

Questions for Honors Exam

Philosophy 270

Spring 2010

1. For each of the following, say (a) what it asserts, (b) whether it is true for absolute confirmation, and (c) whether it is true—or at least plausible—for incremental confirmation. Justify your answers to (b) and (c).
 - Nicod’s condition.
 - Consistency condition.
 - Consequence condition.
2. Does “confirm” in ordinary language mean either absolute or incremental confirmation? Justify your answer.
3. According to Goodman, what does “ E confirms H ” mean in ordinary language? Is he right? Justify your answer to the latter question.
4. Describe a situation in which the inductive probability of a die landing six is (a) the same as its physical probability; (b) different to its physical probability.
5. Is inductive probability the same thing as subjective probability? Justify your answer.
6. What does it mean for a probability concept to be logical in Carnap’s sense? Is inductive probability logical in Carnap’s sense? Justify your answer to the latter question.
7. Are the following arguments sound as applied to inductive probabilities? Justify your answer.
 - (a) There is very little agreement on the values of probabilities in the simplest cases. But the simplest cases are the ones where logical relations should be most clear. Therefore, logical probabilities don’t exist.
 - (b) Logical probabilities must be determined by a general rule. But the only rule that has been proposed is the Principle of Indifference and it leads to contradictions. Therefore, logical probabilities don’t exist.
8. What is Maher’s argument that inductive probabilities exist?
9. Define “explication,” “explicandum,” and “explicatum.”

10. What is Maher's justification for requiring p to satisfy the mathematical laws of probability?
11. Is the function p logical in Carnap's sense? Why, or why not?
12. How is $C(H, E, D)$ defined and what purpose is it intended to serve?
13. It is usually supposed that if H logically implies E given background evidence D , then observation of E incrementally confirms H given D . What is the corresponding statement about C ? What provisos must be added to make this true?
14. Let $D =$ Lime is an alkali; $E =$ Lime turns syrup of violets green; $H =$ All alkalis turn syrup of violets green. Does E incrementally confirm H given D ? Justify your answer.
15. State two conditions that C should satisfy if it is to adequately reflect reasoning by analogy. Give an intuitive justification for each condition.
16. State Nicod's condition and show that it is false for some background evidence.
17. How did Good argue that Nicod's condition is false when there is no background evidence?
18. Express in explicatum terms the claim that Nicod's condition holds when there is no background evidence; say what the symbols you use mean. What did Maher show about this?
19. Under what conditions is $C(A, Ga, Fa)$ true? Explain why.
20. State the three propositions involved in Hempel's ravens paradox and prove that they are inconsistent.
21. Express the following in explicatum terms and state two reasons why it is false: *In the absence of background evidence, the evidence that some individual is a non-black non-raven does not confirm that all ravens are black.*
22. (a) State Goodman's definition of "grue." (b) Give an example of something that is grue and something that is not grue.
23. Define two explicata for the concept of a projectable predicate. For each explicatum, say whether "green" and/or "grue" is projectable in that sense (and with respect to what, if the explicatum depends on something else).