

Philosophy 1: Exam 3 Study Questions

1. What is the problem of reality that metaphysics addresses? Why is there a problem? What are the basic kinds of assumptions behind this enterprise? How is it related to the problems in epistemology? Discuss the chapter on this and bring to bear the class discussion about reality and metaphysics (the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant). How did Hume and Kant undermine 2500 years of metaphysics? What has been accomplished?
2. What is the problem of knowledge that epistemology addresses? Why is there a “problem”? What are the basic kinds of assumptions behind this enterprise? How is it related to the problems in metaphysics? Discuss the chapter on this in Kolk and bring to bear the class discussion about empiricism and rationalism (the theories of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant). How did Hume and Kant radically change philosophy? What has been accomplished?
3. Briefly compare the rationalist and empiricist philosophies and show how they culminated in Hume and Kant. What was Kant’s new conception of knowledge (“Second Copernican Revolution”) and what led him to this? What problems in the epistemology and metaphysics of rationalism and empiricism did this solve? How did Kant’s revolution “show the limits of reason to make room for faith” (and morality). What new problems did his revolution lead to (for example the noumena/phenomena distinction)?
4. Why have the “correspondence view of truth” and the “representational model of knowledge” failed (draw on Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche). Why are the current generally unexamined assumptions that A) truth is relative or B) the traditional assumption that truth is absolute, both untenable and very poor “answers” to the question of truth? How do they lead to unnecessary conflict and affect the issue of taking responsibility for your life? How does all this tie into the idea of Bildung we began with? What has all this got to do with human finitude, vulnerability and the fundamental condition of interpretation? (Focus: Class, Melnick text, internet work (standford.edu) on the philosophers, Kolak, Pickard articles.)
5. Discuss the central features of Nietzsche’s thinking. How was his thinking a challenge to western philosophy and religion? How was it both a culmination of yet departure from the critique of reason begun by Kant and then romanticism? How did Nietzsche set much of the agenda for 20th century philosophy? Why do you think he is so controversial and misunderstood?
6. Choose two 20th century philosophers of diverse approaches. Show the importance of their contribution to philosophy and how they continued or altered the “great conversation.”
7. Read Chapter 6 of *Human Experience* by Russon (on website) and write a 2-3 page essay showing first and understanding of this piece then why you think it is important.