

Phil 190: Take Home Final
Winter, 2026

Instructions

Due, as an attachment, via the “Assignments” tool on Canvas, by 11:55pm on Tuesday, March 17.

Answer any *two* of the the following questions, 3–4 pages for each answer, for a total of 6–8 pages.

The questions are keyed to different sections of the text, with the idea that each question is raised most centrally in that place. However, in keeping with the fact that this is a final exam, and also with the self-applying nature of Hegel’s system, each question also requires you to consider the section in question in light of other sections.

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.)

You can cite pages in our text by section number, adding “R” for Remark or “A” for Addition if applicable, and page number.

Questions

1. (Preliminary Conception) Assume that §§20–23 have the following structure: (α = §20) thinking as subjective; (β , γ = §§21–2) thinking-over (*Nachdenken*); ($[\delta]$ = §23) free thinking. Explain thinking-over as a shining-within-itself of subjective thinking (i.e., explain why it is a second moment), why it is thinking of an object (*Objekt*), and why this means getting at the essence

of that object, or what really matters about it (the *Sache*). Finally, considering free thinking as the third moment (as moment of being-for-self), explain why the three moments taken together characterize thinking in the way appropriate to “objective idealism” (as hinted at also in §24).

2. (Quality) Consider the following (partial) summary of Descartes’s *Second* and *Third Meditations*: (1) the *Second Meditation* shows that I, a thinking thing, am (have being); (2) the *Third Meditation* discusses the heterogeneous objective being of my ideas (that they are heterogeneous to each other because they are ideas of qualitatively different “something”’s) and (3) compares it to their homogeneous formal being (that they are homogeneous, all of the same kind, insofar as they are all just my ideas). How might (1), (2) and (3) be correlated with the moments of quality: being, being-there (*Dasein*), and being-for-self? (Recall what Hegel says about being-for-self in the Addition to §96: “The most familiar form of being-for-itself is the ‘I.’ We know ourselves as beings who are there [*als daseiende*], first of all distinct from all other such beings, and as related to them. But secondly, we also know that this expanse of being-there is, so to speak, focused onto the simple form of being-for-self.”) Use the correlation to explain, from Hegel’s point of view, why the immediate form of consciousness is *time*: that is, why consciousness is, immediately, the unified consciousness of a succession of determinate contents, one after the other.

3. (Quantity) Consider a correlation between the following moments of quality and of quantity:

quality	quantity
becoming (third moment of being, §88)	continuous quantity
true infinite (third moment of being-there, §95)	discrete quantity
attraction (third moment of being-for-self, §98)	unity

The three moments on the right are the moments of “pure quantity” (all described in §100, p. 160).

We might expect a correlation something like this given that pure quantity is the “frozen” unity of being and being-there, i.e. the collapse into a new immediacy of the “fluid” unity which constitutes being-for-self. In other words: the whole movement of the Quality section repeats itself, in “frozen” form, within pure quantity.

Explain in detail how, in each case, the quantitative moment is a quantitative version of the qualitative one. For example: explain how *continuous quantity* (that is, quantity regarded as both determinate and indeterminate, as having no stable stopping places within itself) is *becoming* regarded as characterizing a dimension in which determination can vary indifferently to the being of which it is a determination, and similarly for the other two pairs. (Hints: in the case of discrete quantity, remember that we are not talking about a particular discrete quantity, a number, but rather about, so to speak, *discrete quantitativeness*, what is common to *all* discrete quantities; with respect to unity, remember that attraction is the unity of one and many.)

4. (Measure) In the second question on the first writing assignment, I asked about the sense in which Hegel *agrees* with Protagoras that “the human being is the measure of all things” (even though, of course, Hegel doesn’t think this is the *whole truth*). Now consider interpreting this statement as follows: there are no qualitative differences between things as they really are (what really exists is just qualitiless atoms); every quality (for example: sensible qualities such as white and hot) is only the result of the way someone perceives the atoms hitting their sense organs. (This, or something like this, is the interpretation of Protagoras which Socrates advances in the *Theaetetus*.)

Explain, first, why Hegel might say that *measure* is the exact right determination to use in expressing this thought (which, again, is, in a sense, a *true* thought). Hints: (a) think of measure as quantity-for-quality, in the following way: a whole manifold of indifferent quantitative variation, within a certain determinate range, is unified by its correspondence to *one* determinate quality (and see the end of the Addition to §106, p. 169: in quantitative determinations about the world, we are really concerned “to discover the quantities that underly determinate qualities”); (b) try to understand why Hegel (in the Remark to §99) connects quantity with *materialism* (which you can understand to mean: the view that everything that exists is just more and more of the same basic stuff); (c) as suggested in the original writing assignment, think of measure as a form of being-for-self, hence of finite consciousness as an application of measure (see again the Addition to §96: in consciousness, the “expanse of being-there [*Dasein*]” is “focused onto the simple form of being-for-self,” that is: all the infinite different somethings are what they are only *for* the one simple self).

Second, explain roughly how the *judgment of the concept* — a finite appli-

cation of which, fully developed, would be “This house (being constituted in such-and-such a way) is good (i.e., a good house)” (§179; cf. the same example of a house, §99R, p. 158: a house remains a house if you make it bigger or smaller, but, this will be the moment of measure: only within certain limits) — is a form of measure, and use *that* correlation to show why, according to Hegel, Protagoras’ position about qualities entails, or goes along with, moral relativism.

5. (Essence as Ground of Existence) The moment of ground (§§121–2) has no clear internal structure in the *Encyclopedia* (and the 1812 *Science of Logic* is too different in these sections to provide much guidance). However, one way we could try to fill in that structure would be by making a parallel with other sections. Here is one suggestion, based on drawing a parallel between Essence as the Ground of Existence, on the one hand, and the whole Doctrine

	Essence as Ground of Existence	Doctrine of the Concept	
of the Concept, on the other:	identity distinction ground	concept judgment syllogism	Explain

how each item in the second column differs from the corresponding item in the first column by the presence of a *mediating particularity* (which shows up in the judgment as the copula and in the syllogism as the middle term; in the concept as such, the mediating particularity is just particularity). (Hint: remember that the moment of identity, as a moment of *essence*, contains an internal “shining” — it is the essential identity *of* what is, inessentially, distinct; similarly, distinction is the essential distinctness *of* what is, inessentially, identical; similarly, ground is the essential unity of identity and distinction which shows the distinction between identity and distinction to be inessential: the consequences contain all the same content as the ground. In the sphere of the concept, mediation will replace “shining.”) Then, use the parallel to sketch very roughly what might correspond to the moments of the syllogism (the qualitative syllogism, $S-P-U$; the syllogism of reflection, $U-S-P$; and the syllogism of necessity, $P-U-S$) as moments of ground. (Hint: think of universality as parallel to identity, particularity as parallel to distinction, and singularity as parallel to the unity of the two. Then in each case think of the essential ground as the first term of the syllogism, of the inessential qua consequence standing out from the ground as the third term, and ask what it means that the middle, mediating term of each syllogism is

missing, replaced by “shining,” in the parallel moment of ground.)

6. (Appearance) In §135, discussing the essential relationship (*Verhältnis*) of whole and part, Hegel says that “the content is the whole and consists of [*besteht aus*] its opposite [*Gegenteil*], i.e., of the parts [*Teile*] (of the form)” (§135). Based on this (and perhaps other things he says there), explain in what sense Hegel can say the following about his system. First, we *can* see the system as a whole which consists of parts — that is, this way of seeing the system is not simply wrong. Second, however, this way of seeing the system is not fully *adequate*, hence not fully true: in fact, because division into parts (*Teile*) yields the mere *form* of the system, the result in a way is the precise opposite (*Gegenteil*) of a true understanding of its *content* (*Inhalt*). Explain further why, if we stop with this way of looking at the system (as a whole consisting of parts), what we will have the mere *appearance* of a system, and why, as a result, we will not be able to understand how one can call a halt (*Halt*) to the further addition of new parts (see the Addition to §131, p. 200: “appearance is still this inwardly broken [*in sich Gebrochene*] [moment] that does not have any stability [*Halt*] of its own” — but you must explain that, and hopefully in a way which connects it to *Inhalt* and *Verhältnis*). Finally, consider the following correlation: whole/parts (§135)—living thing within itself (§218); force/expression (§§136–7)—living thing and its environment (eating) (§219); inner/outer (§§138–41)—living thing and its genus (reproduction and death) (§§220–21). Explain why this is appropriate and argue that the original way of seeing the system (as whole and parts) is inadequate precisely because it regards the system as *inanimate*.

7. (Actuality) Consider the following two accounts of the relationship between God, the world as possibility, and the world as actuality. (1) “Before” God created the world, it had no *real* possibility at all: it was “merely,” formally possible, and, in creating the world, God added nothing at all to this mere possibility, other than the relationship to his actualizing will, nor was there anything in the content of the world which made that will necessary: the world was created by grace, and is purely *contingent*. (This is Descartes’s view, more or less.) (2) The possibility of the world simply is the divine essence; God’s “creation” of the world doesn’t take him out of himself, or even express something about him which was merely implicit: God and the world are the same thing, considered as substance or cause (potentiality as might, power) and as modes or as effect (actuality as passive) — creation

is the God's self-activity or self-causation. (This is Spinoza's view, as Hegel points out: God as active substance = *natura naturans*, as passive modes = *natura naturata*; God is the self-caused, the *causa sui*.) Taking the two sides of actuality (semblance and essence) in their primary application, as determinations of the absolute, explain in what sense Hegel can say that both of these seemingly mutually inconsistent alternatives is correct, but both are still inadequate in that they regard the world as mere actuality, not as independent object (*Objekt*), or (which is to say the same thing) in that they leave out the moment of divine *purpose* (which is supplied only in Leibniz's view: see the Remark to §194, as well as the discussion of Leibniz in the Addition to §121, pp. 190–91). (Note: if you are not familiar with Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, you should be able to answer this without referring to them; I mention them because, if you *are* familiar with them, it may help to keep them in mind.)

8. (Subjective Concept) One determination Hegel uses to explain the nature of the speculative or concrete universal is *continuity*:

Within being the abstract form of the progression is an *other* and *passing-over* into an other; within essence [it is] *shining within what is opposed*; in the *Concept* it is the distinctiveness of the *singular* from the *universality* which, as such, *continues* itself into what is distinct from it, and is *as identity* with the latter. (§240, p. 306; translation slightly altered)

Explain, first, how the moments of pure quantity — continuity, discreteness, and unity (§§99–100) — are relevant here. In what way is the distinctness of the singular from the universal like the distinctness of unity from continuity? (Hint: continuity makes sense as the first moment of Quantity because it is completely *indifferent* to the (qualitative) determinations of the quantified “something”: insofar as something is continuously quantified, it is everywhere the same. But the quantitatively *unified* something has *quantitative* determinations to which the determination of unity is indifferent — however *much* of it is unified, is thereby the same. Where do the quantitative determinations come from? Where did the initial continuity go?)

Secondly, explain how this continuity is related to the *freedom* of the concept, understanding freedom both (a) as absence of external determination, per Spinoza's definition (“That thing [*res*] is said to be free which exists [*existit*]

from the necessity of its own nature alone, and is determined to action by itself alone” [*Ethics* I, Def. 7].) and (b) as the expression of the will as such, the very nature of willing, in a singular act (a conception apparently at odds with Spinoza’s: see the Scholium to Prop. 49 of *Ethics* II, “For we have shown that the will is a universal entity, or the idea whereby we explicate all particular volitions. So if they believe that this common or universal idea of volitions is a faculty . . .”). Bonus question: why might Kierkegaard (or his pseudonym) suggest that this understanding of freedom is inconsistent with the concept of an *original sin*, that is, of a sin committed by an innocent will?

9. (Object) [?]

10. (Idea) [?]