Question Pool
Winter 2016
Metaphysics MA Comp Exam

What is Quine’s criterion for ontological commitment? Argue for or against it.

Can something exist in more than one possible world? Evaluate the arguments that Lewis and Kripke (or others) have given about this.

What is a criterion of identity? Of what importance are such criteria? Does either the identity of indiscernibles or the principle of the identity of relative indiscernibles provide such a principle?

Call Lumple the lump of clay a statue is made of. Call the statue Goliath. Evaluate the reasons for thinking Lumple and Goliath are the same object.

What is primitive thisness supposed to be? Why should we take it seriously?

Are there fictional objects? Sketch and assess the most plausible responses to this question.

What’s an essential property? What connection is there, if any, between something A having a property P in every possible world in which it exists and P being an essential property of A?

Philosophers as diverse as Kant, Moore and Kripke have struggled with the question “Is existence a predicate?” Exactly what hangs on this question, and how is it to be answered?

Do macroscopic objects cause anything? If so, is there pervasive causal overdetermination? Does it matter if there is?

How should one distinguish intrinsic and relational properties? Why might one want to?

Can causation be understood as a kind of dependence of one event upon another? Discuss why one might think it can, and why one might think it can’t.

Water is H₂O. Many philosophers think it is necessarily H₂O. Why might someone think this? Why might someone deny it? Who is right?