

Q3-ish philosophical questions (if absent or don't contribute you'll do a 500 word response to 1-3 questions)

Argue the position you support. Don't bring any weak stuff. Bring insightful/clever/revealing lines of argumentation, concrete historical/personal/cultural examples and case studies (possibly from the classes you've taken at CREEK), or subvert and reword the question in ways that better unpack it if you find the quote/question itself to be a problem. Be honest too. Have 2-3 you can discuss fully/precise/for X% of Q2 grade.

Ap Lang 87 Q1 – In the following passage, EM Forster argues that personal relations are more important than causes or patriotism. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay agreeing or disagreeing with Forster's view.

I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country. Such a choice may scandalize the modern reader, and he may stretch out his patriotic hand to the telephone at one and ring up the police. It would not have shocked Dante, though. Dante places Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle of Hell because they had chosen to betray their friend Julius Caesar rather than their country Rome.

OR

AP Lang 07 Q3: A weekly feature of *The New York Times Magazine* is a column by Randy Cohen called "The Ethicist", in which people raise ethical questions to which Cohen provides answers. The question below is from the column that appeared on April 4, 2003. At my high school, various clubs and organizations sponsor charity drives, asking students to bring in money, food and clothing. Some teachers offer bonus points on tests and final averages as incentives to participate. Some parents believe that this sends a morally wrong message, undermining the value of charity as a selfless act. Is the exchange of donations for grades OK? The practice of offering incentives for charitable acts is widespread, from school projects to fund drives by organizations such as public television stations, to federal income tax deductions for contributions to charities. In a well-written essay, develop a position on the ethics of offering incentives for charitable acts. Support your position with evidence from your reading, observation, and/or experience.

- 1) Can a life be determined by a single act?
- 2) Ultimately, is everything simply a matter of degree?
- 3) Did speech precede music (as Steven Pinker suggests); did song precede speech (as Darwin thought); or did both develop simultaneously (as Mithen proposes)? How can this dispute be resolved?

"As far as biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless. It shows no signs of design for attaining a goal such as long life, grandchildren, or accurate prediction and perception of the world. Compared with language, vision, social reasoning, and physical know-how, music could vanish from our species and the rest of our lifestyle would be virtually unchanged."

Steven Pinker, from *The Language Instinct*

Is he wrong?

- 4) Does your life actually have to serve a social good or push civilization forward? (What are the responsibilities of an educated person?)
- 5) Which of these SHOULD be the primary motivation in your career/life:
 - to be of use/useful; - to make money; - to achieve happiness
- 6) Which perception of work do you think you will or should have: as a job, as a career, as a calling?
- 7) "Youth is wasted on the young" – GB Shaw (Agree?)
- 8) "It would be extremely naïve to expect the dominant class to develop a type of education that would enable subordinate classes to perceive social injustices critically." -Paulo Freire Do you agree with this rather leftist view of the actual social needs involved in constructing an education system?
- 9) "...Nishi still owns the denim duffel bag that her father told her to put her belongings into when their family went off to the internment camps for Asian Americans during WWII. She takes it when she lectures at schools.

"I tell kids, 'If you had to leave your home and had to put everything that's important to you in this bag, what would you take?' That really shakes them up. That gets them thinking. It moves them in a way that they may not be able to verbalize, about what it would mean to be separated. To be ousted. Stigmatized."

RESPOND TO THE BOLD QUESTION

- 10) Are we thinking creatures that feel or feeling creatures that think? (emotion/sense perception vs. linear rationality; left vs right brain)
- 11) I must be willing to give up what I am in order to become what I will be – Einstein. Do you agree? Must this be a painful struggle or cathartic release?
- 12) What is the difference between the phrases "God is truth" and "Truth is god"?
- 13) "The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance, but the illusion of knowledge." Boorstin. Your thoughts/opinions?
- 14) "...in a culture that sometimes equates work with suffering, it is revolutionary to suggest that the best inward sign of vocation is deep gladness – revolutionary but true." What sort of relationship do you wish to have with your future careers?
- 15) "Many people blithely assume that the critical labor-market distinction is, and will remain, between highly educated (or highly skilled) people and less educated (or less skilled) people – doctors versus call-center operators, for example. The supposed remedy for the rich countries, accordingly, is more education and a general "upskilling" of the work force. But this view may be mistaken ... The critical divide in the future may instead be between those types of work that are easily deliverable through a wire (or via wireless connections) with little or no diminution in quality and those that are not. And this unconventional divide does not correspond well to traditional distinctions between jobs that require high levels of education and jobs that do not." -- Alan Blinder (Princeton economist) Do you agree with the first sentence or Blinder's claim?

- 16) "When you grow up you tend to get told that the world is the way it is and your life is just to live your life inside the world. Try not to bash into the walls too much, try to have a nice family life, have fun, save a little money. That's a very limited life. Life can be much broader once you discover one simple fact, and that is that everything around you that you call life was made up by people no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it. You can build your own things that other people can use. Once you learn that, you will never be the same again." -Steve Jobs Have you found truth in this statement so far in your life experience?
- 17) Practical intelligence is knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect – *Outliers* pg 101. In what contexts can you see practical knowledge being more valuable than knowledge of facts or academic knowledge?
- 18) Anatomists (with the help of brain imaging) today would be hard put to identify the brain of a visual artist, a writer, or a mathematician – but they could recognize the brain of a professional musician without a moment's hesitation. Why? What does this tell you?
- 19) Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, and either fulfill or betray it. – Frantz Fanon What is your generation's mission?
- 20) What are the difficulties/differences between determining the value of something and the cost of something?
- 21) "Think how hard physics would be if particles could think." Murray Gell-Mann (apply to human sciences)
"I can calculate the motions of heavenly bodies, but not the madness of people." – Isaac Newton
Are the human/soft sciences actually harder to figure out than the more objective math/natural sciences?
- 22) "A person is smart. People are dumb" (Tommy Lee Jones in *MIB*) Do you agree or is there a greater wisdom to be found in crowds/collaborative thought?
- 23) "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it." Michelangelo Is one of an individual's (or humanity's) greatest failures the failure of ambition?
- 24) "State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor. The former will decide it as well and often better than the latter because he has not been led astray by artificial rules." Thomas Jefferson. Do you agree?
- 25) I used to be "with it". Then they changed what "it" was. Now, what I'm with isn't "it", and what's "it" is weird and scary to me. It'll happen to you. – Abe Simpson **WILL IT HAPPEN TO YOU (and so what if it does)?**
- 26) "Seeing is believing" has always had primary status as an epistemological axiom, but "saying is believing", "reading is believing", "counting is believing", "deducing is believing", and "feeling is believing" are others that have risen or fallen in importance as cultures change.
- Is it correct to value "seeing" as a pathway to belief/knowledge or are the other ways of knowing or quotations above equally (or even more) valuable. Provide at least 3 real-world examples.
- 27) If you had the ability to end only one of the following two things when you woke up tomorrow which one would you choose (and why): to end terrorism around the world OR to end poverty around the world
- 28) In theory or in practice: Is it better to throw stones at the building/system from the outside OR get inside the building and work to create change from within (come up with scenarios/case studies you apply your position to)
- 29) "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." **Can two divergent things be simultaneously true?** (provide 2 real world or historical examples)
- 30) How do you see the relationship between "patriotism of affirmation" and "patriotism of dissent"? Which is more valuable or vital in theory or in the actual functioning of a society? What are the advantages or limitations/biases to either or both?
- 31) Do you believe in moral progress?
- 32) Is the best science done collaboratively or in competition (consider historic and current examples)?
- 33) Agree?: Smart people believe weird things because they are skilled at defending beliefs they arrived at for non-smart reasons.
- 34) Which quote do you side with more: "Be all you can be" OR "This above all, to thine own self be true"? (relentless self-improvement vs authenticity)
- 35) If you could rewrite one event in history, what would it be, why, how would you change it, and how you think it would affect the present if your outcome had occurred?
- 36) Which is the more important attribute of the historian: the ability to analyze evidence scientifically, or the ability to develop interpretations of evidence using creative imagination? (05 #8)
- 37) Is there any difference between an artist and a craftsman?
- 38) Are we living inside a mathematical equation? Is that an effective way to approach consideration of what reality is? Is math a way of describing reality or is math reality? Are algebraic numerics an invention or a discovery?
- 39) With time, do we get closer or further from the historical truth of an event?
- 40) Do you agree with Jeopardy champ Ken Jennings answer:
Q: In the age of Internet search, there's less value placed on the type of broad general knowledge you displayed on Jeopardy. Is this a mistake for us as a civilization?
A: It worries me a little. When you make a decision, you need facts. If those facts are in your brain, they're at your fingertips. If they're all in Google somewhere, you may not make the right decision on the spur of the moment.
- 41) What is your relationship with/to failure? Why shouldn't it scare (but instead motivate) you?
- 42) Does the wind possess a velocity?
- 43) A pilot without an altimeter is better off than one who blindly trusts a faulty altimeter, as the former can at least look out the window. (Apply the quote/idea to tools/models/methods/technology as ways of knowing in any AOK field)
- 44) Is there any difference between an artist and a craftsman?