomies) According to the Thesis of the Third Antinomy, p. 409 (A444/ B472), "it is necessary to assume that there is," in addition to natural causality, "also another causality, that of freedom." Explain how "freedom" is defined here, and explain why, according to Kant, reason (in its argument for the Thesis) demands the existence of a "free" cause (in *that* sense of free). On the other hand, how can we tell, based on the conclusions of the Transcendental Analytic (in particular, the Second Analogy), that this demand could never be fulfilled by any object of experience, i.e. that we can never experience anything which is in that sense "free"?

5. (Solution to the Third Antinomy) Freedom (more precisely: transcendental freedom) would seem to be inconsistent with determinism, for the following reason. Suppose I freely choose how to act at time t. According to determinism, whatever happens after t must be completely determined by what happened long before t (i.e., only one course of future events can be compatible with that course of past events). Therefore, I can only choose one way, i.e. can't choose freely. What would Kant say about this argument? (Hint: if I am free, is my free choice something that happens at a time? Is there more than one way I can choose? What is my "intelligible character"?)

6. (Ideal) What is (supposed to be) the concept of an *ens realissimum*? Explain what makes this concept an "ideal," as Kant defines that term on

p. 485 (A568/B596): explain, that is, why this is the concept of an *individual* object. How, according to Kant, is this concept related to the totality of all possible things? In particular: why does reason's demand, that a thing be known as possible by seeing it as one among all the possible things, i.e. by comparing it to the sum of all possibilities, end up being a demand that everything be thought by comparison to the ideal of the *ens realissimum*? How does the argument depend on the principle that realities cannot oppose each other, i.e. that the only thing opposed to reality is negation?

7. (Impossibility of the Proofs) Suppose we have a concept, C, and we already agree that C's are possible. Suppose I now tell you, further, that some C's are actual (i.e., that there actually are some C's). How, according to Kant, would this be different from telling you (for example) that all C's are extended, or that all C's are heavy? In particular, if C is an empirical concept, what am I adding to the claim that C's are possible when I say that at least some are actual? Explain using the example of the 100 thalers (dollars). How is this related to what Kant says about the modality of judgments at the bottom of p. 109 (A74/B99–100) and about the categories of modality, at the beginning of the "Explanation" of the Postulates of Empirical Thought, on p. 239 (A219/B266)?

8. (Canon) Explain the difference between a pragmatic law and a moral law, according to Kant. How is each related to happiness? (Explain what "happiness" means, according to Kant.) Explain further why, given these definition (of moral law and of happiness), and given that the "supreme good" (or "supreme derivative good") is as Kant describes on pp. 640–41 (A813–14/B841–2), our only hope for the supreme good would be to assume that God exists. What is the definition of "God," as the term is used in the conclusion of this argument?