

Fall 2020 Honors Philosophy of Human Nature Exam 1 Study Guide

Concepts *You should know what these terms mean and how they fit into the arguments in the readings in which they are found.*

- Appearance vs. Reality (Ch.1)
- Reality vs Ultimate Reality
- The Arrogant Scientist's Answer
- Logical Positivist's Answer
- The Kantian Answer
- PvI's Answer
- Arguments, Premises, and Conclusions (Ney)
- Validity and Soundness
- The Principle of Charity
- Straw Man Fallacy
- Identifying Premises & Conclusions
- Counterexamples
- Enthymemes
- Realism, anti-Realism, & Dogmatism (Ch.5)
- "Good" vs "Bad" things to say/Subjective Truth vs Subjective Falsehood
- Idealism vs Anti-Realism
- Objective Truth (Ch.5 & Boghossian)
- The argument for anti-Realism from the Social Construction of Truth (Ch.5 & Boghossian)
- The problem with the above argument (Ch.5 & Boghossian)
- Sentences vs Claims/Propositions (Ch.5 & Boghossian)
- The Sokal Hoax (What was It?) (Boghossian)
- Historicism
- Postmodernism
- The problem with equating 'just as valid' & 'just as true'
- The problem with equating 'just as valid' & 'just as justified'
- The problem with equating 'just as valid' & 'just as successful'
- Postmodernism_R (Alexander)
- War on Cops/War on Cardiologists/War on New Atheism/War on Weinstein
- The Fallacy of Grey
- Truth *vs.* Being Annoying and Ridiculous to Argue Against
- The Evidential Weight of One (Peer Reviewed etc.) Study
- The Evidential Weight of Two or Three (Peer Reviewed etc.) Studies
- The Statistical Explanation for the Above
- The Evidential Weight of a Meta-Analysis
- Rational Persuasion vs. Psychological Manipulation
- Symmetric *vs* Asymmetric Weapons
- The Secret of Our Success
- The Cultural Intelligence vs Big Brain Hypotheses
- The Argument Against Critical Thinking
- Chesterton's Fence
- The Natural Way to Think (Wallace)
- Learning How to Think
- Bad & Good Things to Worship

Short Answer Questions *You should be prepared to answer all of these questions.*

- 1) Please *state* the four different answers to the question (1, 2, 3A, 3B), "Why isn't there metaphysical information?" (e.g., Why hasn't metaphysics produced a body of knowledge like science or even theology?), and *explain* the problems with the first three answers.
- 2) What is the difference between an argument and a claim or theory? What does it mean to say that an argument is valid? What does it mean to say that an argument is sound? How does Ney say we should test (assess) arguments for validity? Why aren't sound arguments necessarily "good"?
- 3) Please *explain* (1) the two steps we have to go through in order to figure out whether a sentence is true, (2) the Social Construction Argument for anti-Realism, and (3) why the Social Construction Argument fails.
- 4) Please *explain* (1) the "General Challenge" for anti-Realists discussed by van Inwagen, (2) why (in outline) he thinks it is unlikely that they'll be able to meet that challenge, and (3) (in at least a little detail) one of the proposals he discusses and why he doesn't think it works.
- 5) Paul Boghossian discusses three ways to understand the claim that two claims (a claim supported by archeological findings, and the Zuni creation myth) are "just as valid". Please pick **one**, *explain* it, and *explain* why (according to Boghossian) it is either implausible (or worse) **or** not helpful to the postmodernist's cause (critiquing Realism).
- 6) Making use of our four readings by Scott Alexander, please *explain* why someone might think that Power, and not truth and reason, determine what we believe—what is taken to be true. You should be sure to say something (more than a sentence) about how the Powers can determine what we have evidence for, making use of the ideas and cases from our readings.
- 7) What is an "asymmetric weapon" (as opposed to a symmetric weapon), and why is it important (according to Alexander) to restrict ourselves to their use? Please explain Alexander's examples symmetric and asymmetric weapons for illustration.
- 8) What is the Cultural Intelligence Hypothesis, and why do some people think it provides an argument *against* critical thinking? What is the only real response to this argument?
- 9) Why does Wallace say that, really, there is no such thing as atheism? What does he mean by this? What important choice does he think this leaves us with? Please compare two different choices one might make (one good and one bad). Please note that this question has four parts.