

Phil 106: Take Home Final

Spring, 2024

Instructions

Due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas, by 11:55pm Tuesday, June 11 (in PDF or any format easily converted to PDF, e.g. MSWord).

Answer any *two* of the questions listed below, in 2–3 pages for each answer, for a total of 4–6 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 For possible consequences of plagiarism, see the Academic Misconduct Policy.²

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>).

¹<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/c.php?g=1349850&p=9960819>.

²<https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html>.

Questions

1. (Introduction to the Dialectic/Concepts of Pure Reason) Consider a hypothetical syllogism of the form:

If all C is D, then all A is B.

But, all C is D.

Therefore, all A is B.

Explain the difference between (1) the unity of the understanding which allows the concept A to be brought under the concept B and (2) the unity of reason which allows the judgment *All A is B* to be explained by the principle, *If all C is D, then all A is B*. In particular: explain how both (1) and (2) involve the unification of the *same* manifold of possible cognitions, namely, those falling under the concept A. The purpose of the unification (1) is to “collect much possible knowledge into one” — that is, in this case, to allow the predicate concept, B, to be applied at once to every object of the subject concept, A. So the possible objects of A are to be united *in virtue of their common conformity to the concept A*, and *for the purpose of representing them all together as object to B*. In virtue of what, and for what purpose, are the objects of A to be united in (2)?

2. (Concepts of Pure Reason) In the Transcendental Analytic, it is argued that the manifold in intuition must be such as to allow the understanding to think it under concepts, i.e. that there is an object of experience. Why would it be wrong to argue, further, that manifold in sense must be such as to allow *reason* to think the object of experience under principles? If, nevertheless, we make such a demand, why does this result in an attempt to think something further through the *categories*, which are pure concepts of the understanding? (Hint for both parts: *thinking an object* is an act of what faculty?) Finally, why does this new alleged use of the categories involve applying them *transcendently*, that is, using them to think an object which could never be the object of experience? (Hint: why is any judgment about the object of experience always *conditioned*?)

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, then, in Kant’s example,

must contain the term that is being used equivocally? (You should be able to identify the *phrase* where the equivocation must be just on the basis of the form of the syllogism.) Show, further, based on Kant's text, that the specific *word* used equivocally is "thought."

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"? (Note: of course the argument for the Thesis of the Third Antinomy contains a mistake, according to Kant, since the Antinomy as a whole, both Thesis and Antithesis, is a product of transcendental illusion, as are all the Antinomies. So your explanation of "why reason demands" this will incorporate the mistaken step or steps. The inconsistency of the conclusion with the Second Analogy will then show why Kant *must* think there is a mistake somewhere.)

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 . If we define "determinism" as the view that the future is completely determined by the past, then, 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? (Note that this is a contemporary argument which Kant does not address directly. You can't answer this question by just summarizing the Solution to the Third Antinomy; you will need to think about how Kant would respond to a question that no one actually puts to him.) (Hint: if I am free, is my free choice something that happens at a time? Does Kant's definition of "freedom" imply that there is more than one way I can choose? Is there more than one way I can choose, according to Kant? What is my "intelligible character"?)

6. (Ideal) What is (supposed to be) the concept of an *ens realissimum*? Ex-

plain why, if we really could think something through this concept, it would be an “ideal,” as Kant defines that term on p. 485 (A568/B596): explain, that is, why it would be the concept of an *individual* object. How, according to Kant, is this supposed concept related to another supposed concept, the concept of the totality of all possible things? In particular: why does reason’s (mistaken) 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 (also mistaken, according to Kant) 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 an ordinary empirical concept, *C*, and we already agree that *C* represents some possible objects. Call these possible object of *C* the (possible) *C*-things. Suppose now (1) I go on to tell you that some (possible) *C*-things are heavy. This involves adding further information about what is possible: not only is a *C*-thing possible, but a heavy *C*-thing is possible. Suppose, on the other hand, (2) I go on to tell you that some *C*-things are actual (i.e., that there actually are some *C*-things, that the concept *C* represents some *actual* object). How, according to Kant, is (2) different from (1)? Since we are assuming *C* is an empirical concept, what am I adding to the claim that *C*-things are possible when I say that at least some are actual? Explain using the example of the 100 thalers (dollars). (Hint: how must an actual *C*-thing be related to *me*? What is the role of *sensation* here?) How does this show, in advance, that there will have to be a problem with any proof in which we first show that God *possibly* exists, and then go on, through some further steps, to show that God *actually* exists?