Epistemology MA Exam, Winter, 2015

Answer one question from each part. Time limit: 3 hours

Part I

1. Hume's *Enquiry* argument (Section XII) for epistemological skepticism has suggested to some that nothing could count as evidence for or against any *a posteriori* hypothesis about the external world. On the other hand, it seems that we could have evidence for all or most of the usual skeptical scenarios: brain-in-a-vat, evil demon, matrix, etc., and that this is an important source of support for the idea that we understand what the skeptic is saying. Are these perspectives incompatible? If so, which is correct? What are the most important implications of this issue?

2. BonJour ("Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?") writes:

   Thus it finally seems possible to make sense of externalism only by construing the externalist as simply abandoning the traditional notion of epistemic justification and along with it anything resembling the traditional conception of knowledge.

   Is this right? Does Externalism require such dramatic revisions in our traditional notions?

3. Disjunctivism is sometimes seen as a response to either the argument from illusion or the argument from hallucination. Does it work in either case? Do we need it in order to respond to either argument?

Part II

4. Kim accuses Quine’s naturalized epistemology of jettisoning the normative. What does this mean? Does naturalized epistemology jettison the normative?

5. What, according to Kripke, are the most serious problems for our alleged knowledge of other minds? Can they be overcome?

6. What conclusions if any should we draw from what appears to be the evident failure over decades to supplement truth and justification with an extra ingredient that enables us to define knowledge?
Part III

7. Does the experience of an apple justify one’s claim to know that there is an apple “there”? Does it provide the claim with greater warrant?

8. What are some of the forms that transcendental arguments can take? What, in your view, is the most promising? Could a transcendental argument succeed?

9. Does Contextualism provide an answer to Skepticism? If so, what form of Skepticism is answered?