

Midterm Study Guide

Context:

The midterm is next Tuesday, May 1st. This study guide is meant to be used as a tool to help you as you prepare yourself for the exam. Note: every question that will be on the midterm can be found in this study guide. This does not mean that every question in this study guide will be found in the midterm. For each different question type (short, medium, and long answer) you will have a choice of several questions to respond to.

Questions:

Short Answer:

In 1-2 sentences please define the following terms *and* state their philosophical significance

Reflective Equilibrium

Oh yeah!

Invalidity

Libertarianism

Psychological Determinism

Veto Freedom

BOC

Compatibilism

Claim

Theological Determinism

Physical Determinism

Reactivity to reason

Guidance control

Receptivity to reason

Validity

surface freedom

Readiness potential

Hard Determinism

PAP

Frankfurt's Principle

Soundness

Medium Answer:

In a short paragraph (5-7 sentences) address the following questions

1. Explain why determinism (of any kind) is often thought to be a threat for theories of moral responsibility
2. What is a second-order desire and why does Frankfurt think they matter?
3. Libet argues that our will is not free in the way that we thought it was. Briefly explain the experiment he conducted and why he concludes that we are not free in the way we
4. Explain why determinism being false at the quantum level does not automatically solve the free will problem
5. What is Frankfurt's 'case 4' and why does he think that it shows us that the principle of alternate possibilities is false?
6. Fischer and Ravizza argue that moderate reasons-responsiveness is all we need to be morally responsible. What is moderate reasons-responsiveness and is it compatible with determinism?
7. Pereboom argues that we are never responsible for anything we do. How does he support this claim?
8. Describe one major criticism of Libet's study and explain why it is a problem for Libet's view
9. If hard determinism is true how would we have to change our moral language and practice according to Pereboom? Why?

Long Answer:

In a well-developed essay address one of the following sets of questions. Please make sure to include the standard components of an essay (intro, body paragraphs, and conclusion). Do not neglect to answer all parts of each essay (including the parts that ask you for your own input). Remember that you must go beyond merely telling me *what* an author's position is; make sure to include an explanation of the *argument* that each author uses to support his or her claims.

1. One of the major questions regarding our will is whether free will is compatible with the truth of determinism (physical, psychological, or theological). Harry Frankfurt argues that one of our seemingly incompatibilist intuitions, the principle of alternative possibilities, is false. In a carefully written essay, explain the principle of alternative possibilities and its relationship to free will and moral responsibility. Following this, explain Frankfurt's arguments against the principle. How does Pereboom criticize Frankfurt's compatibilism? Whose claims (Pereboom or Frankfurt) do you find more convincing and why? Make sure to explain your position on the principle of alternative possibilities and how it relates to Frankfurt and Pereboom's positions.
2. John Martin Fischer argues that in order to be morally responsible we don't need what he calls 'regulative control' but instead that we need only 'guidance control.' Explain Fischer's understanding of guidance control especially as it regards receptivity and reactivity to reasons. Contrast Fischer's understanding of guidance control with Pereboom's generalization argument against all compatibilist positions. Make sure to explain why Pereboom thinks his arguments show that a view like Fischer's is false. How do you think Fischer might respond to Pereboom's argument? Which do you find more convincing and why? Be specific.
3. Pereboom argues that if our choices or characters are determined by factors beyond our control that we do not choose freely and that if we do not choose freely then we are not responsible or blameworthy for anything we do. In a carefully written essay, explain Pereboom's hard compatibilism. Do you think Pereboom's position is aided or hindered by the kinds of psychological experiments that we have discussed throughout lecture (Stanley Millgram's experiment, the San Francisco Phone Booth study, etc)? Why or why not? Do you agree with Pereboom's argument regarding the kind of control needed for moral responsibility? Explain why, make sure to pay special attention to Pereboom's claims regarding how we would need to change our understanding of moral language and emotions if hard determinism is true.