

Final exam guide

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Format

The final exam will consist of four questions from the following list. On the exam, you will answer three of these four.

For each of the three questions you answer, you should do the following three things:

- (1) Say what you think the correct answer to the question is.
- (2) Give what you think is the strongest argument in favor of that answer.
- (3) Say what you think is the strongest objection to your answer, and why in the end you do not find it convincing.

You will have the full two hour final exam period to complete the exam.

The questions

1. Are we, at least in part, immaterial beings?
 2. Can a material thing gain and lose parts over time while continuing to exist?
 3. Imagine a simple teletransportation machine of the sort described in class, which (allegedly) teletransports people from Earth to Mars. Would the person who emerges from the machine on Mars be the same person as the one who gets into the machine on Earth?
 4. Can you know that there is an external world?
 5. Is Foundationalism true?
 6. Is it always rational to pursue the course of action with the highest expected utility?
 7. Is psychological egoism true?
 8. Which of moral realism, moral nihilism, and moral relativism is true?
 9. Is it true that things are good only insofar as they lead to pleasure (or the absence of pain), and bad only insofar as they lead to pain (or the absence of pleasure)?
 10. Should one always perform the action which will lead to the best overall consequences?
 11. Is it true that one always ought to prevent something bad from happening if one can do so without sacrificing anything of any moral importance?
 12. If moral realism is true, is consequentialism or a rule-based ethics more likely to be true?
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Grading

Each of your three answers will be graded according to grading scale on the course web site, and your grade for the exam will be the average of these.

Answers will be judged according to the following seven criteria:

- (i) clearly states the author's view about the correct answer to the question;
- (ii) clearly explains the premises of the main argument for that answer;
- (iii) clearly explains why the author takes these premises to be plausible;
- (iv) clearly explains why the author thinks that his or her answer follows from these premises;
- (v) gives a strong (i.e., as persuasive as possible) objection to that answer;
- (vi) clearly explains why he or she does not think that this objection to the answer outweighs the positive argument given for it;
- (vii) in accomplishing one or more of the above, goes at least a little beyond material discussed in lecture and discussion sections.

An A answer accomplishes all seven. A typical A- answer would accomplish (i)-(vi) but not (vii); but in general an A- answer is one which fails to meet one of the above criteria. A B+ answer is typically one which fails to meet two of the above criteria, or egregiously fails to meet one. A B answer is one which fails to meet three of the above criteria, or fails to meet two, one of which it egregiously fails to meet. And so on. Obviously, meeting or failing to meet these criteria is a matter of degree, and we will take that into account; but this should give you an idea of how you will be evaluated.