INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
TEST #1: KNOWLEDGE AND SKEPTICISM

Please, answer exactly one question. Make sure you will address all parts of the question you chose to answer. Type your answers (few pages should be enough). I will especially appreciate examples illustrating concepts and arguments that you use in your essays.

Question 1:

A) What are three senses (meanings) of knowledge? Give some original examples illustrating each kind of knowledge. Give specific example

B) Using convincing examples, explain "JTB" definition of propositional knowledge is (i.e., knowledge as a justified true belief). Be sure to explain thoroughly all components of propositional knowledge (i.e., belief, truth, and justification); illustrate your explanations with convincing examples. Also, give examples showing how a person may fail to know something. Give example

C) What is Gettier's challenge to the traditional (JTB) analysis of knowledge? Give some Gettier-like examples and explain what they show. (Feel free to use examples discussed in our reading and in class.) Give example

D) One possible answer to Gettier-like examples is that, in order to have knowledge, an agent must not reason through any false belief (and when the agent does not know, this is the case because s/he uses some falsehoods in his or her reasoning.) Is this answer plausible or not? Explain why using a convincing example. Explain a better way to fix the definition of knowledge. Give example

Question 2:

A) What is Traditional Skepticism about the external world? Explain. Your explanation should include the concepts of external world and perceptual belief. Give some examples of perceptual beliefs (about external world) and some examples of other beliefs that are not about the external world.

B) How is Traditional Skepticism different from Methodological ("Cartesian") Skepticism? Explain!

C) Skeptics argue that, in order to have knowledge, an agent must have *absolute (or metaphysical) certainty*. Using convincing examples, explain the concept of absolute certainty. Then explain how a skeptic may argue that we never have absolute certainty about any perceptual belief; therefore, we never know any perceptual belief. (Hint: Feel free to use one of the radical skeptical hypothesis introduced and discussed in class and readings.)

D) Non-skeptics argue that, in order to know, we must have *practical certainty*. Explain this concept using convincing examples. Given this concept, do we know any perceptual belief? Explain!

Main readings:
Blackburn, Chapter 1, "Knowledge"
"Epistemology" http://www.iep.utm.edu/epistemo/

Supplementary reading:
Matthias Steup, "The Analysis of Knowledge" http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/
Peter Klein, "Skepticism" http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/skepticism/