4.1 Philosophy and contemporary issues

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 25 marks**

KEY WORDS conceptual analysis • thought experiment

Philosophy and contemporary issues

Objective

Split the conceptual from the empirical in contemporary debates, apply the meta-questions (what philosophy is, its method, its public role), and run the issue kits – AI, environment, identity (the HL extension).

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

> **Extension toolkit.** Philosophy as conceptual analysis, argument, and the a priori study of the possible. Method questions: autonomy vs science; thought experiments as intuition-pumps; the experimental-philosophy challenge to intuitions. AI: Turing test, Chinese room, personhood criteria on systems; machine moral agency; algorithmic choice vs compatibilism. Environment: the non-identity problem; future generations' rights; sentience; intrinsic vs instrumental value. Identity: algorithmic othering; epistemology of the feed; the philosopher's advisory role. The meta-skill: name the method while using it.

2 Practice

2.1 Name the three conceptions of philosophical activity from the handout. [3]

2.2 What is the a priori's business, as against science's? [2]

2.3 What does the Turing test test, and what does the Chinese room claim to show? [2]

2.4 State the non-identity problem in one sentence. [2]

2.5 What is the experimental-philosophy challenge to intuitions? [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Meta style.)* "Can a machine think?" Split the question into its conceptual and empirical parts, and state philosophy's function in the debate. [4]

3.2 *(Issue style.)* Develop the non-identity analysis: the conceptual claim, the argument it generates, the rights objection, and the meta-point the case shows about philosophy's work. [6]

3.3 *(Issue style.)* A recommendation engine shapes what users see and choose. Using compatibilism, evaluate whether the nudged choice is still the user's own. [4]

Solutions

2.1 Conceptual analysis (unpacking the concepts an issue runs on); argument (premises, validity, suppressed premises); the a priori study of the possible (3).

2.2 Philosophy asks what could be, what must be, what is consistent; science asks what IS the case (settled by observation) (2).

2.3 The Turing test tests behaviour – indistinguishable conversation as the criterion; the Chinese room claims to show that symbol-manipulation without understanding passes such tests, so behaviour is not thinking (2).

2.4 Policies determining who will exist make particular future persons impossible to harm in the ordinary (counterfactual) way – they would not otherwise have existed (2).

2.5 If intuitions (about cases, about concepts) vary across cultures and groups, what weight can they carry as evidence in philosophical argument – are they data about the concept or about the thinkers? (2).

3.1 Empirical part: what the system does – its outputs, architecture, performance (science's question) (1). Conceptual part: what would COUNT as thinking – the criteria (understanding, intentionality, perhaps consciousness) that make performance into thought (1). Philosophy's function: keeping the split visible – settling which question is being asked before answering either (1). The contemporary debate confuses itself wherever the parts blur: passing the test (empirical) is read as meeting the criteria (conceptual) without argument (1).

3.2 Conceptual claim: harm requires a counterfactual – a person is harmed only if they are worse off than they otherwise would have been (2). Argument: depletion policies shape the timing of conception, so the depleted future people would not exist otherwise – no particular person is harmed – so (the argument concludes) depletion wrongs no one (2). Rights objection: whoever exists has rights – each future person has a right to a liveable world, whoever they turn out to be; wronging does not require a named victim (1). Meta-point: the paradox is conceptual – no data settle it; this is philosophy's distinctive work, clarifying what "harm" and "right" mean under conditions science describes (1).

3.3 Compatibilism: a choice is the user's own when caused the right way – by the user's desires and reasons, without coercion (2). The engine does not coerce: options remain, and the user's reasons still operate – so the nudged choice is the user's own in the compatibilist sense (1). But the manipulation case returns: the nudge SHAPES the desires the criterion appeals to – the "right way" is engineered – so the compatibilist must say why designed desires are still the user's, and this is where the extension's debate lives (1).

Local review guidance: name the two parts before the function; (R1 3.2) the meta-point is philosophy's work, not the objection's; (R1 3.3) the evaluation pushes the theory to its own hard case. Authored guidance.