Phil 149
Winter, 2005

Questions for Final Exam

You will be required to write one essay for each part of the exam. Of the **three** questions in each part below, **two** will appear on the exam, and you will be required to pick **one** to write on. There will, almost inevitably, be points of contract between your essays in parts I and II, but try to make them as independent and non-overlapping as possible (you may refer back to a point you made in the other essay if you think it is important to indicate your awareness of something that may not be as central to the current essay). The questions are deliberately open-ended so as to enable you to go in different directions. Develop your answers in as detailed and thorough way as you can in the time available.

Part I.

1. Pretend you are **one** of the following individuals: Descartes, James, Piaget, or Skinner and you have come back to life long enough to complete this assignment. Write a book review of Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini's *Inevitable Illusions*. A good book review both gives a far and accurate account of what the book does and develops your line of response to the book (things you endorse, things you reject, things that force you to change your mind).

2. Relate some of the major results reported in *Inevitable Illusions* to the main project of cognitive psychology **or** artificial intelligence as we have discussed them (ground your discussion in what you take to be exemplary work in the tradition you pick). In what respects are these results a continuation of earlier research in those fields and in what respects do they challenge or alter that line of research (or are simply irrelevant to it)?

3. Explore how one might place some of the major results presented in *Inevitable Illusions* in an evolutionary perspective. Your discussion should include the research project of evolutionary psychology as we discussed it, but need not be limited to it. There may be other ways to relate these phenomena to evolution.

Part II.

1. What is meant by a heuristic? Use at least one of the heuristics of availability or representativeness to ground your discussion. How do heuristics relate to normative principles of reasoning such as those provided by logic? Why might heuristics exist, and what should we do about them?

2. According to Piattelli-Palmarini, framing plays a major role in both perception and reasoning. Explain what framing is and describe some of the cases in which it seems to affect perception and reasoning. Are there ways in which it assists and/or ways it harms our ability to see or reason? If so, what strategies might we adopt to deal with it?

3. What is meant by typicality and what are typicality affects? What are some of the ways in which these affects can be demonstrated? How do they affect our reasoning, including ways they affect it for better and for worse?