Philosophy of Psychology
Philosophy 149
Winter, 2013

Directions and Questions for First Exam

Bring *two* bluebooks available in the university bookstore with ***nothing*** written in or on them (not even your name). These may be redistributed at the time of the exam.

The exam will consist of the two parts, for which the instructions are below. The second part requires you to write two essays. There are different ways of addressing the essay questions that can result in an excellent grade. You will be judged on the overall quality of your answer, not whether your answer corresponds to a pre-set model. However you approach the essay, more thorough answer that explicates the key ideas will score higher than a skeletal answer. Don't pad your answer, but strive to write as complete an answer as possible given the time constraints. You should aim your answer at a generally knowledgeable student who has not taken this class. Explain all that you would need to explain for them to understand your answer.

Part A. Answer each of the following six questions in two to three sentences each. Each question is worth up to 5 points (30 points total). The following are the question from which the six that will appear in Part A will be drawn:

What does Aristotle mean by saying the soul is what actualizes the body?

What are the properties of the animal soul for Aristotle?

How did Aristotle employ the notion of form in his account of visual perception?

What, for Descartes, is it to give a mechanistic explanation of some phenomenon?

How did Descartes propose to explain behavior performed by animals (or the same behavior when performed by humans)?

For Descartes, what features of humans defy mechanistic explanation?

What is a psychophysical law?

What did Weber mean by a *just noticeable difference*?

What are nonsense syllables and why how did Ebbinghaus use them in experiments?

What is the spacing effect discovered by Ebbinghaus?

How did Ebbinghaus measure how much he remembered of what he previously learned?

What does Brentano claim we can perceive (incidentally) through "inner perception."

What key feature of mental states did Brentano designate with the word *intentionality*?

In what way is James' approach to mental life like Darwin's to biological life?

What was Huxley's conscious automaton theory?

How did James respond to the claim that according to scientific accounts, all our actions are determined?

What did Pavlov mean by *freedom reflex*?

What did Pavlov mean by a *conditioned reflex*?

What was Watson's view about the usefulness of introspection in psychology?

For Watson, what should be the objective in a behaviorist study of emotions?

How are theories evaluated according to the hypothetical-deductive method?

What did Tolman mean by a cognitive map and what role did it play in his explanations of behavior?

What did Tolman mean by latent learning?

Give an example of how one might operationally define a mental term like belief.

What did Skinner mean by saying "It is social reinforcement which leads the individual to know himself"?

In what respect was Bruner offering a "new look" at visual perception?

What capacity of memory did Miller quantify in terms of seven plus or minus two?

What is meant by processing information in the context of cognitive psychology?

How did Shepard and Melzer use reaction times to argue for the reality of mental images?

Part B. Address the following two questions in an essay (35 points each). Be as thorough and complete as possible in answering the question within the time allowed. Keep your essay focused on the question—extraneous material can detract from the quality of the essay. Address your essay to an intelligent reader who does not know the material you are asked to cover. The actual questions will be selected from the following:

1. Contrast Descartes' account to of the mind with Aristotle's conception of the soul. How do they differ in their approach to identifying mental or psychological phenomena? How do they differ in their understanding of what the soul or mind is and what it does? Are there also points of agreement in their accounts?

2. James says of consciousness "I mean . . . to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it stands for a function." What does he mean by this? What is it to

be a function and how does James develop his account of consciousness as a function. Be specific about how he construes consciousness. How, in this respect, is his position similar or different to that advanced by Descartes?

3. Brentano distinguishes *genetic* and *descriptive* psychology. Take Brentano's own work as illustrative of descriptive psychology and Ebbinghaus's research as representative of genetic psychology. What are the differences between the approaches? What do proponents of each approach claim to be able to teach us about mental phenomena? What would each say in arguing for the importance of their own approach?

4. Imagine you are Descartes and made a visit to Pavlov's laboratory and that Pavlov took time to show you examples of the research he conducted. You set out to write a report in which you convey your impressions of his research and the ways in which it contributes to our knowledge. Write the report you think Descartes might have written. Be specific both about the research you observed and what you think it does and does not show.

5. Construct a dialog between James and Watson in which each presents his preferred conception of psychology, defends it, and criticizes that of the other. Be as clear as possible about how each construes psychology and what it is supposed to do and on the points of difference between them.

6. Skinner saw operant conditioning as an important advance beyond the stimulus-response (S-R) approaches of other behaviorists. Explain the major difference between S-R and operant conditioning (focus on what kinds of behavior can be explained in terms of operant conditioning that could not be explained by S-R theories). How would Skinner defend operant conditioning as a solution to the problem for which Descartes thought a non-physical mind was required?

7. Even as cognitive psychology repudiated behaviorism, it preserved important elements of its approach to psychology. Be as specific and concrete as possible about which features of behaviorism were rejected and which were retained. What defense would cognitive psychologists offer for rejecting those parts of behaviorism they rejected? How might a behaviorist argue for behaviorism as against cognitive theories?