   1. “We are going to study metaphysics, and in what we are going to do there is, for the moment, an element of falseness” (13). Explain what is (and isn’t) false about studying metaphysics.
   2. “A truth does not properly exist except for the one who has need of it; ...metaphysics is not metaphysics except for those who need it.”
   3. What is the difference between mediate and immediate necessity? Give examples.
   4. What is the difference between a student of a science and one who feels an immediate need for that science, when they set about studying that science?
   5. What are the two meanings of the word “curiosity”? Can either type of curiosity lead to the creation of real knowledge, real science?
   6. “Since studying has an element of falseness, we should just give up studying.” Would Ortega agree or disagree with this statement? Why? (Not sure if we mentioned this in class, but the answer is straightforward from the text.
   7. Note Ortega’s first introduction of what he means by metaphysics on 26-7. Why does Ortega come to the conclusion that our basic situation is one of disorientation?

II. Lesson II.
   1. One does metaphysics by seeking a basic orientation in one’s situation. Therefore, the human situation is one of disorientation and lostness. Yet many or most people do not feel lost. How does Ortega explain this paradox?
   2. For each of us, “life contains all realities” (35). Explain. Be able to include the following:
      a. Life is prior to science, prior to metaphysics.
      b. Life is even “before God.”
      c. “Life is what we are and what we do”; “Life is what we do and what happens to us” (36).
      d. “Life is always a ‘now’” (37). [“Life is pure actuality”].
         i. Why do c & d above imply that “Life lives always on a ’why?’” (37)?
         ii. How does this “why” relate to Ortega’s definition of metaphysics?

III. Lessons II and III. (Most of these points are introduced in II, but then revised in III and following).
   1. “Life is becoming thoroughly aware of itself” (56). To explain this, include the following:
      a. “Nothing we do would be in our life if we did not take account of it” (37).
      b. My life is present to me (38).
      c. My life is unlike the existence of a stone (38).
      d. Life is always my life, something I take possession of (39).
      e. Be able to say how Ortega modifies his thesis that “Life is awareness” by distinguishing between relying on [contar con] and reflection/thinking [reparar]. Be able to do this with examples, developing them and making the distinction clear.
         i. You do not need to know the Spanish meanings of the words, but obviously, if these help you, take advantage of that.
         ii. Be able to say what the relationship is between the two kinds of awareness (more on this in Lesson V).
   2. “Life is circumstantial” (39-40). In explaining this, be able to discuss the following:
a. “[Life is] finding ourselves in the world and occupied with the things...of the
world” (39).
b. This is not the same as being a body among other bodies (39). Why not?
c. “The world is, sensu strictu [strictly speaking] that which affects us” (39).
d. If life were only awareness, it would be a mere spectacle (57); why?
e. Which comes first, person or world? Explain.
3. “Life is decision”; “Life makes itself” (41-5). Include the following:
a. We are free within a margin of possibilities. Explain.
b. “Life is unforeseen.”
c. Life is like a person waking up on a stage. Explain. (Develop the metaphor and
explain why Ortega uses it.)
d. Thrownness: We are thrown into life, but we experience this differently than a
bullet would—if it had consciousness—upon being fired from a gun. Explain.
e. We live by “carrying the weight of our lives amid the corners of the world” (41).
What does Ortega mean by this description?
f. “Living...[is] a process of feeling ourselves forced to decide what we are going to
be” (43). Explain.
   i. How is this emphasis on decision a revision of the definition: Life is what
we are and what we do?
   ii. Why does Ortega say we are forced to decide?
   iii. Much of the time we do not feel as if we are making decisions. Why doesn’t
this disprove Ortega’s thesis?
4. What justification does Ortega supply for the fourth life-characteristic: “Life is
perplexity” (58)? [This also relates to Lesson VI .]

IV. Lesson IV.
1. “I am in the dorm, studying for a philosophy test.” What are the three general elements
of life that are revealed in this specific instance (59)? [Note: They are general elements, for
they would be discovered in almost any “situation”: I am in a classroom thinking about
Señor Ortega’s philosophy lecture.
2. That I am now in the dorm—in this room—seems accidental, unnecessary. But Ortega
goes on to say that, in a way, though this particular circumstance is accident, I am a
prisoner. What does he mean? (60)
3. How is my being in the room different from my desk’s or my couch’s being in the room?
Explain.
4. Why can I say that I am unique, heterogeneous to both the things in the room and the
people in it?
   a. Explain how Ortega would answer this question: Is what makes us each a unique
person the particular qualities or characteristics we possess or come to develop?
5. What does it mean to say that, when speaking of the “I,” “in this case, homogeneity of
concept implies heterogeneity of being” (65)?
6. To be in the room (or anywhere else) is to exist outside myself (65ff). Explain what Ortega
means by this statement and be able to discuss the following in relation to it:
   a. I am essentially a stranger and exile in the world.
   b. What is the difference between essence and existence?
   c. “There are unicorns, but unicorns do not exist.” What is the difference in meaning
that is indicated here?
d. What is “the strict meaning” that Ortega develops for the verb “to exist” (68-9)?
e. What is the difference between the spectator’s and the actor’s perception of existence (69)? [We didn’t discuss this particularly, but some commented on it in the public folder.]

V. Lesson V.
1. Why is the room not primarily something spatial or material?
   a. What is my primary relationship with the room?
   b. What does this imply about me and my life?
2. “Thinking about something always implies some prior activity with that something” (80). Explain.
   a. How can this be true of someplace you’ve never been—Katmandu—or something you’ve never actually seen—the Eiffel Tower or the Parthenon?
   b. Does this thesis deny the possibility of artistic creativity or scientific invention? Explain why not by using examples. Your example should show both some activity prior to thinking and real newness—or else there would be no such thing as creativity.
3. To know a thing is not to possess the thing itself but to possess “the being of the thing.” What makes Ortega come to this conclusion?
4. What is something—e.g., the light—before I begin to think about it? As I begin to think about it? Explain.
5. According to the strict meaning Ortega gives to ignorance, the stone is not ignorant of the hammer that smashes it. Why not?
6. “The light, before I begin to think about it, before I know it by learning optics, is simply what shines on me and lets me see.” Why does Ortega say that this means that the light is nothing at this point?
   a. Is it correct to say that the light does not exist when before I begin to think about it?
7. Only when we think about things do they “take on a being which they do not have in their other relationships to us” (86). Explain. (Ortega says this is the difference between being and non-being; how could we revise this by positing two different kinds of being?)
8. Failure is necessary for me to begin to think about something. Why?

VI. Lesson VI.
1. Why could a human being be called a “human not-yet-being”?
2. “Life gives one a great deal to do” (89-90). Explain. How is this true even if one does nothing with one’s life? (This picks up things discussed in Lesson 2).
3. What does it mean to say (93) that we are fatefully free?
   a. Explain this in terms of the keyboard metaphor (92).
   b. Relates this to the discussion of Life as circumstance and decision in Lesson II, including the “waking up on a stage metaphor.”