Essay One

Requirements
You are to submit one 4-6 page research paper on Wednesday 29 October, addressing one and only one of the questions listed below. A hard copy of the paper must be submitted in class.

Guidelines

Some additional comments on the essay:

• Do not hand in a first draft.
• Do not submit anything over the page length.
• I don’t mind which referencing system you use, as long as it is consistent.
• Use footnotes if necessary, but do not use endnotes.
• When researching, it is better to read one paper many times than many papers once.
• A good test for a successful paper is whether your otherwise intelligent friend, who has never studied philosophy, can read and understand it.
Questions

• Explain the difference between physicalism and dualism, and then address at least one of the following questions:
  
  – Explain and evaluate at least one Cartesian argument for dualism.
  – Explain and evaluate the problem of causal interaction for dualism.
  – Explain and evaluate the pairing problem for dualism.

• Explain and evaluate philosophical behaviourism. Discuss at least two of the following objections to behaviourism:
  
  – The translation problem.
  – The problem of mental causation.
  – The perfect actor problem.
  – The super-spartan problem.
  – The problem of phenomenal consciousness.

• Explain Ned Block's argument against behaviourism in his “Psychologism and Behaviorism”, and address at least two of the following questions:
  
  – Why does Block think the standard objections to behaviourism he considers are inadequate to refute it?
  – How is Block's argument stronger than the standard objections?
  – Why are none of the entities in Block's examples intelligent? *Note:* Be careful not to nominate something that would make us unintelligent too!

• Explain and evaluate the identity theory, addressing at least two of the following questions:
  
  – Why can't the identity theory be refuted on the grounds that we don't mean the same thing when we talk about mental states as we mean when we talk about brain states?
  – Why does Smart think that without the identity theory, mental properties would be “nomological danglers”?
  – Explain Black's objection, and the response Smart gives. Is Smart's response successful?
  – Explain the multiple realisation argument against the identity theory. How should the identity theorist respond?
• Explain functionalism, distinguishing between role and realiser functionalism and between machine, empirical and common-sense functionalism. Discuss at least two of the following questions:

  – How does functionalism solve the translation problem for behaviourism?
  – How does functionalism solve the multiple realisation problem for the identity theory?
  – What can the functionalist say is wrong with Block’s examples in his “Psychologism and Behaviorism”?
  – Must a functionalist be a physicalist? Should a functionalist be a physicalist?
  – Why does Kim think that mental causation is a problem for the role functionalist? Is he right?

• Explain and evaluate John Searle’s argument in his “Minds, Brains, and Programs”, addressing the following two questions:

  – What view is Searle arguing against?
  – What form of functionalism provides the best reply to Searle?