

PHILO 26800: MIND, LANGUAGE, AND COGNITION | SPRING 2019

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM

INSTRUCTIONS

A paper copy of your midterm is due in class on Friday, March 22nd.

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 terms, “behaviorism” and “behavioral psychology” are both used to describe several different related ideas. Compare these ideas and explain what they have in common. Explain why many philosophers and psychologists found them so appealing during the early 20th Century.
2. What is the difference between conscious and unconscious mental states? What led some psychologists to believe in unconscious mental states early in the 20th Century? How would a skeptic about unconscious mental states respond?
3. Explain the different theories about how people's minds are related to their bodies. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each one? How, if at all, does our answer to this question affect how we think about the question of whether humans have free will?
4. What are the most important flaws with behavioral psychology? If we fix these flaws while changing as little as possible otherwise, what kind of psychological theory will we wind up with instead?

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.