Spring 2017
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 reasons to believe in the existence of universals? What would it be for universals to be "sparse", and are universals sparse?

3. What is the principle of the identity of indiscernibles? Is there more than one? Is any of them true?

Part II

4. Can a presentist say things that are true about the past and the future? How?

5. Is conceivability a reliable guide to possibility?

6. There seems to be no fact of the matter as to where exactly the "Outback" begins and where it ends. Does this mean that there are vague objects?

Part III

7. 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?

8. What is an INUS condition, and how is it used in the analysis of causation? Does the analysis succeed? Why or why not?

9. Is there good reason to think that we can act freely but that other higher mammals—dogs, vervet monkeys, pigs, etc.—cannot?