

PHIL 93515: Final exam questions

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Below are the questions which may appear on the final exam. On the exam, you will be given six of these questions, and you will answer three of your choice. You will have 8 hours to complete the exam.

1. Are propositions structured abstract objects which have constituents? If so, what sorts of things are those constituents? If not, how should we understand the relationship between propositions (which are the meanings of sentences in contexts) and the meanings of the subsentential expressions?
2. Explain Kripke's modal argument against descriptivism. How should the descriptivist respond to the argument? Are any of these responses convincing? Does the argument count equally against any view of the meanings of names on which those meanings are distinct from their referents?
3. Explain the connections between Kaplan's notion of character and primary intensions in the two-dimensionalist system of *The Conscious Mind*. What theoretical roles are primary intensions, so understood, supposed to play? Can they play any of these roles successfully?
4. Explain the differences between the two-dimensionalism of *The Conscious Mind* and the 'epistemic' two-dimensionalism of Chalmers' more recent papers on the topic. Which view of primary intensions has a better chance of validating the thesis that a priority is necessity of primary intension? Say what explanatory roles epistemic intensions are supposed to play, and whether they can play these roles.
5. Explain Fodor's asymmetric dependence theory of content. What are the most serious objections to the theory? How does it fare compared with an 'ideal conditions' causal theory of content?
6. Explain Peacocke's approach to concept possession. How does it compare to causal theories of concept possession? Which is more plausible?
7. Explain which kinds of spectrum inversion pose a problem for (minimal) intentionalism. Explain two or more ways that the intentionalist could respond to these cases. Is any of these responses convincing? Why or why not?
8. Can external particulars, as well as properties, be represented in experience? Which properties can be represented in experience? Try to come up with a principled test for saying whether a given sort property can be represented in experience.
9. Explain the puzzle of 'true blue', and a few responses to it. Which is most plausible? Why?