**GENERIC SUBJECT CONTENT**

**Philosophical analysis questions**

1. What is philosophical analysis? (3)
2. What is conceptual analysis? (3)
3. What is argument analysis? (3)
4. What is a philosophical question? (3)

**Philosophical terminology questions**

1. What is an assertion? (3)
2. What is a claim? (3)
3. What is a proposition? (3)
4. In a conditional proposition, what is the antecedent and what is the consequent? (5)
5. What is the difference between an analytic truth and a synthetic truth? (5)
6. What is the difference between a priori knowledge and a posteriori knowledge? (5)
7. What is the difference between necessity and contingency? (5)
8. What does it mean to claim that a set of beliefs are consistent? (3)
9. What does it mean to claim that a set of beliefs are inconsistent? (3)
10. What is the difference between objectivity and subjectivity? (3)
11. What is a tautology? (3)
12. What is a dilemma? (3)
13. What is a paradox? (3)
14. What does it mean to say that a proposition has been ‘proven’? (3)
15. Explain different views in philosophy about the nature of proof. (5)
16. What is the difference between truth and falsity? (3)
17. What does the term ‘justification’ mean? (3)

**Argumentation questions**

1. What is an ‘argument’? (3)
2. Explain the key features of argumentation in philosophy? (5)
3. What is a premise? (3)
4. What is an assumption? (3)
5. What is a reason in an argument? (3)
6. What is a conclusion? (3)
7. What is a sub-conclusion in an argument? (3)
8. What is an inference? (3)
9. What is deduction? (3)
10. What is induction? (3)
11. What is abduction? (3)
12. What is a valid argument? (3)
13. What is an invalid argument? (3)
14. What is a sound argument? (3)
15. What is an unsound argument? (3)
16. Explain the link between deduction and certainty. (5)
17. Explain the link between induction and probability. (5)
18. What is an argument from analogy? (3)
19. What is Ockham’s Razor? (3)
20. What is hypothetical reasoning? (3)
21. Explain how arguments can be flawed. (5)
22. Explain how deductive arguments can fail. (5)
23. Explain how inductive arguments can fail. (5)
24. Explain how abductive arguments can fail. (5)
25. What is a fallacy? (3)
26. What is the circularity fallacy? (3)
27. What is the contradiction fallacy? (3)
28. What is the question-begging fallacy? (3)
29. What is the fallacy of equivocation? (5)
30. What is the fallacy of composition? (5)
31. What is the naturalistic fallacy? (5)
32. What is an ‘objection’ in philosophy? (3)
33. What is a counter-argument? (3)

**GLOSSARY**

# philosophical analysis

a method of enquiry that seeks (a) to clarify the meaning of concepts and (b) to understand the logical relationships between them

# conceptual analysis

a method of enquiry that seeks to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions of a concept (or that to which the concept refers)

# argument analysis

**a method of enquiry that seeks to evaluate the cogency or persuasiveness of arguments**

# philosophical question

an open-ended question concerning the nature of reality (what is?), knowledge (what can we know about what is?), ethics (What ought to be?), or other fundamental topics. An example of is, ‘What is the relationship between mind and body?’

# assertion

a statement that is presented as true or claimed to be true e.g. the sky is blue

# claim

a statement that is presented as true and amenable to proof e.g. aliens exist

# proposition

a proposition is a statement that has truth-value (or truth-aptness) i.e. that is either true or false e.g. the sky is blue

# conditional proposition

an if-then statement: a type of compound proposition that consists of two simple propositions, called the antecedent and the consequent e.g. if *x* is a dog, then *x* has four legs

# antecedent

in a conditional proposition, the antecedent is the if proposition that expresses a condition e.g. the ‘if *x* is a dog’ part of the ‘if *x* is a dog, then *x* has four legs’ conditional proposition.

# consequent

in a conditional proposition, the consequent is the ‘then’ proposition that specifies the entailment of the condition e.g. the ‘then *x* has four legs’ part of the ‘if *x* is a dog, then *x* has four legs’ conditional proposition.

# analytic truth

an analytical truth is a proposition that is true because the subject concept contains the predicate concept e.g. ‘bachelors are unmarried men’ because the concept ‘bachelor’ includes the concepts of unmarried and male.

# synthetic truth

a synthetic truth is a proposition that is true, not because the subject concept contains the predicate concept, but because of what is really the case e.g. ‘Tim is a bachelor’ is true because Tim actually is unmarried and male.

# a priori knowledge

a priori knowledge is knowledge established by human reason and rationality, not (sense) experience

# a posteriori knowledge

a posteriori knowledge is knowledge established by (sense) experience

# necessity

a proposition is necessary if it cannot be otherwise, i.e. it is true in all possible worlds e.g. 1+1=2

# contingency

a proposition is contingent if it can be otherwise, i.e. it is not true in all possible worlds e.g. Tim owns one phone and one car

# consistent

a set of beliefs is consistent if those beliefs can all be true without contradiction e.g.

* Alice loves me
* If Alice loves me, then she would have sent flowers
* Alice sent me flowers

# inconsistent

a set of beliefs is inconsistent if those beliefs cannot all be true without contradiction. Here is an example of an inconsistent triad:

* Alice loves me.
* If Alice loves me, then she would have sent flowers.
* Alice has not sent flowers.

objectivity

subjectivity

# tautology

a proposition that is true by definition i.e. because of the relations between the words, concepts, or symbols. For example, 1+1=2 is a mathematical tautology because the 1 is defined as the successor to 0, and 2 is defined as the successor to the 1. Therefore, it is impossible for 1 + 1 to be anything other than 2.

# dilemma

a choice between two (or more) options none of which is entirely acceptable. An example of a moral dilemma is when a person is either (a) steals food to feed their family or (b) doesn’t steal food and lets their family go hungry.

# paradox

A paradox is a statement that seems to contradict itself, but may actually be true. It may be the result of (seemingly) sound reasoning from (seemingly) acceptable premises, but leads to an unacceptable conclusion.

An example is the liar paradox, which is based on the statement "This statement is false." If the statement is true, then it is false, and if it is false, then it is true.

# proof

overwhelming empirical evidence or mathematical-logical demonstration

truth

falsity

justification

premise

assumption

a (usually unstated) proposition in an argument that is taken for granted without evidence or reasoning. For example, the argument

* Jesus performed miracles
* Therefore, Jesus was the Son of God

assumes both that Jesus existed and that God exists.

argument

an argument is a reasoned inference from one set of propositions, the premises, to another proposition, the conclusion.

conclusion

the proposition that follows from the premises of an argument and is supported or entailed by them.

sub-conclusion

A sub-conclusion is a conclusion that is reached within an argument, but is not the main conclusion of the argument. Sub-conclusions can be used to support the main conclusion of an argument e.g.

* All dogs are mammals.
* All mammals have fur.
* Sub-conclusion: Therefore, all dogs have fur.
* Conclusion: Therefore, my dog has fur.

inference

a conclusion (or sub-conclusion) in an argument that is drawn from reasoning and evidence

deduction

a type of argument in which the truth of the premises logically entail the truth of the conclusion e.g.

* All men are mortal.
* Socrates is a man.
* Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

induction

a type of argument in which the truth of the premises support, but do not logically entail, the truth of the conclusion e.g.

* If you smoke, then there’s a high chance of getting cancer
* Tim smokes
* Therefore, Tim will get cancer

abduction

a type of argument involving inference to the best explanation of a set of facts e.g.

* There is a footprint in the mud
* Therefore, someone was walking there.

validity

An argument is valid if the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. This means that if the premises are true, then the conclusion must also be true. Only deductive arguments can be valid. An example is

* All men are mortal
* Socrates is a man
* Therefore Socrates is mortal

invalidity

a deductive argument is invalid if the conclusion does not follow necessarily from the premises. This means that if the premises are true, then the conclusion must also be true. e.g.

* All philosophers are clever
* Jane is not a philosopher
* Therefore, Jane is not clever

soundness

an argument is sound if both (a) the premises are true and (b) the argument is valid. Only deductive arguments can be sound because only deductive arguments can be valid.

unsoundness

an argument is sound if both (a) the premises are true and (b) the argument is valid. Only deductive arguments can be unsound because only deductive arguments can be invalid.

certainty

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probability

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argument from analogy

a type of inductive reasoning in which the conclusion is drawn based on the similarity between two or more things e.g.

* humans and chimps are similar e.g. in physical appearance
* humans are able to speak
* chimps are probably able to speak

Ockham’s Razor

The law of parsimony: the principle that that the simplest explanation is the best one, everything else being equal (i.e. if those explanations explain the facts equally well).

hypothetical reasoning

hypothetical reasoning is a type of reasoning that involves considering possible scenarios that are not necessarily true. For example, it might be hypothesised that if there is no God, then there is no objective morality: the philosopher would then formulate arguments for and against the hypothesis.

fallacy

an error in reasoning that makes an argument unconvincing. Examples include the fallacy of equivocation, the fallacy of composition, and the naturalistic fallacy.

circularity fallacy

The fallacy in which the premises of an argument rely on the conclusion, making the argument circular.

* I am a good person because I always do the right thing.
* I always do the right thing because I am a good person.
* Therefore, I am a good person.

contradiction fallacy

a statement that contradicts either itself or another statement in an argument. It occurs when the two propositions cannot both be true at the same time e.g. ‘This number is both even and odd’.

question-begging fallacy

also known as petitio principii, is a type of logical fallacy in which the conclusion of an argument is assumed in one of the premises, framed as a question e.g.

* Why is God the creator of the universe?
* Because God is the creator of the universe.

fallacy of equivocation

a fallacy in which a word or phrase is used in two different senses in the same argument, leading to a logical contradiction e.g.

* Feathers are light
* What is light is not dark
* Therefore, feathers are dark

fallacy of composition

a fallacy in which one infers that something is true of the whole from the fact that it is true of some part of the whole e.g.

* The Great Wall of China is made from small bricks
* Therefore, the Great Wall of China is a small wall

naturalistic fallacy

a fallacy in which someone argues that something is good or desirable simply because it is natural e.g. that eating meat is good because it is natural for humans to do so. But something can be natural (e.g. cancer) but not good.

objection

a reason given against a premise, argument, or conclusion. The reason are often expressed as an argument, but could be framed as a question. An objection to an objection is commonly known as a ‘rebuttal’.

counterargument

an argument that opposes another argument. It is a way of responding to an argument by providing reasons why the argument is flawed or unsound. Counterarguments can be used to refute an argument or to raise doubts about it e.g.

* *argument*: The death penalty should be reinstated because it deters crime.
* *counterargument*: The death penalty does not deter crime. In fact, studies have shown that there is no correlation between the death penalty and crime rates.