Philosophy 104
Exam Study Questions

Descartes

9. Answer each of the following:
   
i) Give a clear, accurate sketch of Descartes’ epistemological project. What was he trying to do? Why?
   
ii) Give a clear, accurate explanation of (a) chains of justification and (b) the inverted pyramid of knowledge, as these were explained in lecture.
   
iii) Give a clear, accurate explanation of the role that certainty plays in Descartes’ project.
   
iv) Give a clear, accurate explanation of Cartesian doubt and of the role that Cartesian doubt plays in Descartes’ project.
   
v) Descartes offers three arguments aimed at showing that we cannot be certain about the vast majority of our beliefs. Give a clear, accurate sketch of each of these three arguments.

10. Answer each of the following:
   
i) Give a clear, accurate sketch of Descartes’ Cogito argument.
   
ii) Explain the difference between the veridical & phenomenological senses of words like ‘perceive’.
   
iii) What was Descartes' Archimedean Point? Explain the role that this “Archimedean Point” played in Descartes’ epistemological project.
   
iv) Give a clear, accurate explanation of Descartes' view on the essential property of a person.

11. Answer each of the following:
   
i) Give a clear, accurate and detailed explanation of the ego-centric predicament?
   
ii) Give a clear, accurate sketch of Descartes’ argument aimed at escaping from the ego-centric predicament.
iii) In lecture, it was suggested that the argument is circular. Explain what a circular argument is and why it is a bad thing for an argument to be circular.

iv) Give a clear, accurate explanation of the alleged circularity in Descartes’ argument.