

BA EXAMINATION 2008

for Internal Students

This paper is also taken by Combined Studies Students

PHILOSOPHY

3.(b) Political Philosophy

Tuesday, 6 May 2008:10.00-13.00

Answer THREE questions, including at least ONE from EACH section. Candidates taking Optional Paper (r) Marxism may NOT attempt question 8, marked with an asterisk. Avoid overlap in your answers.

SECTION A

1. EITHER (a) Does Plato provide a compelling argument in the *Crito* for the obligation to obey the state in all circumstances?

OR (b) Can Plato's account of the just state be criticized for its failure to recognize human rights?
2. EITHER (a) Explain and assess Aristotle's view that man is a 'political animal'.

OR (b) Is Aristotle's account of the 'natural slave' mere ideology?
3. EITHER (a) What does Hobbes mean by 'laws of nature'? What role do such laws play in his argument?

OR (b) In what sense or senses is the Hobbesian sovereign absolute? Can Hobbes justify such absolute power?
4. EITHER (a) Is there anything to be said in favour of Locke's argument that citizens 'tacitly consent' to their governments?

OR (b) 'Locke's labour-mixing argument to justify the appropriation of property from nature is, strictly speaking, nonsense. Yet it is based on a powerful intuition connecting labouring with the right of ownership.' Discuss.

TURN OVER

5. EITHER (a) Is Hume right to view justice as an artificial virtue?

OR (b) 'We are, therefore, to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government, as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice' (Hume). Discuss.

6. EITHER (a) What, according to Rousseau, are the preconditions of a democratic state? Does it follow that, on Rousseau's account, there has never been a true democracy?

OR (b) 'Rousseau's account of the "noble savage" is merely misty-eyed romanticism.' Discuss.

7. EITHER (a) Does Hegel's view that 'the rational is real' entail that all political change must be mistaken?

OR (b) Critically examine Hegel's concept of freedom.

*8. EITHER (a) Does Marx show that capitalism must inevitably break down?

OR (b) Does Marx have moral reasons for advocating communism?

9. EITHER (a) Mill says that one may seize a man who cannot be warned against crossing an unsafe bridge, 'for liberty consists in doing what one desires, and he does not desire to fall into the river'. What is the significance of this claim for Mill's case against paternalism?

OR (b) Assess the nature and persuasiveness of Mill's case against banning an activity for the reason that many find it offensive.

SECTION B

10. EITHER (a) Explain and assess Rawls' arguments against a utilitarian conception of justice

OR (b) 'The principle of open positions ... expresses the conviction that if some places were not open on a basis fair to all, those kept out would be right in feeling unjustly treated even though they benefited from the greater efforts of those who were allowed to hold them' (Rawls). Discuss.

11. EITHER (a) Can a society be neutral between competing conceptions of the good? Should it be?

OR (b) Is every comprehensive conception of good capable of accommodation in a Rawlsian overlapping consensus?

UL08/444

12. EITHER (a) Do we harm the global poor?
OR (b) Some argue that if a conception of social justice applies at the domestic level, it should apply, for the same reasons, at the global level. Do you agree?
13. EITHER (a) Can equality be reconciled with individual responsibility?
OR (b) What is 'priority to the worst off'? Is it to be preferred to equality?
14. 'There is little to be gained from discussing the value of democracy for, in the modern world, there are no serious alternatives.' Discuss.
15. Can a libertarian justify individual rights to property?
16. Can the notion of 'human rights' be given a philosophical justification?
17. 'Lack of money entails lack of freedom.' Discuss.
18. Critically assess the 'natural duty' theory of political obligation.
19. What is 'multi-culturalism'? Is it a liberal doctrine, or is it opposed to liberalism?
20. Does 'the ethics of care' illuminate any important issue in political philosophy?

END OF PAPER