

Introductory Comments

Each of these essays is designed to give you the opportunity to demonstrate how well you understand the class material. State things clearly, explain any technical terminology, offer examples where they are needed for illustration, and expanding on any cryptic or compressed remarks, so that a person not already familiar with the material would understand what you mean. By doing this, you will demonstrate to me that you understand what you're talking about. But please do not "pad", i.e., do not go off into irrelevant areas or offer information that is not needed to answer the question.

Be aware that failure to address the question will be strictly penalized. Be aware that unless such answers are of exceptional quality, short answers will normally be penalized 3 points. I will absolutely stop reading at the page limit. Long answers will be penalized 3 points.

Each question has multiple parts that you must make sure to address, but do not simply answer them one-by-one, in a disconnected, "bullet-point," manner. Incorporate your discussion of each of the points within a continuous, coherent, flowing essay on the topic. The parts of the essay do not necessarily need to be treated in order in which I mention them.

General Writing Tips

1. Avoid general, historical, or flowery introductions. Don't use phrases like "Since the dawn of history, philosophers having been arguing about..." or "Webster's Dictionary defines philosophy as..." It's perfectly fine to use the first person as *you* will be giving reasons in defense of *your* position or to explicate *your* interpretation of the text.
2. While you do not necessarily have to answer each part of each question in order, you do need to make sure your essay is organized and has a clear structure. Before you start to write a draft of your paper, think about what the main points are that you wish to make, how they relate to one another, and the order that you'll need to present them.
3. Make sure what you write is coherent. Check to see that each point you make somehow helps to support your main thesis. If it does not, leave it out. Keep your essays on point. There's lots that one might appropriately say about issue X or philosopher X but if it isn't relevant to the issue at hand, leave it out. On the flip side, make sure that you've answered the question thoroughly.

Each essay calls upon you to explicate the text and to develop a position about the text and/or the philosopher. It is not a research paper. Do not use footnotes or endnotes (see exception below).

4. Be liberal with your citations and stingy with your quotations. For a citation just give (Cohen, 13) for the text to which you are referring in Cohen's book that appears on page 13. You don't need to write out the full title of Cohen's book or write the philosopher's name for every citation.

Quotations: Every quote over 10 words will be penalized 25 points. Yes. 25 points for *each* quotation over 10 words. You may have five 10 word quotes without penalty. But one 15 word quote will receive a 25 point deduction. Put in only the most vital excerpts from the texts (e.g., the fragments we've been reading -- either from the sources I've made available to you or from other texts you may have). The reader needs to be able to track down which text or which part of the text that you're discussing. If you are using something other than Cohen please cite it with an endnote that gives the source (e.g., Scooby Doo, *Rury Reek Rirosophy*, pg. 45).

5. Strive for clarity. Make sure that your writing is clear enough that somebody not already familiar with the material and ideas could understand what you're saying. By doing so, you show that you understand what you're talking about. Unclear writing is often the product of unclear thinking.

6. While this exam does not require that you present formal arguments for your positions, you are not allowed to just emote on the page. Don't just say what you believe. You need to say why your belief is correct or is at least plausible. Make sure that you give reasons for the position that you hold. I do not care how you *feel*. This is not the Oprah® show. I do care very deeply about what you *think* and *why* you think it.

7. Proofread. Poor grammar, English usage and punctuation errors, repeated typos, etc. will lower your score. Your paper should be free of typos and grammatical mistakes. No one is perfect, but please try your best. Spell-checking won't catch all of your errors.

8. Practice safe computing. Make backup files and keep a flash drive of your work. Save your work often.

9. Please submit a hard copy of the exam in class on or before OCTOBER 8. In case of emergency you may email it to me (phood@sfsu.edu). Please use the time wisely. Think early and think often.

10. Format: 1 inch margins, standard font that is no smaller or larger than in this document (e.g., 12 pt Palatino, Times New Roman). Black ink only. Double spaced throughout, including quotes. Place your name, course title and page number in header (see header on this document). Take this exam as a model. Your header should not be in the body of the page. Refer to the formatting videos for help:
<http://profpam.com/format>.

EXAM IS DUE OCTOBER 8 BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

NOTE: If you are a graduate student in Philosophy, you may either suggest a topic of your own or use one of the exam questions below and expand it to a 5-6 page paper. You must receive prior approval of the topic, however. If you are not a Philosophy graduate student, you must complete the exam as indicated below.

PART A: ANSWER THIS QUESTION
points

LENGTH: 2 PAGES (MIN/MAX) 25

1. Explain what "*arche*" means. Briefly, what *arche* is offered by (a) Thales, (b) Anaximander, and (c) Anaximenes. In your own words, what justification do you think can be given for each of these theories? Which philosopher's *arche* seems most reasonable as a conceptual model or explanation of the universe? Least reasonable? Discuss any similarities you find between the motivations behind contemporary cosmological accounts and the Presocratic search for an *arche*.

You do not need to refer to these quotes. I include them here as food for thought:

"Einstein spent the last decades of his life searching for a universal principle for physics. Although he hoped to find the solution in what he called a unified field theory meant to combine gravitation and electrodynamics in a single mathematical theory, he was never able to achieve satisfactorily this life-long ambition.

Are mathematicians similarly doomed to disappointment if they too hope for a single unifying principle to comprehend all of mathematics? The human desire for unity may indeed be a very basic one, and in various guises it seems to pervade nearly all areas of human thought, beginning with the Presocratics. The reduction of complex matters to one simple principle that will prove all inclusive

may simply reflect a deep psychological need. Is it this, perhaps, that is ultimately impossible to fulfill? And if set theory comes closest to having achieved this desire for unity in mathematics, is that perhaps enough?"

Dauben, "Cantorian Set Theory and Limitations of Size", p. 550. *Brit. J. Phil. Sci.* 39 (1988). 541-550

Two and a half thousand years ago the presocratic philosophers first tried to explain and understand the world in terms of some kind of elemental stuff, invariant through all change and diversity. For Anaximander, everything was diverse, lawful manifestations of the *apeiron* or boundless; for Heraclitus everything was lawfully regulated fire or process; for Democritus everything was the outcome of intrinsically unchanging atoms in relative motion in the void. After Plato and Aristotle, the astonishing endeavour of the presocratics fell into decay, and was abandoned. It was resurrected in the seventeenth century by those who created modern science: Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Huygens, Boyle, Newton. From that time until the present, the basic idea of the presocratics has been the fundamental guiding idea of physical science: to explain and understand change and diversity in terms of that which is elemental and invariant. But it is above all in the twentieth century, and especially in the last decade or so, that giant strides have been made towards fulfilling the presocratic vision. Grand unified theories, quantum gravity and superstring theory are, for the first time ever, groping attempts at a unified scientific theory of everything. And here we come to the paradox. For just when the two and a half thousand year old research programme of the presocratics seems close to completion, the physics community has lost interest... Insofar as the physics community, by and large, accepts (quantum theory) as unproblematic, *and does not actively seek a better alternative*, it has lost interest in the noble quest of the presocratics.... As Einstein realized with anguish, the soul of natural philosophy has been betrayed. The quest to understand has disintegrated into expert puzzle solving, the hunt for Nobel prizes and defence contracts.

Maxwell, "Quantum Propensiton Theory: A Testable Resolution of the Wave/Particle Dilemma", p. 43. *Brit. J. Phil. Sci.* 39 (1988), 1-50

PART B: ANSWER ONE QUESTION
points

LENGTH: 2 PAGES (MIN/MAX) 25

2. What is Parmenides' main thesis and what are its four key conclusions drawn from the only way of inquiry that he accepts? Select one of the four conclusions. Briefly present his reasoning in support of that conclusion.

3. Discuss the pluralism of either Empedocles or Anaxagoras as a response to Parmenides' main thesis and subsequent conclusions. In your essay be sure to: (a) state Parmenides' main thesis and the four subsequent conclusions he arrives at, (b) explore what Empedocles or Anaxagoras take to be that which is the most fundamental in his own cosmology, (c) the other attendant features of the cosmology necessary for it to work, (d) how issues addressed in (b) and (c) differ from Parmenides' views.

PART C: ANSWER ONE QUESTION LENGTH: 2 PAGES (MIN/MAX) 25 points

4. Discuss the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus. How do they characterize atoms? Do they think other things besides atoms exist? What is the atomists' account of (a) physical objects (or entities) and (b) change? What is the relationship, if any, between atomism and Parmenides' views on the one hand and Heraclitus' views on the other?

5. Briefly recap one of Zeno's arguments. If you can, offer your own solution to the paradox. If you can't do that, discuss at least one difficulty that you find in Zeno's reasoning that would challenge his account.