

PHIL 20229: Midterm exam study guide

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In class, Tuesday, February 26

On the midterm, you will be given five questions from the following list, and will have to answer three:

1. Explain Zeno's Racetrack and Achilles arguments for the conclusion that motion is impossible. What do these arguments assume about the nature of space and time? Is it possible to complete an infinite number of tasks in a finite time? Why or why not?
2. Explain Zeno's Stadium argument. What does the argument attempt to show? Is it successful? Why or why not?
3. Explain what the A-series properties are, and why McTaggart thought that they were contradictory. Is his argument successful? Why or why not? What, if anything, does it show us about the nature of time?
4. Why did Einstein conclude from the constancy of the speed of light in all reference frames that simultaneity is relative to a frame of reference? If the only things that exist are things that exist in the present, does the relativity of simultaneity show that what exists is relative to a frame of reference? Does this make sense? Why or why not?
5. Explain the Doomsday Paradox, and say what you think the best response to the paradox is.
6. Explain the paradox of the statue and the clay, and say what you think the best response to the paradox is. Defend your view in response to one or two objections.
7. Is teletransportation possible? What, if anything, do examples of teletransportation show us about personal identity?
8. Explain split brain cases, and say why they pose a challenge to our assumptions about personal identity. How many persons, and how many streams of consciousness, are there in the body of a split brain patient?
9. Explain the consequence argument for the incompatibility of free will and determinism. Is the argument convincing? Why or why not?
10. Respond to the following argument: 'If an event is not determined by prior causes, it is random, and random actions cannot be free. So, if free will is incompatible with determinism, free will is incompatible with both determinism and indeterminism, and free will is impossible.'