

PHIL 101 Test 1 Study Questions

Our first test is scheduled for Friday, February 6. Expect a test composed of 20 true/false questions and 20 multiple-choice questions. Any material covered from the beginning of the course through the class meeting of February 4 may appear on the test. Test 1's material includes not only material addressed explicitly in class, but also everything from the assigned readings. I'll likely focus on what got addressed in class, but anything is fair game.

1. Know what is meant by the following terms, names of views, names of arguments etc.:

philosophy	the problem of the "external" world
metaphysics	the classical analysis/definition of knowledge
epistemology	foundationalism
value theory	certainty
ethics	indubitability
aesthetics	the method of doubt
argument	the argument from illusion
premise	the dreaming argument
conclusion	the evil genius/demon argument
knowledge-that	evil genius/evil demon
knowledge-how	appearance and reality
knowledge-of	self-evident

2. What is philosophy? What are the different branches of philosophy? Be able to sort some propositions into those different fields within philosophy.

3. What is the value of philosophy? Two quotations are worth thinking about here: "The unexamined life is not worth living," by Socrates, and "All humans by nature desire to know," by Aristotle. What do they mean, and what might they have to do with the value of philosophy?

4. Be able to recognize the premises and conclusion of an argument if you are presented with a passage containing one.

5. What charges were brought against Socrates in 399 B.C.? How did he defend himself against those charges? How did his trial go?

6. What is Socrates' argument that death isn't something to fear (from near the end of the *Apology*)?

7. What is the classical analysis/definition of knowledge? Be able to apply it to specific cases, where you might imagine being given a scenario involving a proposition, a believer, and some justification (or lack thereof) for that proposition.

8. What is Descartes' goal in the early part of the *Meditations*? What basic assumptions does he make right at the start? What method does he follow in Meditation I, by way of trying to accomplish his overall goal? (Don't just know the name of that method—know how it works and what it is supposed to be for.)

9. Be familiar with Descartes' three skeptical arguments (from Meditation I). They are the argument from illusion, the dreaming argument, and the demon argument. Think about whether those arguments are sound—how might one go about criticizing those arguments?

10. What “discoveries” does Descartes claim to make in Meditation II? Why does he think they are immune from any doubt whatsoever?
11. How does Descartes solve the problem of the external world? (Just an awareness of his general strategy is enough for our purposes.)
12. Some sample questions for the test (and anything from the reading questions might be asked too, by the way):
1. True or false? ‘Knowledge is impossible’ is an epistemological claim.
 2. True or false? ‘The external world doesn’t exist’ is a metaphysical claim.
 3. True or false? Descartes assumes that there are some foundations to what is known.
 4. True or false? The argument from illusion seeks to generate some doubts about mathematics.
 5. True or false? If the evil genius/demon argument is sound, then that would show that none of our memories are certain.
 6. True or false? According to Descartes conclusions in Meditation II, one’s own existence is uncertain.
7. Consider this argument:
- Abortion is immoral. This is because all fetuses have the right to life, and abortion is a violation of a fetus’ right to life.
- Which of the following claims is the *conclusion* of the argument above?
- (a) Abortion is immoral.
 - (b) All fetuses have the right to life.
 - (c) Abortion is a violation of a fetus’ right to life.
 - (d) none of the above
8. Which of the following fields studies the fundamental nature of reality?
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| (a) logic | (d) value theory |
| (b) metaphysics | (e) ethics |
| (c) epistemology | |
9. The verdict in Socrates’ trial in 399 B.C. is:
- (a) guilty
 - (b) not guilty
 - (c) neither—the judge threw out the case, so no verdict was made
10. Say I believe that the world will end tomorrow—on February 7, 2009. The reason I believe this is because I’m a member of a doomsday cult, and the leader of our cult has predicted tomorrow as the last one. He’s made similar predictions before: March 1, 2006; May 2, 2007; June 8, 2008; August 27, 2008; and January 30, 2009, to name a few. He’s made a lot of predictions like this in the past, and he’s of course been wrong all those times. But I believe him now. Suppose further that in fact, the world *will* end tomorrow—say there’s an undetected asteroid headed right for us that will smash the whole Earth to bits. Now, if the classical analysis of knowledge is right, do I *know* that the world will end tomorrow?
- (a) yes
 - (b) no