

PHIL 420 final exam
Fall 2009

Directions: Answer one question from each of the four categories A-D below, for a total of four answers in all. Each answer should take the form of a well-organized essay of around a page in length. Be sure to answer the entire question (if it comes in multiple parts), and take the time to critically reread and revise your answers as if you were writing a longer paper. Other items of note:

- All answers should be typed and double-spaced, the writing quality should be impeccable, and citations must be provided where appropriate (with a works cited list included at the end of the document you turn in). Answers not meeting the minimal standard for college-level writing will receive extremely low grades, no matter what the content happens to be.
- Answers should not include quotations and close paraphrases as the bulk of your answer to any given question. You must answer in your own words, and you are prohibited from using any sources other than your notes, the handouts, and the readings available for our course.
- **The exam is due electronically on Blackboard (under the SafeAssign link) by 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 10.** Compile all of your answers into one properly-formatted document, and upload that one document as your submission. Papers will be accepted after the due date and time, but with the late assignment policy being applied (which is a 10-point penalty per calendar day).

A few formatting requirements:

- (1) Include some appropriate header information (such as your name and the date) at the top left of the first page of your exam.
- (2) Submit your answers in the order that the questions appear below.
- (3) Include a restatement of each question you choose to answer.
- (4) Include in-text citations and a works cited list as necessary. Use an accepted citation format for this.

A. Modality

- A1. Describe Lewis' strategy for dealing with what Jubien calls *the problem of singular propositions*, along with one critical worry about Lewis's strategy.
- A2. Explain the difference between *de re* modality and *de dicto* necessity and possibility, along with examples of each. How would Lewis' view handle your examples? What is it, on Lewis' view, that makes those examples cases of true modal claims?

B. Time

- B1. What is presentism? In your view, what is the best objection to presentism, and what is the best response to that objection?
- B2. What is Michael Tooley's view of time? (It was discussed in class, not in the book.) After describing the view carefully, give what seems to be the best objection to that view of time. Discuss the merits of that objection—is it any good or not?

C. Persistence

- C1. According to perdurantism, what are you? What is the best objection to that view of what you are, and what is the best response to that objection?
- C2. Give a statement of an argument against endurantism that makes use of the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals. What is the best response to that argument? Is that response adequate to meet the objection or not?

D. Metaphysics

- D1. We've seen a number of examples in our course of the methods philosophers use by way of trying to answer metaphysical questions. Give a few examples of the use of ONE of those methods. Is that method reasonable to use or not? Defend your view on the use of that method.
- D2. Is string theory a theory of physics or of metaphysics? Defend your answer by appeal to some specific views about the nature of science and of metaphysics. If you want, feel free to watch some of *The Elegant Universe* again. You can do that online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/program.html>. If you use the discussion from the program, be sure to cite it appropriately (by part (part I, part II, or part III) and chapter (chapter 1, chapter 2, etc.)).