

**Department of Philosophy**  
**M.A. Exam/Ph.D. Qualifying Exam 2016**  
**History of Modern Philosophy Exam**

Answer exactly *three* questions, including at least one from section I and one from section II. Defend your claims as well as you can and make your answers as detailed as you can within the allotted time. You have two hours for the entire examination, so you should devote about 40 minutes to each answer.

**Section I**

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. Ever since Descartes wrote the *Meditations*, people have been claiming that it is circular. What exactly is this charge and what is its basis? What are some ways that it has been suggested that Descartes avoids circularity? Which of these ways do you find the most promising?
  
3. Arnauld charged that on Leibniz's view once God created Adam "all that has since happened to the human race or which will ever happen to it has occurred and will occur by a necessity more than fatal." Explain how this seems to follow from Leibniz's theory of truth and his doctrine of individual substance. What answer does Leibniz give to this sort of criticism?
  
4. "For Descartes everything is possible 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.
  
5. It is often thought that Descartes had a problem with mind-body interaction and that rationalists after him gave different solutions to this problem. For what reasons have people thought that Descartes had a problem with mind-body interaction? Carefully explain the views of *two* of the later rationalists on the problem of mind-body interaction (specifically, two of Malebranche, Leibniz, and Spinoza).
  
6. Compare the metaphysical positions of two of the following on what a rock is: Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz.

**Section II**

7. Present Locke's distinction between nominal essence and real essence, and explain the role it plays in his critique of Aristotelian metaphysics. Why does he think it is unlikely that science will ever be able to discover the real essence of material objects?

8. 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?

9. 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?

10. Compare the views of two of the following on substance: Locke, Berkeley, Hume.

11. Hume divides all perceptions into two mutually distinct and exhaustive categories: ideas and impressions. How do ideas and impressions differ? He also holds that every simple idea is a "copy" of an impression. What does he mean by "copy" in this context? What role does Hume's Copy Principle serve in his metaphysics and in his epistemology?

12. Hume argues that there is no necessary connection between causes and their effects. Present and discuss his argument for that claim. What is Hume's positive view of causation? (Be sure to address both the objective and subjective components he finds in the notion of cause.)