Metaphysics Exam, Winter 2011

Please answer one question from each section. Avoid overlapping answers.

Part I.

(1) State Quine’s criterion for ontological commitment. What reasons have philosophers given for accepting it? What reasons have philosophers given for denying it? Evaluate.

(2) What is presentism and why is(n’t) it true?

(3) What, if anything, do teletransporter examples show about personal identity?

Part II.

(4) What is the relationship between a statue and the lump of clay of which it is made?

(5) What are some of the reasons why the reduction of the mental to the physical has been rejected in favor of the supervenience of the former on the latter? What are some of the different versions of the supervenience thesis? What is the most promising one? What are the most important objections to it? Can they be met?

(6) “If determinism is true, then my behavior is a mere tropism, rather like the movements of a vine following the movement of the sun. My behavior is not such a tropism, if I sometimes act freely. Thus, either determinism is false, or I never act freely.” Discuss.

Part III.

(7) What problems are associated with mental causation? Can they be overcome?

(8) Are there properties? Evaluate the debate between realists and nominalists with respect to the existence of properties.

(9) What are haecceities? What reasons are there to postulate them? Are they good reasons?