

BA EXAMINATION 2009

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

5. Modern Philosophy from Bacon and Descartes to Kant

Tuesday, 12 May 2009: 10am – 1pm

Answer **THREE** questions, at least **ONE** from Section A and at least **ONE** from Section B. Candidates taking optional paper (n) Philosophy of Kant may **NOT** attempt questions from Section C. Avoid overlap in your answers.

SECTION A

1. What (if anything) does the Cogito demonstrate?
2. Expound and assess ONE of Descartes' proofs of the existence of God.
3. '... It follows that corporeal things exist. They may not all exist in a way that exactly corresponds with my sensory grasp of them, for in many cases the grasp of the senses is very obscure and confused. But at least they possess all the properties which I clearly and distinctly understand, that is, all those which, viewed in general terms, are comprised within the subject-matter of pure mathematics.' How does Descartes arrive at this conclusion?
4. Expound and assess Spinoza's argument for the existence of just one substance.
5. What does Spinoza mean in describing the human mind as the idea of the human body? Is this a good approach to take to the mind-body problem?
6. 'A man like Spinoza would sit absolutely still if he reasoned logically. "If it is possible," he would say, "that such a doctrine might be established, the necessity of nature would establish it without my book. If it is not possible, all of my writings would accomplish nothing"' (Pierre Bayle). Discuss.
7. Why does Leibniz regard this as the best of all possible worlds? How defensible is his view?
8. According to Leibniz, did Caesar cross the Rubicon necessarily? Did he cross it freely?

9. Assess Leibniz's view that bodies are well-founded phenomena.

SECTION B

10. Does Locke have an adequate answer to those who believe that innate ideas do exist, but that they exist merely as potentialities until they get stimulated into consciousness by experience?
11. Is Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities more or less right, or is it fundamentally misguided?
12. Does Locke's theory of personal identity require us to remember absolutely everything we have ever done?
13. How convincing are Berkeley's arguments against abstract ideas? Does his immaterialism stand or fall with those arguments?
14. Can Berkeley adequately explain the difference between real things and illusions?
15. Is Berkeley's immaterialism sustainable without God?
16. How adequately does Hume explain how we come by our ideas of bodies?
17. EITHER (a) Does Hume equate causation with constant conjunction? Justify your answer.

OR (b) Does Hume regard the problem of induction as a problem? Justify your answer.
18. According to Hume, the general character of sceptical arguments is that 'they admit of no answer and produce no conviction'. Discuss with reference to Hume's own philosophy.

SECTION C

19. How does Kant's account of synthetic a priori knowledge relate to Hume's analysis of causation? Does it offer a plausible way of resisting Hume's analysis?
20. Is Kant's claim that space is transcendentally ideal coherent? How does it relate to his claims regarding the nature of things in themselves?
21. Does Kant offer a coherent resolution of the tension between free will and determinism? What are the commitments incurred with his account of transcendental freedom?

END OF PAPER