

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MA PHILOSOPHY OLD REGULATIONS  
for Internal Students

HISTORY OF EPISTEMOLOGY

Monday, 11 September 2000: 10.00 - 1.00

Answer THREE questions.

1. What did Bacon understand by a Natural and Experimental History? What was novel about his conception, and why did he regard the collection of such a history as being so important?
2. Give a brief description of Bacon's account of the Idols of the Mind. What function did it have in his philosophy as a whole?
3. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Bacon and Descartes towards the thesis that any cognition that is to count as knowledge has to be certain.
4. What was Descartes's method of systematic doubt? Why did he choose such a way of proceeding, and what did he hope to achieve?
5. Why did Descartes set out to prove the existence of God in Meditation III? Did he have any alternative to attempting this?
6. What are the most important Cartesian theses that Locke rejected, and what are the most important ones that he retained? What were the factors that motivated his choices?
7. Does the distinction that Locke drew between primary and secondary qualities presuppose a representational theory of perception?
8. What did Leibniz understand by a monad? What are the characteristics of these entities, and how are they related to the bodies that make up the physical world?
9. Why did both Descartes and Leibniz hold that the existence of a vacuum could be rejected purely on a priori grounds? How cogent are the arguments that they provided?

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10. How did Berkeley's immaterialism influence his views about the nature and scope of natural philosophy?
11. Compare the sense in which Berkeley was an empiricist with the sense in which EITHER Locke OR Hume were.
12. Given that Hume almost never uses the word 'induction', can the widespread twentieth-century interpretation of him as an inductive sceptic be justified?
13. Can Hume consistently maintain that some beliefs about matters of fact and existence can be more rationally justified than others?

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