

TAKE-HOME EXAM

INSTRUCTIONS

An electronic copy of your midterm is due by email on Wednesday, May 15th. Please put “PHILO 268 EXAM” in the subject line of the email.

Answer any **two** (and only two) questions.

Your answers should be in the form of concise, clearly written essays, approximately 500–750 words each. Do your best to stick to this length; it is not better to write a longer essay.

You should cite any sources that you use, including required readings, whether you discuss them explicitly or just use them as inspiration.

The exact formatting and citation style doesn't matter, as long as it is clear.

QUESTIONS

1. The philosopher, Jerry Fodor, has argued that our thoughts take place in a linguistic medium. Explain this claim. What are the best reasons to believe it?
2. Explain the difference between Applied AI, Weak AI, and Strong AI, using examples to illustrate each concept and the differences between them. Does current work on Applied AI give us reason to be optimistic about Weak and/or Strong AI? Why or why not?
3. Suppose that an evolutionary psychologist argues that humans have an innate capacity to appreciate the beauty of a certain kind of plant because that plant resembles an important food source from the environment in which we evolved. What theoretical reasons are there to be suspicious of this claim?
4. What is our capacity for language like, and how do we acquire it, according to Chomsky and other generative linguists? What evidence is there for this theory of language acquisition?
5. What is the difference between “implicit” and “explicit” psychological processes? Should we believe in this distinction? Why or why not?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Answer the Question:** The whole thing, and nothing else!
- **Clarity:** It should be easy for the reader to understand what point is being made at all times. This means writing well, but also structuring your essay carefully so that it's obvious how each thing that you say fits with your overall aims.
- **Persuasiveness:** When you make an argument for some philosophical or interpretive claim, it should be a rationally persuasive one, even to someone who wouldn't otherwise agree with your claim.
- **Accuracy:** If you're discussing other people's ideas—including those in the readings—you should show that you understand them properly.