

Study Guide For Final Exam

Faith

- Know the difference between prudential, moral, and epistemic sense of 'should' (on Handout 5 I call this the difference between prudential and epistemic 'ought'). For example, you should be able to explain three different ways of understanding the claim: "You should believe that *P*."
- Be able to state and explain Clifford's Evidentialist thesis. Note how it can be understood differently depending on how one understands the 'should' in Evidentialism. Note that Clifford seems to understand Evidentialism in a *moral* sense. Be able to explain why Evidentialism seems to rule out belief in God (or atheism) if there is no evidence for God's existence (or nonexistence).
- Understand and be able to critique both versions of the argument that we formulated for Evidentialism based on the ship owner example (called 'Arg1' and 'Arg2' on Handout 6). In particular, be able to formulate a counterexample to premise 3' of Arg2 on Handout 6.
- Understand and be able to critique both versions of the general argument for Evidentialism (called 'Arg3' and 'Arg4' on Handout 6).
- Be able to explain van Inwagen's line of thinking that might lead one to question Evidentialism. This has to do with cases of rational disagreement. Note that van Inwagen is addressing Evidentialism understood in an *epistemic* sense rather than in a *moral* sense (I call this 'E-Evidentialism' on Handout 6).

Basic Belief In God

- Be able to explain the distinction between basic and non-basic belief. In particular, be able to explain how this distinction ties into the notion of Sufficient Warrant, Transfer Warrant, and Immediate Warrant.
- Be able to explain the view that we called Foundationalism, and explain why someone might be attracted to such a view.
- According to Strong Foundationalists, what kinds of beliefs are basic?
- Be able to explain Plantinga's proposal that belief in God is a basic belief. Be able to explain how Plantinga views perceptual beliefs as basic beliefs in much the same way.
- Be able to explain the atheistic-sense objection and why it might not be a problem for Plantinga.
- Be able to explain what a defeater is, and why this might be a problem for the view that belief in God is a basic belief.

Hume and Miracles

- Be able to explain Hume's argument against believing that there have been miracles. Note that he is focusing purely on whether or not we should believe *reports* of miracles. Be able to explain why his answer is 'no'.
- Be able to explain both the Lotto Objection and the Science Objection to Hume's argument. These objections take the form of parodies. They try to show that Hume's style of reasoning leads to absurd consequences. Be able to explain how this works.
- Make sure you understand what 'P(A|B)' means.
- In class we showed that we can represent Hume's argument using probabilities. You don't need to know the details of this. But you should understand that, when formalized in this way, Hume is trying to establish that $P(\text{Miracle} | \text{Report of a Miracle})$ [that is, $P(M | R)$] is low. We showed that this will be true just in case $P(R | \neg M) > P(M)$. If Hume's argument is to be successful, we'd like some reason to think that it is true that $P(R | \neg M) > P(M)$. Make sure you understand the different answers (p.5 of Handout 8) that could be given to provide such a reason.
- Consider a scientist who claims that there have been experiments where things happen contrary to the laws of nature. Consider also a person who claims that there has been a miracle (which is something contrary to the laws of nature). Be able to explain why there is something fundamentally different about the position the scientist is in compared with the person who claims there has been a miracle. (This is Response 3 on p.5 of Handout 8).

Teleological Argument

- Be able to give an example of and explain what explanatory inference is (sometimes called inference to the best explanation).
- Be able to give an example of and explain the Surprise Principle.
- Understand Paley's version of the Teleological Argument (in class, we presented this in terms of the human eye). Be able to explain several things about this argument how it uses the surprise principle.
- It is also important to understand how Paley's Watch/Watchmaker analogy supports the argument. As we presented it, Paley is *not* claiming that the human eye (or anything in nature) is like a watch, *nor* is he claiming that God is like a watchmaker. Rather, he uses the Watch/Watchmaker argument to show that a certain *form* of argument is acceptable.
- Be able to explain the objection to Paley's argument based on Darwinian natural selection. Essentially this response grants that we should use an argument form similar to the one that Paley uses, but denies that the features of the natural world would be unlikely if there were no God.
- Consider this passage from Dawkins:

“Cheetahs give every indication of being superbly designed for something, and it should be easy enough to reverse-engineer them and work out their utility function. They appear to be well designed to kill antelopes. The teeth, claws, eyes, nose, leg muscles, backbone and brain of a cheetah are all precisely what we should expect if God’s purpose in designing cheetahs was to maximize deaths among antelopes. Conversely, if we reverse-engineer an antelope we find equally impressive evidence of design for precisely the opposite end: the survival of antelopes and starvation among cheetahs. It is as though cheetahs had been designed by one deity and antelopes by a rival deity. Alternatively, if there is only one Creator who made the tiger and the lamb, the cheetah and the gazelle, what is He playing at?...

The true utility function of life, that which is being maximized in the natural world, is DNA survival. But DNA is not floating free; it is locked up in living bodies and it has to make the most of the levers of power at its disposal. DNA sequences that find themselves in cheetah bodies maximize their survival by causing those bodies to kill gazelles. Sequences that find themselves in gazelle bodies maximize their survival by promoting opposite ends. But it is DNA survival that is being maximized in both cases...” (pp. 111-112)

Be able to explain how one can understand Dawkins as giving a design argument that is very similar in structure to Paley’s argument for the existence of God.

- Be able to explain the Fine-Tuning Argument (FTA) and how it is different than Paley’s Argument.
- Understand and be able to explain the following objections to the FTA:
 - (a) The objection that maintains that the FTA does not support the idea that any specific God exists (e.g., the Christian God). This involves rejecting line 2 of the surprise-principle version or line 3 of the probabilistic version. [This objection corresponds to objection A on p.3 of Handout 9.]
 - (b) The Chance Objection. Be able to give examples that seem to show that lots of unlikely events happen, and yet we don’t think that these things need to be explained (e.g., a person winning a lottery, a random sequence of heads and tails). Nor do we think that we can give arguments similar to the FTA when it comes to such events. Be able to give examples on the other side that show that some unlikely events *do* seem to need to be explained (e.g., a person winning three lotteries in a row, 100 heads in a row). Further we do think that arguments similar to the FTA can be given when it comes to these events.
 - (c) The Anthropic Objection. Be able to explain how this response works. It objects to line 2 of the surprise-principle version or line 3 of the probabilistic version. Understand the Firing Squad example that is supposed to show that the Anthropic Objection is faulty.
 - (d) The Many Universes Objection. Be able to explain why someone would think that the existence of many universes would provide a response to the FTA. Understand how this is similar to the Darwinian response to Paley’s Argument. [Note: you can ignore the stuff about why the fine-tuning evidence doesn’t give us reason to believe that there are many universes.]

Problem of Evil

- Know that Al Ghazali and Leibniz both seem committed to the idea that God must create the best possible world and that our world is the best possible world.
- Be able to formulate the Candide Problem of Evil. You must also be able to say why someone might think that each of the premises are true.
- Be able to explain how one might respond to the Candide Problem of Evil by claiming that there is no best world. How could one support the claim that there is no best world?
- Know the difference between Intrinsic/Instrumental Goodness and Badness.
- Be able to formulate the Evidential Problem of Evil. You must also be able to say why someone might think that each of the premises are true. In particular, you need to be able to say why premise 1 is true, which says:

“If God exists, then there is no evil in the world *for which there is no good reason.*”

 Be able to show how this depends on three attributes of God: omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness.
- Understand the difference between the following two principles:

Principle about Good Persons 1: If you are a good person, then you prevent evil that you know about and that you are able to prevent.

Principle about Good Persons 2: If you are a good person, then you prevent evil that you know about for which there is no good reason that you are able to prevent.
- Understand and be able to explain the theodicy that tries to explain evil by saying that it is necessary for good (Al-Ghazali). Be able to explain how this breaks down into two versions:
 - (a) Evil is necessary for good.
 - (b) Evil is necessary for the recognition of good.
 Be able to critique each of these.
- Know the distinction between natural evil and human evil.
- Understand and be able to explain the Free Will Theodicy.
- Be able to explain the Selective Freedom response to the Free Will Theodicy. You need not be able the subsequent debate about whether or not the Selective Freedom response is successful.
- Know the basics of van Inwagen’s version of the Free Will Theodicy.
- What makes free will a good thing according to van Inwagen?
- Be able to explain objection 1 and objection 3 (Handout 10) to van Inwagen’s theodicy, and the responses to these two objections. (See note on the response to objection 3, below).

Note on the response to objection 3:

The response to objection 3 that we went over in class differs somewhat from what was on the handout. So, to make it clearer, here is what I take the response to the objection to be:

Consider the following two principles:

(S) If a fine of $\$n$ is an effective deterrent, then a fine of $\$n - 1\text{¢}$ is an effective deterrent.

(L) If our fines can be less (and still effective), then they should be.

Both (S) and (L) are very plausible. However, they together imply the absurd conclusion that our fines should be \$0. To see why, consider a fine of \$25.50 that is an effective deterrent. According to (S), a fine of \$25.49 is just as effective. According to (L), our fine should then be set at \$25.49. So, consider our new fine of \$25.49. It is an effective deterrent, so according to (L) a fine of \$25.48 is an effective deterrent. According to (L), our fine should then be set at \$25.48. There is no place at which to stop this process. So, we must reject either (S) or (L). Van Inwagen claims that (S) is very plausible, and so (L) should be the one to go. He then carries over this kind of reasoning to the problem of evil. Consider the following two principles:

(S*) If there is a distribution of evil consistent with God's plan, then that distribution minus one small evil is still consistent with God's plan.

(L*) If the amount of evil can be less (and still be consistent with God's plan), then it should be.

Just as above, these two principles together imply that no evil is consistent with God's plan. But we are granting van Inwagen that *some* evil is needed. The objection is that there is *too* much. So this is an absurd conclusion. Thus, we must reject one of (S*) or (L*). Van Inwagen claims that (S*) is very plausible, and so recommends that we reject (L*). But if (L*) is false, then it is hard to maintain that the "age of evil" is too long, or that there is too much evil. Of course, there could be less evil, but that is not problematic if (L*) is false. There are responses that could be made to van Inwagen's claim, but we didn't go over any in class.