Mid-term Study Guide for

PHIL 2200: Major Social Theories

**Logistics:**

1. The exam will be during our normal class time, in our normal classroom
2. Needed materials: a writing utensil (plus a backup pen or pencil). You also might wish to bring a watch because the use of cell phones is **not** allowed.

**You should:**

1. Know the three main branches of philosophy (Epistemology, Metaphysics, and Values/Ethics), and what types of questions they seek to address.
2. Understand the differences and relationships between: beliefs, knowledge, and truth.
3. Know the two purposes/uses of logic. Know the definitions for, and the difference between, *deductive* and *inductive* arguments. Also, know and understand the definitions for: *arguments*, *premises*, *conclusions*, s*tatements, valid/invalid, sound/unsound, strong/weak, and cogent/uncogent*.
4. Be able to identify, reconstruct, and evaluate arguments (for validity, soundness, etc). Also know the “Principle of Charity.”
5. Know the difference between *descriptive* *statements* and *normative statements.*
6. Understand the philosophical process of *conceptual analysis*, whereby we try to identify the *necessary and sufficient conditions* for something (“x is a chair iff \_\_\_\_\_\_”).
7. Understand the theory of Cultural Relativism, as well as its strengths (arguments for it) and weaknesses (objections to it).
8. From the Huemer article, know the three features of political disagreement (widespread, strong, and persistent), the four theories aimed at explaining these features (miscalculation, ignorance, divergent values, irrationality), know the objections to the first three theories, and understand the irrationality theory and how he thinks it works. Know the differences between *instrumental irrationality* and *epistemic irrationality*, as well as the “sources of belief preference” and “mechanisms of belief fixation.”
9. Know and understand the main ideas in books 1 and 2 of Plato’s Republic. Specifically, understand the theories of justice put forth by: Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus/Glaucon, as well as the major objections to each that Socrates raises. Also understand the story of the Ring of Gyges and what role it plays in Glaucon’s argument.
10. Know Hobbes’ version of Social Contract Theory, including his views on the state of nature (same as the state of war) and how this gives rise to a society governed by a sovereign.
11. Know John Locke’s version of Social Contract Theory, including his views on the state of nature, the state of war, natural law, rights, property, the social contract that gives rise to the common wealth, majority rule, and the right to rebel and replace the government.
12. Be able to compare and contrast the views of Hobbes and Locke.
13. Understand the basic principles of Game Theory (specifically Prisoner’s Dilemma) that are applicable to Social Contract Theory, as well as the basics of Dawkins’ views about how this plays out in evolutionary terms.