

# Phil. 102: Introduction to Philosophical Inquiry General Education Assessment Project

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## 1 Directions

The following questions reflect some of the specific aims of our introduction to philosophy course. Answer the questions in accordance with what you think is correct.

For the multiple choice questions, choose the best response of those listed and circle the letter corresponding to the best answer.

For the short answer questions, provide reasons supporting your point of view.

## 2 Philosophy General Education Assessment

1. Study the following passage and choose the best assessment of its purpose.

Selfishness and self-interest are not ever the same kind of action. For example, it is in my self-interest to exercise, but it is not selfish of me to exercise. Therefore, if someone concludes that I am selfish because I act in my self-interest, then their inference is not correct.

The primary purpose of this passage is to ...

- (a) explain a point of view.
- (b) direct or to command agreement with the author.
- (c) attempt to prove or argue to a conclusion.
- (d) rationalize something already believed.
- (e) show that everyone is selfish.

2. A good way to attempt to show that the conclusion in the passage above has not been shown to be true is to point out that ...
- (a) Since all persons are selfish, they must also act from self-interest. Hence the passage is false.
  - (b) The conclusion is not universally true because sometimes when I act in my self-interest, I am being selfish.
  - (c) In some cases, people are altruistic; that is, they go out of their way to help others.
  - (d) It all depends on what you believe. One can't generalize about the issue.
  - (e) Some actions in our self-interest can be selfish and still happen to be in the interests of others also.
3. From a philosophical point of view, what we disbelieve about the nature of life and the nature of the world should be primarily determined by ...
- (a) the authorities in our lives such as parents, teachers, and government officials.
  - (b) the religious authorities and the religious texts of our era.
  - (c) our study of the recent advances in science and mathematics.
  - (d) whether a belief is inconsistent with what we know to be true.
  - (e) a systematically random point of view established by experience.
4. A person's political, religious, and ethical beliefs should be, if possible ...
- (a) consistent and noncontradictory.
  - (b) determined by our situational feelings.
  - (c) relative to the conditions of our environment.
  - (d) different for different persons.
  - (e) derived from the dominant groups in our society.
5. What would be a good question to raise about the following passage?
- The order and arrangement of the physical processes of the universe exhibit natural law and such an intricate design that we cannot help but conclude that a Great Designer exists.
- (a) Are events such as earthquakes, plagues, and pestilence a part of the design?
  - (b) Are some events related noncausally or by chance?
  - (c) Are descriptive laws of science different from prescriptive laws of agents?
  - (d) Is the order and design of the universe incompatible with free will?
  - (e) All of the above are good questions.

6. Explain whether you agree or disagree with the following passage.

If a problem of moral concern is defined to be a problem having the potential to help or harm ourselves or others, then events as trivial as whether or not to wash your car regularly, if you have a car, is a problem of moral concern.

7. Which of the following questions is the most philosophical?

- (a) What is the exact shape of the earth?
- (b) Does heaven exist in some kind of transcendental reality?
- (c) What is truth, goodness, and beauty?
- (d) What career should I have?
- (e) How should we feel about the morals of society?

8. Explain whether you agree or disagree with the following passage.

Since people from different societies differ in their beliefs about what is right and what is wrong, ethics cannot be objectively determined.

9. What is a good way to resolve the old question concerning if a tree falls in a forest with no one to hear it, is there a sound?

- (a) If no one hears the sound, there is no sound.
- (b) The sound would exist even if no one heard it.
- (c) The word “sound” is ambiguous. Sound can be defined as a perception or a vibration.
- (d) Sounds are only subjective because many organisms cannot hear.
- (e) The question has no resolution.

10. Explain whether the following belief is true or false.

Nothing can be proved beyond a shadow of doubt. Every generalization has an exception, and no belief is absolutely certain. In the end, everything is relative.

### 3 Assessment Note

Please be sure you have provided reasons for the views expressed on the short answer questions.

This assessment questionnaire does not form a part of your grade in this course, and individual scores are not recorded. Your answer will help establish whether or not the objective of the course are being met. Thank you for your participation.