

PHIL 420 midterm 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 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, October 8.** 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 assignments 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. The nature and methodology of metaphysics

A1. Consider the following claims:

- (i) There is a physical reality independent of our mental states.
- (ii) What makes up that physical reality obeys general laws (the so-called 'laws of nature').
- (iii) We are capable of grasping those laws and the evidence in favor of or against their being true.

What is it about these that makes them *metaphysical* claims, rather than either *scientific* claims or merely *epistemological* claims?

B. Universals

- B1. State one argument in favor of platonism with respect to universals (with some appropriate discussion by way of clarifying that argument and why one might accept the premises). Then give what you take to be the best objection to that argument, again providing some appropriate discussion by way of making the objection clear.
- B2. What is so important about the question of whether there are uninstantiated and necessarily uninstantiated universals with respect to the overall debate about universals? What about for coinstantiated and necessarily coinstantiated universals?

C. Concrete particulars

- C1. What is going on in the debate between substratum theorists and bundle theorists with respect to whether the principle of the identity of indiscernibles is true?
- C2. For the two versions of the bundle theory I abbreviated (BT#1) and (BT#2) (on handout #8), what is an objection to (BT#1) that (BT#2) is able to meet, and why is that objection not a problem for (BT#2)?

D. Abstract particulars

- D1. What are two objections to a conceptualist view about the number 63?
- D2. What is a trope, and what are two advantages to admitting tropes into our ontology?