

History of Modern Philosophy  
Fall 2019  
*Final Exam Study Questions*

The final will take place during our last regularly scheduled class period, Wednesday, 12/4. from 2-3:40 pm. You can bring a printed copy of our text with you (you will only need the sections on Berkeley, Hume, and Kant), but you can't have any other books or electronic devices open. If possible, please bring a "green" book in which to write your answers.

The test will consist of five essay questions, each worth 4 points. You will be asked to answer five questions in all, one question on one of the three philosophers, and two each on the other two.

**Berkeley Questions:**

1. In numbered paragraph 4 of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* (p. 83 in our readings packet), Berkeley asks a number of rhetorical questions (i.e., sentences that end in question marks, but are really intended as assertions rather than as questions) that constitute an argument in support of Berkeley's claim that "all perceptible objects" exist only in being perceived. Explain his reasoning here, and indicate which part of this reasoning (i.e., which premise) Locke would disagree with.
2. Explain Berkeley's criticism of the notion of material *substratum*. He claims that we have neither a "positive" nor a "relative" idea of it. Explain what he means by both of these claims, and why he thinks so.
3. In his (or what has been called his) "Master Argument" (*Principles* 22-24, and in the *Dialogues*, on pp. 126-127 of our reading packet) Berkeley argues that is impossible to conceive of anything that exists outside of a mind. Explain Berkeley's reasoning here, and point out which part of Locke's account of our knowledge of the world (i.e., his account of awareness or of sense perception) it is that leaves him open to the kind of argument Berkeley makes here.

4. According to Berkeley, how do we distinguish between "real things" and "chimeras?" (See pp. 140-141.) Why is this issue particularly pressing for someone who denies the existence of material substance? How does Berkeley characterize the similarities and differences on this matter between his views and Locke's? Why does this convince Berkeley that his idealism is more reasonable than Locke's commitment to material substance?
5. In the third *Dialogue* (pp. 137-139 in our packet), Hylas challenges Philonous about his (i.e., Philonous') commitment to the existence of a "mind," "soul," or "mental substance." At one point, Hylas summarizes his objections by saying to Philonous, "To be consistent, you should either admit matter or reject spirit." (p. 138) Explain Hylas' reasoning here, as well as Philonous' response in trying to avoid this criticism.

### **Hume Questions:**

6. Explain the distinction Hume makes between ideas and impressions. Which one is dependent upon which? Why? And explain how this is so important for Hume's version of empiricism.
7. Explain the difference Hume draws between knowledge of the relations between our ideas and knowledge of matters of fact. Explain which variety of knowledge can lead to certainty and why. After you have described what the difference *is*, explain why this is *important*. What is Hume telling us about the role of reason in gaining knowledge about the world around us?
8. Explain what Hume has to say regarding our beliefs about causal relations. Why does he think that these beliefs cannot be justified by an appeal to our reason? Why does he feel they cannot be justified by an appeal to sense experience? In general, why can't they be justified?
9. Hume is skeptical that we can know anything about "external existences." On p. 196 in our packet, in his discussion of "Skepticism with regard to the senses," he argues that a "certain degree of regularity in our perceptions can't be a basis for us to infer a greater degree of regularity in some objects that are not perceived."

Explain his reasoning here. Why can't we use the constancy of our perceptions to establish a realm of objects that exists "outside" of our perceptions?

10. In Section 6, "On Personal Identity," Hume concludes that apart from some "metaphysicians," he is willing to "affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions...." What is he claiming here? And what is his reasoning? That is, explain why he believes this.

**Kant Questions: (These are still tentative.)**

11. Explain what Kant means when he says (in the preface to second edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*) that "reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own." How does this help explain the "Copernican Revolution" he is proposing in our understanding of the nature of knowledge?
12. In the introduction to his *Critique of Pure Reason* (on p. 216 of our reading packet), Kant describes the "General Problem of Pure Reason" as that of explaining how "*a priori* synthetic judgements are possible." Explain the distinctions Kant makes between analytic and synthetic judgements, between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, and then explain why Kant thinks this is the general (or central) problem for reason.
13. Also in the introduction (p. 214 from our packet), Kant claims that, "All mathematical judgments, without exception, are synthetic." Explain what this means, why he thinks so, and why this is so important in understanding Kant's response to Hume.
14. At the beginning of the section called the "Transcendental Aesthetic" (p. 220 in our packet), Kant says that "Objects are given to us by means of sensibility, and ... they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts." Explain the distinction Kant is making here between "sensibility" and "understanding," and why this is important.
15. In the "Conclusions" of his discussion of space (on pp. 224-225 from our packet), Kant says, "We assert, then, the empirical reality of space, as regards

all possible outer experience; and yet at the same time we assert its transcendental ideality—in other words, that it is nothing at all, immediately we withdraw the above condition, namely, its limitation to possible experience, and so look upon it as something that underlies things in themselves.” (He says something exactly parallel about time on p. 228.) What does Kant mean by saying that time and space are at once empirically real and transcendently ideal?