

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST I

FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2013

1. Pythagoreans believe that mathematics provides the ultimate explanation for all there is.  
(a) Explain why they assign this role to mathematics and how they think that mathematics can provide such an explanation. (b) Discuss in detail three relevant ways in which Pythagorean thought (not strictly reduced to their views on mathematics) influenced Plato's philosophy.
2. The *Euthyphro* unfolds as a search for the essence of piety. At the end of the dialogue, however, no conclusive answer seems to be reached. Is there real progress made in the search throughout the dialogue in spite of the inconclusive end? If so, what are the specific stages and elements of this progress? If not, why does Plato care to write a dialogue in which no progress seems to be made?
3. In the *Enneads*, Plotinus posits Soul as one of the eternal hypostases that regulate the cosmic order. Explain (a) how Soul functions in Plotinus's derivation of the cosmos from the One and (b) indicate to what extent Plotinus's account of Soul relies upon Plato's doctrine of the World-Soul in the *Timaeus*. Focus your answers on passages from *Ennead* IV.3, V.1 and *Timaeus* 34b-37c.
4. Discuss the extent to which Stoicism succeeds in defending the possibility of human freedom and the extent to which it fails to do so.
5. In *Ennead* I.6 Plotinus critiques the Stoic theory of beauty and proposes his own view instead.  
(a) What are Plotinus's main arguments against that Stoic theory? (b) To what extent does Plotinus's view of Beauty resemble Plato's view as expressed in the *Symposium* 210a-212c? (c) To what extent, if any, does his view differ from Plato's?
6. Discuss three main differences between Xenophanes' skepticism regarding our knowledge of the god(s) and Sextus Empiricus' general skeptical approach.

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST I

SECOND DAY, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2013

1. What is the difference between ability (*dunamis*), virtue (*aretē*) and art (*technē*) in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (consider especially books II and VI)?
2. Present the Epicurean doctrine of divinity. What sort of beings are the gods? What role do they play in relation to the world? In human life? What place do they have in Epicurean ethical theory?
3. With reference to at least two of Lucretius's passages on Epicurus, explain the understanding of philosophy in *De rerum natura*.
4. Compare the claims on the human being of the temporal law and the eternal law in Book I of Augustine's *On Free Choice of the Will*. Can the temporal law be valid if it allows things that transgress the eternal law? Are the two in conflict or not?
5. Discuss how the distinction between actuality and potentiality functions in Aristotle's account of soul in *De Anima* II.
6. Drawing on Averroes' *Decisive Treatise* and either Aristotle's *Categories* or *Metaphysics* (or both), discuss the difference between allegory and analogy. How do allegory and analogy address a similar problem? How do the subjects they treat differ?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST I

#### FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014

1. Discuss three similarities and three differences between the philosophical views of Parmenides and Heraclitus.
2. Some philosophical themes are common to Heraclitus and the Stoics. Pick out two such themes and compare and contrast the respective treatments they receive in the writings of Heraclitus and Stoic thinkers.
3. After going through four complex arguments for the immortality of the soul, the *Phaedo* concludes with a myth of the afterlife. What is it about the dialogue to this point that motivates the turn to myth? In what ways do the particular elements of the myth shed light on the conversation from which it issues?
4. Plato has Socrates explicitly propose recollection as a theory of knowledge in three dialogues: the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Phaedrus*. Even if the core of Plato's view remains the same in each of these dialogues, it is likely that each of the three distinct contexts stresses specifically distinct aspects of recollection. Discuss what you take to be some of the distinctive aspects of recollection emphasized in each of the three contexts.
5. Compare and contrast Stoicism and Skepticism on the significance of knowledge in living a good life. Discuss at least two similarities and two differences on this point between these two schools of thought.
6. Discuss the relationship between contemplation and action as it emerges from Plotinus's *Ennead* III.8. Why is figuring out this relationship important?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST I

#### SECOND DAY, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

1. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VI Aristotle characterizes the virtues as states of character lying in a mean between two extremes of vice. How important is the idea of the mean to understanding the nature of the virtues? What are limitations of the idea of the mean in explaining virtue?
2. Compare and contrast Averroes' *Decisive Treatise* and Plato's *Apology of Socrates* on the relationship between philosophy and divine command.
3. In *On Interpretation*, ch. 9, Aristotle takes a position against determinism in his discussion of truth value relative to future contingents, whereas Lucretius does the same in explaining atomism (II, 216-93). Do both thinkers argue against physical determinism as well as for freedom of choice for human beings?
4. According to Sextus Empiricus what is skepticism and what is its purpose? How does skepticism so understood relate to the main concerns of the Epicureans and the Stoics?
5. Discuss the relationship of nature and human conduct according to the Stoics. How does their materialism relate to this relationship?
6. In book III of *On Free Choice of the Will* how does Augustine argue for the compatibility of God's foreknowledge with the freedom of the human will?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST II

FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2013

1. According to Aquinas in *The Principles of Nature*, what causality do the four causes have on each other? Explain their relationship by using examples other than those of Aquinas.
2. Does Scotus hold (à la Descartes) that God freely creates the “intelligibles” (that is, the creatures as intelligible beings and secondary objects of God’s knowledge)? To answer this question, analyze and discuss the third way in which, according to Scotus, infallible truths are seen in the “eternal rules” (Ed. Wolter, pp. 124–29).
3. Why does Ockham deny any real distinction between existence and essence? (Ed. Boehner and Brown, pp. 92–95). Compare his position with Aquinas’s in *On Being and Essence*.
4. Compare Hume’s view that reason is a slave of the passions (*Treatise* 2.3.3) with Aquinas’s account of the precepts of the natural law in *Summa theologiae* I–II q. 94 a. 2.
5. Why does Berkeley deny the existence of matter (or corporeal substances) but not of spiritual substances? How does he reply to objections against his denial of matter?
6. What role does experience play, or not play, in Kant’s ethics. Why? (See the Preface and Section II of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.)

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST II

SECOND DAY, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2013

1. The basis of traditional morality is the principle that human beings can act voluntarily (by free choice): Where it is within our power to act—thus necessity does not compel us—so too is it within our power to refrain from acting. In Chapter 7 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli says about Cesare Borgia that, “with his great spirit and high intention, he could not have conducted himself otherwise.” Considering this observation and his many uses of the term ‘necessity’, does Machiavelli stand within or outside of the tradition of moral-political philosophy based on the principle of voluntariness in human action? Discuss, using any text from *The Prince*.
2. How does Hobbes understand speech and reason (or *logos*) in the *Leviathan*? Does he think they have an end (*telos*)?
3. Discuss Descartes’s understanding of error in the Fourth Meditation. Does error, for Descartes, consist (as traditionally understood) in affirming the false or denying the true?
4. Discuss Locke’s account of property and its acquisition in Chapter 5 of the *Second Treatise of Government*. How are human beings modified in the course of the history that Locke presents? What are the limits (if any) of acquisition according to Locke?
5. We have today no agreed account of the unity of nature. A sign of this is that contemporary sciences are highly specialized and more or less autonomous of each other. Discuss, using any of his writings, how Leibniz’s system provides metaphysical principles that run through and unify all of created nature.
6. In his *Second Discourse*, Exordium, para. 5, Rousseau finds a major blunder in early modern political thinkers such as Hobbes: they argue from social passions (e.g., pride) to the conclusion that man is not by nature social (e.g., *Leviathan*, Chap. 13: nature dissociates us). Rousseau then hypothesizes an account of human history beginning from a natural but pre-social state. What, for Rousseau, is *human* about these original human beings?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST II

FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014

1. According to Aquinas how does the natural law participate in the eternal law (*ST I–II*, q. 91, aa. 1–2; qq. 93–94)? Does Aquinas’s view that the natural law participates in the eternal law imply that knowledge of the content of the natural law requires knowledge of God?
2. State and explain three of the four ways in which, according to Duns Scotus, truth is known in the eternal light (*Philosophical Writings*, pp. 122–30).
3. Ockham argues that only an act of the will can be “necessarily virtuous” (*Philosophical Writings: A Selection*, rev. 2nd ed., pp. 144–45). How does his argument compare with Kant’s claim in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (at the beginning of section 1) that only a good will can be called “good without qualification”?
4. According to Machiavelli, *The Prince* chs. 15–19, what kind of a reputation should a ruler seek? State at least three good or bad qualities that a ruler should be thought to have or lack. How does Machiavelli argue for his recommendations?
5. Compare Berkeley’s denial of abstract ideas (nn. 6–15) with Ockham’s theory of universals (ed. Boehner/Brown, pp. 43–45).
6. How does Hume argue in *Treatise* 2.3.1–2.3.2 that human actions are subject to necessity? How does he argue for his claim that “’tis only upon the principles of necessity, that a person acquires any merit or demerit from his actions”?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST II

#### SECOND DAY, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

1. Descartes maintains in the second and fourth *Meditations* that judgment, or the “faculty of choice,” must be superadded to perception in order to become subject to truth or error: “I normally say that I see the men themselves . . . . Yet do I see any more than hats and coats which could conceal automatons? I *judge* that they are men” (*Meditation II*). Spinoza, on the contrary, claims that perception already entails judgment: “I deny that a man makes no affirmation in so far as he has a perception. For what else is perceiving a winged horse than affirming wings on a horse?” (*Ethics*, Proposition 49, Scholium). Explain how the different presuppositions, commitments, and principles of each philosopher result in this divergence of interpretation regarding their views on the relation between perception and judgment.
2. Hobbes writes that “of all Voluntary Acts, the Object is to every man his own Good” (*Leviathan* XV, paragraph 16). How does Hobbes explain why men should honor their covenants and remain in allegiance to their rulers, even when such observances cease to be in their immediate interest?
3. In what respects is Locke’s account of the foundation of government in the *Second Treatise* dependent on God? To what extent can Locke’s arguments be separated from their theological setting?
4. Leibniz’s *Monadology* both denies the dualism of soul and body (in the Cartesian sense) and asserts their distinctness. Explain how he grounds each of these claims and how he purports to reconcile them. How and why does he deny substantial interaction *per se*?
5. Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* presents natural man as dumb and solitary, civilized man as speaking and social. The source of sociability seems to lie in the relation between man and woman (as well as within the family, by extension). Explain Rousseau’s account of the connection between sex, the emergence of social self-consciousness, and speech.
6. Clarify the central issues at stake in the footnote to B160–61 of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. How does Kant understand the connection between concepts and intuitions in general and in light of this comment?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST III

#### FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2013

1. What does Hegel mean by “absolute knowing” in the chapter by that name in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (p. 479ff.), and how is it related to religion?
2. Compare and contrast the discussions about the Stoics and Stoicism in Hegel (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 119-126) and Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §§9, 22, 46, 188, 198, and 227).
3. What is the role of the sense of dignity or nobleness in Mill’s account of what makes actions right or wrong in *Utilitarianism*, pp. 6-12?
4. What is Mill’s harm principle (*On Liberty*, p. 9), and how is it grounded on his ethical theory in *Utilitarianism*, as he claims it is in *On Liberty*, p. 10? Focus your answer on Mill’s discussion of the harm principle in *On Liberty*.
5. How does Marx characterize the relation of wage labour to capital in *Wage Labour and Capital*? What is capital, and what is the difference between nominal, real, and comparative (or relative) wages?
6. How does Nietzsche characterize the religious character in part 3 of *Beyond Good and Evil*?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST III

SECOND DAY, MARCH 15, 2013

1. What does Wittgenstein mean by “substance” in the early numbers of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (e.g., 2.021)? What does substance, as Wittgenstein conceives it, have to do with logical space?
2. In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl says:  
Perception, so far as it claims to give us the object ‘itself’, really claims thereby to be no mere intention, but an act, which may indeed be capable of offering fulfillment to other acts, but which itself requires no further fulfillment. But generally, and in all cases of ‘external’ perception, this remains a mere pretension. (Investigation VI, ch. 2, *Logical Investigations*, trans. Findlay, 220)  
From this point of departure, explain the role of perception in the contrast of meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. What kinds of “acts” are involved in intention for Husserl?
3. Why is the human being identified in *Being and Time* as *Dasein*? Trace Heidegger’s rationale for the conception of *Dasein* in his Introduction I, ¶1–2, and Part I, Division One, I-II of *Being and Time*.
4. In the first and second meditations of *Cartesian Meditations*, how does Husserl transform the *ego cogito* of Descartes?
5. Explain Wittgenstein’s slab language of ¶2, and ¶19–20 of *Philosophical Investigations* in relation to his criticism of the notion of the proposition as it comes out of truth-functional logic. How is his own conception of language-games involved in this criticism?
6. What is the conception of experience that Dewey ascribes to the Greeks? In accordance with this notion, what is Dewey’s favored conception of art in Chapter 9 of *Experience and Nature*? How are art and experience related?

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST III

FIRST DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2014

1. Summarize the chapter in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* entitled "The actualization of rational self-consciousness through its own activity" (beginning on p. 211 of the Miller edition). Explain the overall point of the chapter. Discuss how each of the following shapes of consciousness described in this chapter are related to one another: (a) pleasure and necessity, (b) the law of the heart and the frenzy of self-conceit, and (c) virtue and the way of the world?
2. Compare and contrast the ways in which Hegel (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface) and Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*, part six) characterize science and its relation to philosophy. (Note that the same German word, *Wissenschaft*, when used by both Hegel and Nietzsche, is translated in our editions of these texts as "science").
3. How does Marx distinguish men from animals in *The German Ideology*? How is this distinction related to the accounts given by Marx, in the same text, of (1) the division of labor, (2) the forms of ownership, and (3) what he calls "aspects of the primary historical relationships" (183)?
4. How does Mill argue for the Principle of Utility in chapter four of *Utilitarianism*? In particular, what role does his notion of virtue play in that proof?
5. What should be the role of the state in the education of children, according to chapter five of Mill's *On Liberty*? How does Mill apply his theory of "individuality, as one of the elements of well-being" (the title of chapter three) to this case of the state's role in education?
6. Compare and contrast the ways in which Mill (*Utilitarianism*, chapter two) and Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*, part nine) characterize what is noble.

## GRADUATE READING LIST EXAMINATION

### LIST III

#### SECOND DAY, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

1. In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, what are the key elements of Wittgenstein's contention that the proposition is a picture or that it pictures? These passages are useful to answer the question: 2.1–3.251, 4.116–4.1213.
2. How are moral and esthetic ends distinguished from natural ends in chapter 3 of *Experience and Nature*? Why is this distinction so important according to Dewey? How are the esthetic and the scientific opposed to one another then (chapter 4)?
3. Explain §305 of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. This passage treats (a) memory, (b) mental process, and (c) philosophical method ("What gives the impression that we want to deny anything?"). Explain what Wittgenstein would wish to convey about each of these topics, referring to other passages from *Philosophical Investigations*, in particular the immediate context of §305.
4. What are some senses of time or temporality that Heidegger distinguishes in *Being and Time*? How are these senses of time related to senses of ontology or the ontic that he distinguishes?
5. Discuss Husserl's conception of evidence in the Third Meditation of *Cartesian Meditations*. How is evidence connected to Husserl's statement in the Fourth Meditation, §41 that Descartes "missed the genuine sense of his reduction to the indubitable . . ."?
6. Briefly put, what is categorial form in Husserl? In his *Logical Investigations* VI, Second Section, what are the objective correlates of categorial forms? What is the "real" and "being" in this context? Are categorial forms fulfilled by perceiving? See in particular §42–46.