

FINAL EXAM | PHILO 101 | FALL 2017

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose **one question from each section** and answer it with a concise essay in a blue booklet. There is no perfect length for the essays, but as long as your writing is not unusually large, you should be able to fit both answers into a single blue booklet.

The exam will take place on Monday, December 18th, 1:45–3:45, in room HW505.

SECTION 1

ETHICS AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Some moral and political philosophers have argued that our most important value should be happiness, while others have argued that it should be freedom. Explain this debate. Make sure to describe the views and reasoning of at least one philosopher on either side, and to illustrate the disagreement by giving at least one example of a decision or public policy over which the two sides would disagree.
2. A common complaint about many theories in ethics and political philosophy is that they are too demanding. Describe at least three of the theories that we learned about during the first half of the course, and explain why someone might think that each one places unreasonable moral demands on us.

SECTION 2

METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY

3. Explain the distinction between rationalism and empiricism, and describe the debate between the two views. Explain what you take to be the best reason for being a rationalist and the best reason for being an empiricist. Which is more compelling, and why?
4. Descartes argues that he is, fundamentally, a unified, immaterial thinking thing that could exist independently of his body. Explain three different ways that later philosophers have disagreed with this position. Each should come from a reading that we've done in the second half of the semester.