

**Guidelines for preparation for the Master's State Final Examination in Philosophy, and information on the examination process**

KFSV FF UHK

I.

The Master's State Final Examination consists of two parts:

**1. Preparation and interpretation of the topics**

In the first part of the examination, the student has to demonstrate the ability to independently prepare and systematically and critically interpret thematic topics belonging to the following five areas:

- Philosophy of Social Science
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Natural Science
- Philosophy of Mind
- Political Philosophy

The student will independently prepare a total of 25 topics - 5 topics for each area – which are specified in more detail in Part II.

The student will prepare the topics using the literature listed in Part II.

- The State Final Examination committee will select two topics (from different areas), which the student will interpret and defend his/her interpretation before the committee.
- For each area, 2 classical titles are listed as required reading - thus a total of 10 titles - which the student should be able to summarize and whose main thesis he/she should be able to explain in a concise form.

This part of the exam takes a total of 30 minutes.

**2. Interpretation of a philosophical text**

In the second part of the exam, the student should demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret a professional philosophical text that will be presented to him/her on the spot.

The basic criteria by which the quality of the interpretation of the text will be assessed is the following:

- (a) an extract and outline of the main theses of the submitted text
- (c) a reconstruction of the author's argument in the student's own words, and an analysis of the coherence of the text OR of the overall structure of the text
- (d) an explanation of the key philosophical concepts contained in the text and a clarification of difficult to understand passages
- (e) where appropriate, developing, critically evaluating or updating the main ideas of the text

This part of the examination takes a total of 10 minutes.

## II.

### PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

(guarantor: Prof. J. Peregrin and dr. P. Stovall)

#### LITERATURE:

##### Two compulsory titles:

Lycan, W. G. (2019). *Philosophy of Language: A Contemporary Introduction, Third Edition*. Routledge.

Taylor, C. (2016). *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity*. Harvard.

##### Additional literature:

Brandom, R. (2007). "Inferentialism and Some of Its Challenges".

Culbertson, C. (2019). *Words Underway: Continental Philosophy of Language*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Davidson, D. (2001). *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation*. Oxford.

Fennell, J. (2019). *A Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*. Routledge

Foucault, M. (1972). "The Discourse on Language".

Hale, B., C. Wright, and A. Miller (2017). *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language, Second Edition* (Two Volumes). Blackwell.

Harrison, B. (1979). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*. Macmillan.

Kemp, G. (2018). *What is This Thing Called Philosophy of Language?* Routledge.

Larson, R. K. et al. (2010). *The Evolution of Human Language: Bilingual Perspectives*. Cambridge.

Martinich, A.P. (1996). *The Philosophy of Language, Third Edition*. Oxford.

Martinich, A.P. and D. Sosa. (2001). *Analytic Philosophy: An Anthology*. Blackwell.

Miller, A. (2018). *Philosophy of Language, Third Edition*. Routledge.

Morris, M. (2007). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge.

Peregrin, J. (2008). "An Inferentialist Approach to Semantics"

Pinker, S. (1994). *The Language Instinct*. W. Morrow.

Prinz, J. (2012). *Beyond Human Nature: How Culture and Experience Shape the Human Mind*. W.W. Norton.

Saussure F. (1966). *Course in General Linguistics*. McGraw-Hill.

Soames, S. (2010). *The Philosophy of Language*. Princeton University Press.

Taylor, K. (1998). *Truth and Meaning: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*. Blackwell.

Wolf, M. P. (2023). *The Philosophy of Language: 50 Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Thought Experiments*. Routledge.

## TOPICS:

### **1. Logical analysis and formal semantics**

Frege on sense and reference; Carnap on extension and intension. Russell and logical analysis. Modern formal treatments of meaning, including: model-theoretic possible-world semantics and proof-theoretic intralinguistic semantics. Quine's thought experiment concerning radical translation and its implications for Quine's understanding of language. Quine's modal skepticism and ontological relativity versus Carnap's modal semantics and the principle of tolerance. Davidson and radical interpretation. Davidson's interpretation of meaning based on Tarski's theory of truth.

### **2. Language within the continental tradition.**

Ferdinand de Saussure and philosophers inspired by him; structuralism. Foucault and Derrida. Hermeneutics: Heidegger and Gadamer. Language as the "abode of being" in Heidegger. Language as the *Dasein* of *Geist* (the determinate being of spirit) in Hegel.

### **3. Language as a means of representing reality vs. interacting with reality vs. expressing oneself.**

The concept of representation and its role in semantics. The development of model-theoretic possible-worlds semantics as a basis of theorizing about meaning in the philosophies of language and mind, and in linguistics. Semiotics. Representational theory of mind and the 'language of thought' hypothesis. Rorty's critique. Wittgensteinian language games. Pragmatist and neo-pragmatist theories of language. Meaning as use. Speech act theory and Grice's conversational maxims.

### **4. Language in terms of evolutionary theory and cognitive science**

How language might have developed in the framework of evolution - examples of views (Krebs and Dawkins, Dunbar ...). Possible evolutionary and developmental pathways of language acquisition, like those of Daniel Dor and Eva Jablonka. David Lewis' game-theoretic model. Nature/culture co-evolution. The cognitive benefits made possible with language use.

### **5. Language, thought and culture.**

Language as an externalization of thinking vs. language as a tool of thinking. To what extent does the advent of language change the ways we think? The symbolic nature of cultural reality. Linguistic relativity and linguistic constructivism. Language as giving shape to the world we live in.

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## PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

(guarantor: doc. M. Paleček)

## LITERATURE:

### Two compulsory titles:

Risjord, M. (2014). *Philosophy of Social Science. A Contemporary Introduction*. Routledge.

Zamora-Bonilla, J., & Jarvie, I. (2011). *The SAGE Handbook of the Philosophy of Social Sciences*. SAGE.

### Additional literature:

Boyerd, P. (2002). *Religion Explained*. Basic Books.

Clifford, J., and Marcus, G. E. (1986): *Writing Culture*. University of California Press.  
Little, D. (1989). *Understanding Peasant China*. Yale University Press.  
Risjord, M. (2000). *Woodcutters and Witchcraft*. SUNY.  
Turner, S, and M. Risjord (2007). *Philosophy of Anthropology and Sociology*. Elsevier.

## TOPICS:

### **1. What is a theory?**

What is the difference between the empirical concept of theory and hermeneutics? What are "ideal types" and "understanding" according to Weber? What is the problem of so-called "social construction"? How do we use/construct concepts in science and in the social sciences? In what sense can social sciences discover elements and processes that are hidden from members of a given society? What might be an example of such a hidden social structure?

### **2. Interpretivist methodology.**

What is interpretivist methodology? What are the problems associated with rationality, explanation and interpretive charity? What is the problem of "apparent irrationality"? What are the cognitive roots of culture? Give an example and explain the "symmetrical" and "asymmetrical" research thesis with the example of interpretation.

### **3. Explaining behavior in social sciences.**

How do we explain an action in the social sciences? Who is an "agent"? According to Hempel, how does the so-called General Law work in history? What is the difference between "cause" and "reason"? What are strategic games? What types do you know and how do the social sciences use them?

### **4. Reductionism in the social sciences.**

What is reductionism in the social sciences Explain the main motives of the debate between the so-called methodological holists and individualists. What is methodological localism? What is so-called microfoundation and moderate methodological individualism? What does the evolutionist explanation look like in the social sciences, and what are the basic problems that evolutionists and cognitivists want to explain?

### **5. Instrumental rationality.**

What are the principles of "instrumental rationality"? How do reductionists and naturalists treat these principles? Explain the rational choice theory and practice theory. How do these theories understand norms and rules? How can cooperation between people be explained? In what ways can both theories be made compatible with the idea of "cultural coevolution"? Are social institutions always normative in nature? What is the best approach to explain such normativity? What is the relationship of norms to "rational choice"? Can norms be naturalized?

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## POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

(guarantor: doc. J. Daneš)

### LITERATURE

#### Two compulsory titles:

Rawls, J. (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Walzer, M. (2006). *Just and unjust war: a moral argument with historical illustrations*. New York: Basic Books.

#### Additional literature:

Gentile, E. (2020). *Politics as Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Grotius, H. (2005). *The Rights of War and Peace*. Books I-III. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Horton, J., & Mendus, S. (eds.) (2015). *John Locke: A Letter Concerning Toleration*. London: Routledge.

Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary political philosophy: an introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MacIntyre, A. (2016). *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Maier, H. (2003). *Totalitarismus und politische Religionen*. Brill:Schöningh.

Skyrms, B. (1996). *Evolution of the Social Contract*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swift, A. (2013). *Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Polity.

Tuck, R. (2002). *Natural Right Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### TOPICS:

#### **1. The debate about distributive justice in the 20th and 21st centuries.**

Why is the question of distributive justice an evergreen of political philosophy? Is not a problem of distributive and social justice a pseudo-problem (F. A. Hayek's argument)? Is the market an instrument which secures just distribution? What is the relation between the social/welfare state and the concept of distributive justice? Who are the defenders and opponents of redistribution or the social/welfare state? (Try to elucidate all these problems in connection with the work of the following authors: J. Rawls, R. Nozick, F. A. Hayek, R. Dworkin, G. A. Cohen.)

#### **2. The Just War Theory**

Why do we have to give reasons for starting a war? Or do we have to? Is there any need to discriminate between just and unjust wars? Is there any difference between Christian (Augustine, Thomas Aquinas), early modern (Grotius), and contemporary (Walzer) philosophers regarding both the way and the content of the argumentation? Are you able to pick an individual philosopher of war and to present the committee with both the political context and the content of his/her work?

#### **3. Theory of natural rights**

Could you give a definition of natural rights? To whom or to what period can we trace back the origins of the argumentation of natural rights? Why was the theory of natural rights so popular and

influential among the early modern and modern philosophers of politics and law (Spanish Dominican philosophers of the 16th century, Hugo Grotius, John Locke et al.)? Could you explain and elaborate the utilitarian criticism of the concept of natural rights?

#### 4. Politics as Religion

What are the roots of the term *politics as religion* and with whom would you link that concept? Could you give a definition of *politics as religion* (secular religions)? Pick a name in the history of philosophy and political thought (in the 20th century) and make a presentation in connection with the topic of politics as religion.

#### 5. Social contract theory

Could you define the concept of the social contract and describe its role in the history of political thought? Are there different types of social contracts or are the results to which social contractarian approach leads different? From what philosophical positions is the social contractarian approach to social and political institutions criticised or, in other words, what are the rivals of the social contractarian approach? What is your explanation for the popularity of the theory of the social contract in the 17th and 18th centuries? Is there any connection between nominalistic metaphysics and the theory of the social contract?

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### PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL SCIENCE

(guarantors: doc. L. Koreň, doc. F. Jaroš)

#### LITERATURE:

##### Two compulsory titles:

Curd, M., Cover, J. A. (1998). *Philosophy of Science*. W. W. Norton & Co.

Godfrey-Smith, P. (2003). *Theory and Reality. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. The University of Chicago Press.

##### Additional literature:

Balashov, Y., Rosenberg, A. (Ed.) (2002), *Philosophy of Science. Contemporary Readings*. Routledge.

Darwin, C. (1859). *On the Origin of Species*. Murray.

DeWitt, R. (2010). *Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Hacking, I. (1999). *The Social Construction of what?* Harvard University Press.

Feyerabend, P. (1975). *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. New Left Books.

Kuhn, T. (1996). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Latour, B. (2000). On the Partial Existence of Existing and Non-existing Objects. In *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, Lorraine Daston (Ed.), Chicago University Press, pp. 247-269.

Longino, H. (1990). *Science as Social Knowledge*. Princeton University Press.

Popper, K. (2002). *Conjectures and Refutations*. Routledge.

Schlick, M. (1948). Positivism and Realism. *Synthese* 7(1): 478 – 505.

Tomasello, M. (2016). *A Natural History of Human Morality*. Harvard University Press.

Van Fraassen, B. (2008). *Scientific Representation*. Oxford University Press.

#### TOPICS:

### **1. The dispute between realism and anti-realism in the philosophy of science.**

Can scientific truths be sharply distinguished from other kinds of truths? Is science the knowledge of reality itself? Is there progress in science in the sense that we are approaching one definitive truth about the world around us? What are the basic anti-realist (e.g., instrumentalist, relativist) objections to the realist conception of scientific knowledge (e.g., the argument from the incommensurability of theories by empirical evidence, the incommensurability of scientific paradigms, etc.)?

### **2. The problem of induction and testing of scientific hypotheses/theories**

Hume on the mechanism of causal inference and the problem of induction. What is the objectivity of scientific knowledge according to logical positivists? The hypothetico-deductive model and the theory of confirmation of scientific hypotheses/theories. Duhem-Quine's critique of the simple hypothetico-deductive model. Popper's critique of the principle of induction. Goodman's problem of induction.

### **3. Scientific revolutions and the dispute over rationality**

Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions. Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism. Implications of Kuhn's Structure for the philosophy of science. A critique of the cumulative conception of scientific progress. What is "theory-ladenness of observation"? What is the social construction of scientific objectivity? What is the so-called "strong program in the sociology of knowledge" (B. Barnes, D. Bloor and others)?

### **4. Evolutionary approaches in the biological and behavioral sciences.**

What does Darwin's theory of evolution look like? How does it explain the emergence of altruism? How did the Darwinian program change after the advent of the so-called New Synthesis? What is the difference between altruism in kin selection theory and psychological altruism? Are human faculties the same as those of other animals, or has evolution endowed us with some unique characteristics?

### **5. Methodology and philosophy of natural sciences.**

What does the concept of natural law mean? How does it relate to the problem of induction and various notions of causality? How can be a scientific theory distinguished from metaphysical speculation? Is it possible to solve philosophical problems empirically? What are the core methodological differences between natural and social sciences?

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## PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

(guarantor: doc. L. Koreň)

### LITERATURE:

#### Two compulsory titles:

Clark, A. (2001). *Mindware: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Cognitive Science*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Churchland, P. (2013). *Matter and Consciousness*. MIT Press.

#### Additional literature:

Bermúdez, J. L. (2005). *Philosophy of Psychology: A Contemporary Introduction*. Routledge.

Clark, A.: *Supersizing the Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008

Crane, T. (1995): *The Mechanical Mind*, New York: Routledge.

Dennett, D. (1996). *Kinds of Minds*. New York: Basic Books.

Gallagher, S. and D. Zahavi (2012). *The Phenomenological Mind*. London: Routledge.

Lavelle, J. S. (2019). *The Social Mind*, New York: Routledge.

Rowlands, M. (2010): *The New Science of Mind: From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

### TOPICS:

#### **1. Modern approaches to the body-mind problem**

Classical dualist conceptions (substance dualism; dualism of properties) and the most famous arguments against them. Modern anti-dualist strategies (logical behaviorism; reductionism: identity of mind states and brain states; emergentism; functionalism; eliminativism) and objections facing them.

#### **2. Artificial intelligence and the question of whether machines can think**

Turing machines and the proposal that they provide a purely mechanistic model of thinking (analogy between the brain/mind and a hardware/software; the so-called computational theories of mental processes and the hypothesis that mind is, really, a kind of computer). Classical artificial intelligence (GOFAI; von Neumann architecture) vs. connectionism. Can machines think? (Turing's test; Searle's Chinese Room argument; Dreyfus against GOFAI).

#### **3. New approaches in philosophy of mind: embodied, embedded and extended mind.**

Should we abandon the view that the mind is entirely (or mostly) "in the head", and to what extent can we say that the mind extends to the outside world? How can one argue that the contents of our minds depend on what is "outside" our heads (Putnam, Burge, Davidson)? In what ways and to what extent is body essential to perception and mental processes more generally (embodied, enactive and phenomenological approaches)?

#### **4. Folk psychology**

Modern philosophical debates about the nature of folk psychology: “theory theory” vs. “simulation theory” (pros and cons). Phenomenological critique of the traditional debate and positions and alternative (e.g., direct perception of psychological states). Dennett on “intentional” stance or strategy. What and how do scientists (e.g., psychologists or ethologists) investigate under the banner of “social cognition” and how it that related to folk psychology?

#### **5. Consciousness**

What kinds of consciousness (conscious states) can we distinguish? What is the difference between the so-called access consciousness and phenomenal (or qualitative) consciousness (Block)? What is the so-called hard problem of consciousness and why is it supposed to be hard (the arguments of Chalmers, Nagel, or Jackson)? Arguments that the hard problem is not really a problem at all.