

## SLO Instruments for Philosophy Assessment

### SLO 1:

For each of the following arguments, indicate whether the argument is

- a) logically valid and has premises that do not obviously run afoul of any of the major claims of any of the theories or views covered in the course,
- b) logically valid but has premises that are questionable according to one of the theories or views covered in the course,
- c) logically invalid, whether the premises are plausible or not.

1. A category is a natural kind if and only if it is a natural type with clear, fixed, natural boundary conditions determined by the inherent properties of the things.
2. Human races have no clear, fixed, natural boundary conditions between them on the basis of any inherent property, as there is no single natural or biological property which all and only humans of a particular race have. Therefore, human races are not a natural kind.
3. Determinism is compatible with free will. Indeterminism is also compatible with free will. Therefore, the question of whether we have free will or not does not rest on whether determinism is true.
4. Common judgements about whether one event was the actual cause of another often depend on factors other than whether events of the same type as the first one generally cause events of same type as the second. Therefore, according to common judgements, type causation is not a sufficient condition for actual causation.

For each of the below, write either “valid & plausibly sound”, “valid but questionable soundness” or “invalid”. You may, but do not need to, add a brief sentence or two to explain. (24 pts total)

1. If I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat, then I do not know I have hands. I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat.  
Therefore, I do not know I have hands.
2. Coherentism claims that a belief is justified if fits in with the rest of one’s beliefs, such that the whole set is coherent. Externalism claims that the justification of a belief comes not from its relationship to other beliefs but from how the belief is related to the world (e.g., how causally formed, whether reliably tracks truth). Therefore, if externalism is true, coherentism is false.

## SLO 2

1. Use a truth table or find a counterexample to show that the following argument is invalid:  $P \vdash P \wedge Q$

2. Construct derivations to show the validity of the following arguments:

3.  $P \rightarrow Q, P \vdash Q$

4.  $P \rightarrow Q, Q \rightarrow R \vdash P \rightarrow R$

5.  $\forall xG(x) \wedge \forall xF(x) \vdash F(a)$

## SLO 3/SLO 5

1. In no more than 800 words, explicate LaBossiere's defense of GMOs. Include an introductory paragraph, but not a critique: this paper is exegetical only.
2. Construct a full exegesis of Descartes' defense of skepticism in no more than 1500 words.
3. In no more than 3000 words, explicate and critique Thomson's defense of the claim that abortion does not violate fetal rights to life, per se, and will only violate fetal property rights when mothers confer those rights to fetuses by intentionally undertaking the associated obligations, and will only sometimes violate duties of charity.

## SLO 4

1. Which of the following statements (possibly more than one) are subjunctive or counterfactual conditionals?
  - a) Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day
  - b) If you give a man a fish he'll eat for a day
  - c) If you were to give a man a fish, he would eat for a day
  - d) If you had given that man a fish, he would have eaten for the day
  - e) All men who are given fish will eat for the day
  - f) Necessarily, all men who are given fish will eat for the day
2. A statement about the probability of an event might be interpreted as either conveying the speaker's own subjective credence or making a claim about objective chances in the world. Explain the difference(s) between these two interpretations, and explain why it might be important to determine which interpretation applies to a probability statement made in an argument. (150-250 words)

3. In the context of social choice theory, explain what it means for a voting rule to satisfy the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives property. Do you think a good voting rule ought to satisfy this property? Explain why or why not.
  
4. Carefully explain the frequency interpretation of probability. How would a frequentist understand a statement like "The probability of rain tomorrow is .8?" What is one major weakness of this interpretation of probability?
  
5. What is Korsgaard's normative question?
  - a. "What are my moral beliefs?"
  - b. "Which of my available actions will have the best consequences?"
  - c. "What justifies the claims that morality makes on me?"
  
6. What is act utilitarianism?
  - a. The view that the right action is that which produces the most happiness (overall, in the long-run).
  - b. The view that the right thing to do is whatever a virtuous person would do.
  - c. The view that the right action is that which satisfies a \*rule\*, where that rule is a member of the set of rules such that, if followed in the long-run, they would produce the best consequences.