

Exam 3: Mind, self, identity, and free will

PHIL 101

Instructions:

- Our format is similar to Exams 1 and 2. This time you have two essays to complete. Pick two from the list on p. 2 below. Each essay should be about a full single-spaced page (that's about 550-650 words each). Submit on Moodle under the Turnitin link by the end of **Tuesday, November 15**. You have a two-day grace period if you need it.
- Here are some guidelines for your essays:
 - a. This is an 'Exam', yes, but remember that a central goal for our class is for you to come to some reasoned judgments of your own on our philosophical issues. The exam questions ask you about that, so this is your chance to put your thinking together into some arguments for your positions. Your thinking and reasoning is primary here.
 - b. So the Exam isn't a research project. Nobody should be looking up answers to the questions somewhere, nor should you work together at all. It's not your view if you simply looked something up someplace and summarized it.
 - c. The questions also ask you to relate your ideas and arguments to our readings and topics we've had in our class meetings and discussions. Those are sources that *should* be used here, and be sure to document them properly.
 - d. It's ok to be not supremely confident about your philosophical views or your arguments. Philosophical positions are works in progress anyway. But you still should have more than enough for these essays. If you aren't in that situation just yet, that's ok too. Do your best, I'll give feedback and suggestions, and you can revise to make it a better expression of what you think and why.
 - e. Use your own 'voice'. You don't need to sound profound unless that's actually your normal way of writing. Shoot for your writing to be clear, intelligible, and coherent. Revise, proofread, and edit as needed before submitting, but the content matters most. *What you say and defend* matters the most here.
- You can revise and resubmit your essays. That deadline will be about a week after the comments are available. If the gradebook says 'incomplete', you *have* to revise. That means something was missing or fell short of the expectations above. But everyone has the option to revise. Everyone can make their arguments better in a revision.
- While there's no grade here like an A or an 89, the written feedback should give you something much more useful and precise. Any relevant judgments on quality of the ideas, accuracy, or the presentation will be in the written comments.

Questions on our philosophical content (answer TWO of these):

- 1) Summarize the argument Descartes gives in *Discourse on Method*, part 4, for dualism (that's what we read for class), and then critique that argument. (Note: You might be tempted to give us Elizabeth's question as the critique here. Don't do that. Elizabeth is criticizing dualism itself, the thesis, *not* Descartes' reasoning for dualism that we read.)
- 2) What makes you *you*? Or, what makes a person *that* individual person? That was the characterization question about personal identity. Formulate a reasoned position of your own on this, and compare it to at least some of what we studied in class and had in the readings. Defend your position, either with an argument for it or by considering and replying to a possible criticism.
- 3) For a specific argument in the DuBois reading OR the Baldwin one, summarize the argument and critique it. Even if you think the reasoning in question is a good one, what criticism might be raised against it? (If you want, consider a reply to that critique as part of your essay.)
- 4) If we're not free, as Pereboom argues, then how can we still have morality? How can we have meaning in life? Pereboom addresses both of these possible objections. For just ONE of them, summarize what he says the objection is and what his reply to it is, and then either give another reply of your own to help Pereboom answer the objection, OR critique Pereboom's reply to that objection.

Other suggestions for making an essay good:

- Organize coherently. Even though our essays are short, using multiple paragraphs will help the clarity. Summarize something in one paragraph. Give your own view in a different paragraph. If you stick to one task per paragraph, that makes your writing easier to read, and thus it's clearer. Thus we understand you better.
- Avoid direct quotations. You might have learned, "Always include a good quote." Here's a better rule: Unless you absolutely *have* to include the actual text from somewhere as an essential part of what you're arguing, don't quote. Summarize instead.
- For the philosophical essays, strong essays will consider an objection and reply to it. Try figuring out the best objection a critic might raise against you and respond to it.
- Draft, revise, edit, and proofread multiple times before submitting. *Revising* is taking what you say and writing it again in a better way. The second or third version is usually better. *Editing* includes smaller things like condensing the text, getting rid of repetition, and making the phrasing and word choice better. *Proofreading* includes even smaller things like getting rid of mechanical, grammatical, and spelling errors. Do the writing process in that order: Draft, revise, edit, and then proofread for small stuff.
- Remember to document everything. APA, MLA, Chicago, whatever, both in the text and with a works cited list/bibliography. But be sure to do it. It's for integrity and for distinguishing your ideas from what you're summarizing.