

Phil. 102: Introduction to Philosophical Inquiry

General Education Assessment Project

Division of Humanities
Lander University
Greenwood, SC

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1 Directions

The following questions reflect some of the specific aims of the 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.

2 Philosophy General Education Assessment

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

A relativist believes moral standards of different societies cannot be meaningfully compared because there are no absolutes. Yet, surely the moral ideals of a peaceful society are better than those of a barbaric one bent on world terrorism. The fact that we can say the peaceful society is morally better than the barbaric one implies that we are judging according to a standard that terrorism is morally wrong.

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 there are no objective standards.

2. A good way to attempt to show that the conclusion in the passage above has not been demonstrated to be true in all cases is to point out that ...
 - a. Since societies differ, their moral rules differ. Hence, the passage is wrong.
 - b. A comprehensive objective moral standard is not yet known because sometimes we do not know which society is better.
 - c. In some cases, a morally good society is possible.
 - d. It all depends on what you believe. One can't generalize about the issue.
 - e. Some societies are morally wrong according to one objective standard and are considered morally right according to another objective standard.
3. From a philosophical point of view, what we believe 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 other things 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 ruling groups in our society.
5. What would be some good points to raise questions about the following passage?

Just as we know, because of its intricate design, a found watch implies the existence of a watchmaker, so also we know, because of intricate design, the universe itself implies the existence of a Universe-Maker.

 - a. Are events such as earthquakes, plagues, and pestilence a part of the design?
 - b. Since a watch is made by many persons, so also a universe is made by many Universe-Makers.
 - c. Since the watchmaker is a finite being, so also the Universe-Maker is finite.
 - d. If the watchmaker is observable in space and time, so also the Universe-maker is observable in space and time.
 - e. All of the above are good points.

6. State 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 to whether you come to class on time is a problem of moral concern.

7. In your opinion, which of the following questions is the most philosophical?

- a. How far is the earth from the sun?
- b. Is there an afterlife?
- c. What is truth, goodness, and beauty?
- d. What career should I pursue?
- e. How should we feel about contemporary moral behavior?

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

I can be self-interested without being selfish because it is in my self-interest to exercise but no one would consider it selfish of me to exercise.

9. Suppose a hunter, while trying to glimpse a squirrel, walks all the way around a tree, and at the same time, the squirrel moves all the way around the trunk on the opposite side of the tree. The hunter goes around the tree but does the hunter go around the squirrel?

- a. If the hunter is never actually behind the squirrel, then the hunter did not go around the squirrel.
- b. Since the hunter went around the tree and the squirrel was on the tree, the hunter must have gone around the squirrel.
- c. The phrase “go around” is ambiguous. “Go around” can mean “to be successively north of, west of, south of and east of” or can mean “to be at the front of, the right side of, the back side of, and the left side of.”
- d. Going around something is subjective because when we cannot always observe the event for ourselves.
- e. The question has no resolution.

10. Do you think 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. That's why in the end everything is relative.

3 Assessment Note

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 introduction to philosophy course are being met. Thank you for your participation.