

**BA EXAMINATION 2008**

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

**PHILOSOPHY**

5. Modern Philosophy from Bacon and Descartes to Kant

**Wednesday, 7 May 2008: 10.00-13.00**

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. EITHER (a) Does Descartes succeed in establishing that mind and body are distinct substances?  
  
OR (b) Can Descartes give a satisfactory account of the way in which the mind and body are united to make one thing?
2. Does Descartes' attempt to prove that what we clearly and distinctly perceive is true involve him in viciously circular reasoning?
3. Why did Descartes begin the *Meditations* with a series of sceptical arguments?
4. Explain and evaluate Spinoza's argument for the view that there is only one substance.
5. What led Spinoza to claim that the mind is the idea of the body? Does this claim allow for a satisfactory account of the mind?
6. 'The order and connection of ideas is the order and connection of things.' Discuss the use that Spinoza makes of this principle.
7. How did Leibniz distinguish between *liberty of spontaneity* and *liberty of indifference*? Does the distinction enable him to give a coherent and plausible account of human freedom?

**TURN OVER**

8. EITHER (a) 'Leibniz's metaphysics is in reality just as necessitarian as Spinoza's; he just wasn't prepared to admit this.' Discuss.

OR (b) In Leibniz's system, is there any sense in which possible worlds other than the best of all possible worlds are really possible?

9. 'Atoms of matter are contrary to reason; only atoms of substance, unities that are absolutely devoid of parts, can be the first principle of things' (Leibniz). How did Leibniz characterise these 'atoms of substance'? Why was he as strong a proponent of metaphysical atomism as he was an enemy of physical atomism?

## SECTION B

10. How strong is Locke's case against innate ideas and principles?

11. Does Locke believe that secondary qualities are intrinsic features of bodies? If so, how do they differ from primary qualities? If not, what are they?

12. 'Of substance, we have no idea of what it is, but only a confused idea of what it does' (Locke). Discuss.

13. 'We have, I think, shown the impossibility of abstract ideas' (Berkeley). Has he shown this?

14. Should we agree with Berkeley that 'the absolute existence of sensible objects in themselves, or without the mind' expresses a 'direct contradiction, or else nothing at all'?

15. Does Berkeley provide a good argument for the existence of finite or infinite spirits?

16. EITHER (a) According to Hume, what impression or impressions (if any) can give rise to an idea of necessary connection? How satisfactory is his answer?

OR (b) 'I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause. I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another source.' (Hume). Discuss.

17. Did Hume think we had any idea of 'self'? If he didn't, why not? If so, what was it and where did it come from?

18. Hume wrote, of sceptical arguments in general, 'that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction'. Discuss the relevance of this to Hume's own philosophy.

## **SECTION C**

19. Does Kant successfully establish that space is an *a priori* intuition?
20. Describe and critically evaluate Kant's explanation of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.
21. What did Kant think a 'thing in itself' was? Do Kant's various claims about the character of things in themselves violate his own views about what is required for a concept to be meaningful?

**END OF PAPER**