

PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy  
First Exam Study Questions

**1. Important Concepts, People, and Terminology**

Albert Camus  
Argument  
Aristotle  
Axiology  
Bad Faith  
Being-for-itself  
Being-in-itself  
Biological death  
Brain death  
Death of the person  
Epistemology  
“Existence precedes essence”  
Existentialism  
Friedrich Nietzsche  
Jean-Paul Sartre  
Knight of Faith  
Leap of Faith  
Local death  
Logic  
Masochism  
Metaphysics  
Molecular death  
Near-death experience  
Nihilism  
Out-of-body experience  
Philosophy  
Plato  
Premise  
Pythagoras  
Sadism  
Socrates  
Somatic death  
Soren Kierkegaard  
Sound Argument  
Symbiosis  
Thales  
The Transient Argument  
Valid Argument

**Introduction – A Guidebook for Students (1-11)**

1. Who, according to the Introduction, is typically regarded as the first Western philosopher? What discoveries did he make? What beliefs did he hold? (2-3)

2. The text lists four ways in which the study of Philosophy is divided into a series of smaller units (sometimes regarded as component parts). Identify and describe each of those four ways. Include examples and details concerning major subdivisions. (5-8)

### **Douglas Shrader - The Meaning of Life (17-22)**

1. Restate, as clearly as possible, the Transient Argument. What response do religions typically make to the argument? Existentialists? Nihilists? Which, if any, any response do you believe is best? Why? (18-20)
2. In "The Meaning of Life," what conditions does Shrader impose on the claim, "Social position is important"? (20.1)
3. List three difficulties that Shrader identifies in "The Meaning of Life" as reasons to be cautious concerning any discussion of **"the"** Meaning of Life. (20-21)
4. According to Douglas Shrader's "The Meaning of Life," we should neither agree nor disagree with someone who says simply, "Nothing matters." Why? Present, analyze, and discuss the reasons which Shrader gives to support this claim. (18.2)

### **Leo Tolstoy - My Confession (23-30)**

1. Tolstoy relates the story of a traveler who is clinging to the twig of a wild bush. What, according to the story, is happening to the bush? What observations does Tolstoy make about the story? (25)
2. In his writings, Tolstoy advocated what he regarded as "the only truth." State, as clearly as possible, that "truth." (23)
3. Describe Tolstoy's experiences in "the forest of human knowledge." (26)
4. What mistake did Tolstoy eventually discover in the train of thought which led him to conclude, "life is nothing"? (27-28)
5. Why did Leo Tolstoy seek out the simple life and religious faith of the Russian peasants? Do you agree with his approach? His conclusions? Why? (27-30)
6. Discuss the situation which Tolstoy describes as an arrest of life. Include specifics concerning the circumstances, characteristics, and consequences of these arrests. (23-25)
7. Explicate and discuss Tolstoy's distinction between rational and irrational knowledge. Do you accept his distinction? His conclusions? Why? (27-29)
8. What solution does Tolstoy find to his dilemma? Is it a reasonable solution? A good one? Why? (28-29)

### **Erich Fromm - Love, the Answer to the Problem of Human Existence (38-43)**

1. What does Erich Fromm identify as three partial answers to the problem of human existence? (40.1)
2. Identify three characteristics that Fromm attributes to orgiastic states. (40.1)
3. What lessons does Fromm draw from the Biblical story in which Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge? Do you agree with his analysis? Why or why not? (38-39)
4. What does Erich Fromm regard as the primary problem of human existence? What is the source of this problem? What are its consequences? What answer does Fromm provide? Do you agree or disagree with his analysis? Why? (38-43)
5. On what basis does Erich Fromm distinguish mature love from its immature forms? Include analysis and discussion of (i) three characteristics of mature love and (ii) two primary forms of immature love. (41-43)
6. Present, analyze, and discuss Erich Fromm's views concerning the human condition. Include focused discussion of the following quotation: "In the act of loving, of giving myself, in the act of penetrating the other person, I find myself, I discover myself, I discover us both, I discover man." (43.2)

#### **Douglas Adams - Total Perspective Vortex (44-45)**

1. Try to imagine the experience of Trin Tragula's wife when her husband exposed her to his extrapolation of reality based on a small piece of fairy cake. What would she have seen? How might she have felt? (44-45 R&R)

#### **Comparisons**

1. Shrader, Tolstoy, Fromm, and Adams address a series of issues concerning human existence. Identify, as clearly as possible, what each regards as the central, most fundamental issue. In what ways are their concerns similar? How do they differ? How does reading all four pieces provide a clearer picture of the human condition than any author manages to accomplish on his own?
2. Both Shrader and Fromm discuss isolation and interdependence. In what ways are their accounts similar? How do they differ? Be sure to provide details concerning the questions they ask as well as the answers they provide.

#### **Douglas Shrader - Death and Beyond (49-54)**

1. In his essay, "Death and Beyond," Douglas Shrader analyzes a case concerning an unidentified California woman. Present, in your own words, a brief summary of the case. Be sure to include information concerning the medical circumstances, treatment, and outcome. (49-50)
2. In the case which Douglas Shrader discusses concerning an unidentified California woman, how did nurses attempt to make up for lack of prenatal stimulation? (49.2-50.1)

3. Explain, as clearly as possible, the concept of personhood. Provide two examples of the ways in which people with different values may develop somewhat different concepts. (50)
4. When, in your opinion, did the unidentified woman in Douglas Shrader's essay, "Death and Beyond," actually die? What was the cause of death? Defend your answer in terms of some of the concepts and positions presented in the text. (49-54, 79 R&R)
5. Douglas Shrader draws three conclusions concerning near-death experiences. Present and analyze (attack or defend) each of the three. Are there additional lessons or insights which Shrader may have missed? If so, what? (52-53)

### **Plato - The Death of Socrates (55-58)**

1. How did Socrates view death? (55-56)
2. In what sense did Socrates agree that "true philosophers are half dead?" (56.2-58)
3. What do you think Socrates might have had in mind when he suggested that the study of philosophy prepares a person for their own death? Do you agree? Why? (56-58, 79 R&R)
4. How did Socrates view the relationship between body and soul? Do you think he was right? Why? Be specific. Provide details, reasons, and arguments concerning both your views and those of Socrates. (55-58, 74-77)

### **Clarence Darrow - The Myth of Immortality (59-62)**

1. What reason did Darrow give for not believing that consciousness and memory would exist after death? (60-61)
2. Darrow devotes several paragraphs to the biological processes of cell fertilization and growth. What philosophical point does he hope to establish? (59-60)
3. What reasons does Darrow provide for rejecting the resurrection of the body? (61)
4. Represent, in your own words, Clarence Darrow's arguments concerning the possibility of death survival. Do you find the arguments convincing? Why? (59-62, 79 R&R)
5. What conclusions does Darrow draw from the scientific doctrine of the indestructibility of matter and force? What conclusions does he attribute to others? With whom do you agree? Why? (61-2)
6. Darrow argues that belief in immortality is neither necessary nor desirable. Why? Present, analyze, and discuss the reasons he provides for this controversial claim. Do you agree? Why or why not? (62.2)

### **Plato - The Myth of Er (72-78)**

1. Retell, in contemporary terms, Plato's Myth of Er. Do you find the story plausible? Are there valuable lessons for the modern mind? (72-78, 79 R&R)
2. Represent, in as much detail as possible, Er's description of the structure of the universe. Include your own thoughts and views concerning both the literal and metaphorical value of his description. (75)

### **Comparisons**

1. Compare and contrast Shrader's analysis of a human being with that provided by Socrates. In what ways are they similar? Different? Include a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each. (49-51, 55-58)
2. Do you believe in life after death? If so, why? If not, why not? Include discussion of the positions and/or evidence presented in three of your assigned readings.
3. Socrates and Darrow present significantly different views concerning the nature of the human being and the possibility of life after death. Present a brief synopsis of each person's view. Identify and discuss specific assumptions, supporting arguments, strengths, and weaknesses. With whose view do you tend to agree? Why? (55-62)

### **Ashok Malhotra - Existentialism (83-86)**

1. Present, as clearly as possible, Jean-Paul Sartre's "two aspects of being." Do you agree with Sartre's analysis? Why?
2. Explicate and discuss Sartre's concept of freedom. Why does he regard it as absolute? How is it related to the concepts of responsibility and bad-faith?

### **Wayne Dyer - Taking Charge of Yourself (96-101)**

1. Can one control one's emotions? Is there a real choice? Are we responsible for our way of being? How do your answers differ from those of Wayne Dyer? In what ways are they similar?

### **Albert Camus - The Myth of Sisyphus (102-104)**

1. What philosophical issues does Albert Camus use the myth of Sisyphus to address?
2. In what respects does Sisyphus represent the existential predicament of a human being? What propels him to go on?

### **Friedrich Nietzsche - On the Three Metamorphoses (105-106)**

1. What meaning does Nietzsche assign to each of the three metamorphoses?

### **Comparisons**

1. Compare and contrast the existential views of Sartre, Camus, and Kierkegaard. In what ways are they similar? Different? Include a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each.