

Philosophy 2202G(001) – Early Modern Philosophy
Mid-Term Exam

Do Parts 1 and 2

Part 1

Answer two questions in a sentence or two, showing that you are able to isolate the most important and relevant points and state them succinctly. 2 x 25%

1. What are “actives” and “passives” and how do they figure in Bacon’s account of the causes of change?

An “active” is a thing with a potency to bring about change; a “passive” is a thing with a potency to undergo change. Change occurs when the two come into contact.

2. What two conditions must be satisfied before we can be assured that a revelation has come from God, according to Hobbes?

A miracle has to be performed and the revelation has to be consistent with scripture. (This is not part of the answer, but it is worth noting that the miracle is to prove that the revelation came from a supernatural being; consistency with scripture to rule out the possibility that it came from a devil.)

3. What did Descartes think is most true about the piece of wax he discussed in *Meditations* II and how do we come to know this truth?

That it is something extended, flexible, and moveable, that is, that it is something that fills space in some way or other. We know this through the understanding rather than through the senses or the imagination.

4. Why should we think that bodies will not change their state of motion unless they collide with other bodies or are moved by the will, according to *Principles* II?

Because God is perfectly constant in all his operations and so will not change either the amount or the direction of the motion he originally put into bodies.

Part 2

Answer one question in a paragraph. 50%

1. Assess Galileo’s claim that sensible qualities exist only in the bodies of sentient creatures. What arguments did Galileo offer for this claim and how convincing are they? What problems or puzzles does the claim leave us with? Why would Galileo have been attracted to the claim?
2. Outline Hobbes’s arguments for concluding that there is no such thing as free will and no such thing as voluntary choice. In doing so be careful to say what he considered will to be, what conditions have to be satisfied for us to be considered to be “free” or at liberty, and what it means for an action to be voluntary.
3. Give Descartes’s argument for claiming that we can be sure that the mind is distinct from the body. Does the argument commit the fallacy of appeal to ignorance (arguing that something must be the case simply because we can’t give any good reason why it shouldn’t be the case)?
4. Explain why Descartes was particularly troubled by the phenomenon of dropsy, and how he addressed that trouble.