Research in Philosophy

Divisions of Philosophy
Philosophical Writing
Education in Philosophy

I. The field of philosophy can be organized topically and historically.
   A. Philosophy’s general areas are:
      1. Epistemology: Theory of Knowledge; with special topics of: Philosophy of
         Science; Logic; Philosophy of Language
      2. Metaphysics: Theory of Reality and its Structure; with special topics of:
         Ontology; Mind and Matter; Free will and Determinism
      3. Value Theory: Good and Evil; with special topics of: Ethics / Morality;
         Justice / Society; Philosophy of Art
   B. Philosophy’s history divides into periods:
      1. Ancient, or Greek and Roman philosophy (pre-300AD): Socrates, Plato
      2. Medieval, or Scholastic philosophy (300-1600): St. Augustine
      4. Late Modern, or Nineteenth Century: Friedrich Nietzsche
      5. Contemporary, or Twentieth Century: John Dewey
   C. Philosophers today tend to specialize in either a general area, or in a
      period of history.

II. Professional philosophers are usually university professors, with both teaching and
    research responsibilities.
   A. University professors typically spend 40% of their efforts teaching, 40% in
      research, and 20% in service.
   B. Research in philosophy develops in three stages:
      1. Learning about conceptual problems, and what other philosophers have said.
      2. Formulating original contributions.
      3. Writing and publishing arguments supporting their contributions.
   C. Philosophical writing takes three forms:
      1. Presentation papers for philosophy conferences (4000 – 6000 words)
      2. Articles for professional journals (usually around 9000 – 12000 words)
      3. Books

III. Education in philosophy can lead to a career as a university professor, though not usually.
   A. Philosophy departments at universities offer majors a broad curriculum:
      1. Introduction to Philosophy
      2. Introduction to Ethics
      3. Classes in history of philosophy
      4. Advanced seminars
   B. Graduate study in philosophy leads to the Ph.D.
      1. Ph.D. students spend 5 to 7 years taking advanced classes and writing.
      2. A “dissertation” or supervised book is the final project.
   C. Beginning university professors spend their first 6 years working toward “tenure.”
      1. In addition to satisfactory teaching, they must publish high quality writing.
      2. Not qualifying for “tenure” means discontinued employment, unfortunately.
1. Which of the following is not one of the three general areas in philosophy?
   A) Epistemology
   B) Philosophy of Religion
   C) Value Theory
   D) Metaphysics

2. Philosophical writings communicating research can take all of the following forms except:
   A) Books
   B) Conference presentations
   C) Articles in professional journals
   D) Poetry and Novels