

**BA EXAMINATION 2009**

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

**PHILOSOPHY**

3.(a) Ethics

**Wednesday, 13 May 2009: 10am – 1pm**

Answer THREE questions, at least ONE from EACH section. Candidates taking optional paper (n) Philosophy of Kant may NOT attempt question 18, marked with an asterisk. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. 'Everything I do is a product of my character. I am not responsible for my character. Therefore I am not responsible for what I do.' Discuss.
2. 'Utilitarianism is inconsistent with the value of personal integrity.' Is this true, and would it be an objection to utilitarianism if it were?
3. EITHER (a) Can it be rational to bring about, or allow to be brought about, the worse of two states of affairs?  
  
OR (b) Should one always save the greater rather than the lesser number when one cannot save everyone? Should one instead give each an equal chance of being saved?
4. 'Sometimes it is permissible to bring about a harm as a foreseen side-effect of promoting a good end, when it would not be permissible to bring about that harm intentionally, as a means to realising that same good end.' Discuss.
5. Is there any interesting analogy between the statements 'torture is morally wrong' and 'grass is green'?
6. EITHER (a) Are all my reasons for action dependent in some way on what I am already motivated to do?  
  
OR (b) Does a moral reason necessarily operate in the same way in all situations?

**TURN OVER**

7. 'Moral relativism undermines the authority of moral belief.' Discuss.
8. If moral luck exists, how, if at all, does it require us to revise our moral judgements?
9. To what extent is moral blame a form of rational criticism?
10. What does promising involve? Why does it matter when we break our promises?
11. Is virtue just a form of talent?
12. Explain and assess Mackie's arguments for the view that there is an error inherent in our moral judgements.
13. 'Moral dilemmas are more like conflicts of desire than conflicts of belief.' Discuss.
14. If there are moral truths, how can we discover them?

## **SECTION B**

15. EITHER (a) Would Plato say that someone can be happy simply by being virtuous, regardless of what else might happen to them? Assess his view  
  
OR (b) Assess the role of hedonism in Socrates' argument against *akrasia*.
16. EITHER (a) Would Aristotle's virtuous man seek the happiness of people other than himself? Discuss with reference to his theory of friendship.  
  
OR (b) Is Aristotle's theory of *phronesis* a persuasive account of the nature of practical reason?
17. EITHER (a) What is Aquinas's conception of a virtue? Is this conception still of use to moral philosophy?  
  
OR (b) What did Scotus understand by *affectio iustitiae*? Is his use of the concept defensible?

**TURN OVER**

18.\* EITHER (a) Why does Kant argue that we must always treat humanity as an end in itself? What objections does his argument face?

OR (b) Explain how, in Kant's theory, morality is a matter of pure reason.

19. EITHER (a) According to Hume, how can we come to adopt the 'steady and general point of view'? Does his answer conflict with his claim that 'reason is ... the slave of the passions'?

OR (b) 'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind ...' (Hume). Discuss.

20. EITHER (a) What is Mill's argument in his 'proof' for the principle of utility? To what extent does it succeed?

OR (b) Does Mill have a defensible theory of what constitutes happiness?

**END OF PAPER**