

PHIL 20229: Midterm exam study guide

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In class, Thursday, February 25

On the midterm, you will be given four 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. Kant provided arguments against the two claims that material things are ultimately composed of simples, and that all material things are composite. Explain the argument which you think is **less** convincing, and say how you think it can be resisted.
5. Explain why the combination of Galilean relativity, the principle of relativity, and the speed of light's being a law of nature is inconsistent. What was Einstein's response to this paradox, and why does it involve the relativity of simultaneity? Why does the relativity of simultaneity lead to the phenomenon of time dilation?
6. Explain the Doomsday Paradox, and say what you think the best response to the paradox is.
7. 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.
8. Is teletransportation possible? What, if anything, do examples of teletransportation show us about personal identity?
9. 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?
10. What is the rule-following paradox? What, in your view, is the most plausible solution to the paradox?
11. Explain the consequence argument for the incompatibility of free will and determinism. Is the argument convincing? Why or why not? How should a compatibilist respond?
12. 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.'