Spring 2013
Metaphysics MA Comp Exam

Answer one question from each part. Time limit: 4 hours

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. Are there fictional objects? Sketch and assess the most plausible responses to this question.
3. Are there any good arguments in favor of a four-dimensional ontology?

Part II
4. How should one distinguish intrinsic and relational properties? Why might one want to?
5. Some philosophers think the same objects occur in different possible worlds. Others deny this. Who is right, and why?
6. Sometimes if a cause hadn’t happened, its effect wouldn’t have happened either. Is it possible to build a general analysis of causation on such counterfactual relations?

Part III
7. Does talk of grounding do a better job of capturing pre-theoretical notions of dependence and determination than talk of supervenience does?
8. What is a fact? Are there such things? Why or why not?
9. Suppose a person P1 with body B1 has one half of his brain transplanted into a body, B2, and the other half transplanted into a body, B3. What happens to the persons involved in a scenario of this kind? What does the position you take in connection with this kind of case say about our concept of personal identity?