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Philosophy

Higher level

Paper 1

13 November 2025

Zone A afternoon | Zone B afternoon | Zone C afternoon

2 hours 30 minutes

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer one question.
- Section B: answer two questions, each chosen from a different optional theme.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[75 marks]**.

Section A

Answer **one** question from this section. Each question in this section is worth [25 marks].

Core theme: Being human

1. Read the following text and develop your response as indicated below.

Learning to perform in front of other people made me become unfamiliar with myself. When I was learning, I was convinced that my simulations of others' experiences amounted to watching a video. Months later, when I tried to reconstruct what I had been imagining after undertaking some live performances, what was summoned up was a recollection of hazy, fragmented and moving imagery. Some things came into view—part of my shirt, the side of my hand and so on—but there was nothing like a “picture frame” image in my mind. Even if I try simply to imagine what I look like from across my desk while typing these words, if I closely attend to what is summoned I notice that I cannot generate anything like a typical perceptual experience of watching the television. Try it yourself.

With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, explore a philosophical issue related to the question of what it is to be human.

2. Look at the following image and develop your response as indicated below.



With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, explore a philosophical issue related to the question of what it is to be human.

Section B

Answer **two** questions from this section, each chosen from a different optional theme. Each question in this section is worth [25 marks].

Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

3. Evaluate the claim that one should approach works of art impartially.
4. Evaluate the claim that art is a representation of reality.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Evaluate the claim that truth is relative to the individual.
6. Evaluate the claim that false beliefs cannot be justified.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. Evaluate the claim that the rightness of moral action is grounded in seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.
8. Evaluate the claim that moral judgements are only justified if they can become a universal law.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy of religion

9. Evaluate the claim that different religions are all human responses to the same divine reality.
10. Evaluate the view that the existence of evil and suffering proves too great a challenge for people to believe in an all-loving God/god.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of science

11. Evaluate the claim that scientific methods are a problem-solving process.
12. Evaluate the claim that consciousness cannot be explained by science.

Optional theme 6: Political philosophy

13. Evaluate the claim that only the state can legitimately use force.
14. Evaluate how society and free speech affect issues such as gender politics.

Optional theme 7: Social philosophy

15. Evaluate the claim that people do not marry just to have a family and children.
 16. Evaluate the effectiveness of tolerance as a principle in achieving equal citizenship for minority groups.
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References:

1. Rappert, B., 2022. *Performing deception: learning, skill and the art of conjuring*. [PDF] Cambridge: Open Book Publishers. Available at: Open Book Publishers <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/books/10.11647/obp.0295> [Accessed 01 September 2023]. Source adapted.
2. Vchal, 2017. *Man holds hand of a baby with bar code on it*. [image online] Available at: <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/photo/man-holds-hand-of-a-baby-with-bar-code-on-it-royalty-free-image/667138688> [Accessed 01 September 2023]. Source adapted.