

## History of Modern Philosophy Exam

Answer exactly three questions, including at least one question from section 1 and at least one question from section 2. In each case, you should defend your claims as well as you can and make your answers as detailed as possible. You have two hours for the entire examination, so you should devote about 40 minutes to each answer.

### Section 1

1. According to a currently popular interpretation, Descartes's method of doubt is a strategic device Descartes uses to sneak in the New Science. Explain in detail how the method of doubt is supposed to serve this purpose. In your answer, you will want to distinguish between Descartes-the-character in the *Meditations* and Descartes-the-writer of the *Meditations* and to explain and show the relevance of Descartes's distinction between *analysis* and *synthesis*.
2. For what reasons have people thought that Descartes had a problem with mind-body interaction? Carefully explain the views of Descartes and Spinoza on mind-body interaction.
3. Explain Leibniz's theory of truth in the *Discourse on Metaphysics*. What consequences does Leibniz draw from this theory of truth? What are some of the difficulties surrounding his theory of truth and how does Leibniz respond to these difficulties?
4. Explain the views of Malebranche and Leibniz on interaction between substances. In what ways are they similar and in what ways do they differ?
5. Early in the Third Meditation Descartes says, "...as soon as the opportunity arises I must examine whether there is a God, and, if there is, whether he can be a deceiver. For if I do not know this, it seems that I can never be quite certain about anything else." What problems does this cause? How does Descartes try to solve these problems?
6. "For Descartes everything is possible, for Leibniz some things are possible and some things are not, and for Spinoza nothing is possible except what is actual." Explain in detail what lies behind this statement and argue for a position on the extent to which it is true.

### Section 2

7. Carefully explain Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. How does Locke argue for this distinction? How does Berkeley argue against it? Does Berkeley properly understand Locke's distinction?
8. Most scholars take Locke to be a Representational Realist, but some take him to be a Direct

Realist. Present and discuss the reasons in support for the standard view. Then do the same for the Direct Realist interpretation. Which interpretation do you think gives a better account of Locke's philosophy of perception? Explain why.

9. Berkeley claims that his position on ordinary objects like apples, unlike that of the "materialist," is commonsensical and avoids skepticism. How does he think materialism is contrary to common sense and leads to skepticism, what is his position on these objects, and how does he think his view is not contrary to common sense and avoids skepticism?

10. Berkeley contends that, with respect to ordinary physical objects, *to be is to be perceived*. What does he mean by that? How does he defend it? Is there a connection between his dictum and his rejection of Locke's doctrine of abstract general ideas? (Explain Locke's doctrine.) If so, what is the connection?

11. Some commentators view Hume as the ultimate skeptic. Others view him as an early epistemological naturalist. Still others view him as a "conceptual analysis" philosopher. Which of the three views do you think is most accurate given Hume's remarks about causality, the self, induction, and metaphysics in general? Do you think there is a problem in holding all three interpretations? Explain.

12. What is meant by "meaning empiricism"? Explain in detail the role that meaning empiricism plays in Hume's philosophy.