

Answer exactly three questions, including at least one question from section 1 (on metaphysics) and at least one question from section 2 (on epistemology). 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 to complete the entire examination, so you should devote approximately 40 minutes to each answer.

### Section 1: Metaphysics

1. Describe the most plausible version of realism about *universals* (i.e., properties and relations) that you know of. Describe the most plausible version of nominalism. Critically evaluate both views, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each.
2. Describe the view known as *possible worlds realism*. According to this view: (a) what is a possible world? (b) how are possible worlds related to our world? (c) what is a property? and (d) what does the following statement mean: "Hilary Clinton might be elected President of the United States in 2016 (i.e., it is *possible* that she will be elected)"? Describe a version of the contrasting view known as *actualism*. What answers does this view give to questions (a)-(d)? Which view is better, and why?
3. Explain the metaphysical notion of *grounding*. Do you think it is a useful notion? Why or why not? Defend your answer against the main arguments in the literature opposed to your view. Your answer should contrast *grounding* with supervenience. You should discuss the application of *grounding* to at least two specific issues within metaphysics (e.g., mental and physical, determinables and determinates, wholes and parts, etc.). Say why you think these applications of the notion of *grounding* succeed or fail.
4. Answer at most one of the following:
  - a. Clearly and thoroughly explain the difference between the A theory and B theory of time. Carefully lay out McTaggart's arguments against the A theory and critically evaluate them.
  - b. What does the theory of special relativity imply about simultaneity? What philosophical conclusions can we draw from this that are relevant to the presentism/eternalism debate? Explain.
  - c. Contrast endurantism with perdurantism. What do endurantism and perdurantism say about the persistence of physical objects? Which of these views is the stronger view? Present the best argument(s) for the view you think is the stronger of the two, and present the main objections to it. What are the best responses to the objections?
5. According to the psychological approach, personal identity is based on psychological continuity. Explain this approach, and explain how it handles various cases (partial or complete amnesia, brain transplant, duplication, fission, etc.). Critically evaluate this view in light of such cases.

6. What do you think is the most plausible account of the relationship between the mental and the physical – more specifically, the relationship between conscious experiential states and the corresponding brain states? What are the main problems for this view, and the main objections to it? What are the best responses to these problems and objections?
7. Many relativists hold that there is no such thing as “the way the world really is” independent of ways in which we conceptualize it. Explain what you think is the most defensible version of such a view. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Critically evaluate it.
8. Give the most plausible account of natural kinds that you know of and defend that account against common objections, using paradigmatic examples to illustrate. Does this account leave room for other possibly “non-natural” kinds (e.g., socially constructed kinds or functional kinds)? Give examples of these as well.
9. Contrast logical positivism (or logical empiricism) with scientific realism. In particular, explain how these two views differ with regard to: (a) the meanings of theoretical claims in a scientific theory; and (b) the nature of scientific knowledge (i.e. what we can know via empirical hypothesis testing).
10. Describe what you take to be the most plausible view (or interpretation) about the nature of quantum systems. In doing so, describe the measurement problem, and describe how your chosen view solves (or resolves) the measurement problem.

## Section 2: Epistemology

11. Set out what you take to be the most plausible version of skepticism, and defend it as well as you can. Critically evaluate this view, explaining what you take to be the best response(s) to it. How well does your version of skepticism stand up to these responses?
12. Are there any epistemic values in addition to truth? If so, what are they? Discuss a couple of them and explain in as much detail as you can why they are valuable in epistemology.
13. Answer at most one of the following two questions:
  - a. What are the key features of foundationalist theories of epistemic justification? Describe what you take to be the most defensible version of foundationalism and discuss its main strengths and weaknesses.
  - b. What are the key features of coherence theories of epistemic justification? Describe what you take to be the most defensible version of a coherence view of justification and describe its strengths and weaknesses.
14. What is the Gettier objection to the traditional justified-true-belief definition of knowledge? How might a defender of the traditional account best respond? What alternative account of knowledge do you think does the best job at fending off this problem? Briefly explain that account and how it handles the problem. Does this account really handle the problem better than the traditional account? Use examples to clarify your discussion.
15. How do internalist and externalist accounts of epistemic justification differ? Spell out a specific version of each kind of account of justification. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of each account? Use examples.
16. Describe a Bayesian account of how scientific hypotheses are supported by evidence. How does this account bear on issues of epistemic justification? Does it differ from more traditional accounts of justification, or does it supplement them? What are its strengths? What problems does it face?
17. What is epistemological contextualism? How is it different from invariantism? What are the main arguments in favor of contextualism, and what are the main objections against it?
18. Carefully set out a version of virtue epistemology. Then critically evaluate it. What advantages does it have over more traditional theories of knowledge? What problems does it face that do not affect more traditional views?
19. Intelligent people (e.g., professional economists) often disagree, even when they are equally well-informed. Carefully discuss the epistemic significance of this fact. What does this tell us about justification? (You can construe this as an open-ended question about the implications of disagreement for epistemology.)