

M.A. EXAMINATION 2005

for Internal Students

PHILOSOPHY

Political Philosophy

Friday, 27 May 2005: 10.00 –13.00

Answer THREE questions. Avoid overlap in your answers.

1. EITHER (a) 'Rawls's argument is circular. He defends his principles of justice on the grounds that they would be chosen in the original position, but he defends the original position on the grounds that it would yield his principles of justice.' Discuss.
OR (b) Does Rawls have good reason to reject utilitarianism?
2. EITHER (a) Explain Rawls's idea of the 'basic structure'. Is he right that principles of justice should regulate the basic structure and not individual behaviour?
OR (b) Is it true that inequalities are justified whenever they lead to an improvement in the fortunes of the worst off?
3. EITHER (a) What is 'luck egalitarianism'? Is it a plausible view?
OR (b) Explain why Dworkin introduced the device of hypothetical insurance into his theory. Is it a strength or a weakness?
4. Should we care about equality?
5. Assess the following argument: 'The only plausible ground of political obligation is consent. I have not consented to my government. Therefore I have no political obligations.'
6. Is there any relation between the right to threaten and the right to punish?
7. Explain and assess the communitarian critique of liberalism.
8. EITHER (a) Does Nozick show how the minimal state can be justified even on libertarian assumptions?

OR (b) Does Nozick manage to refute the 'principle of fairness'?

TURN OVER

9. Is taxation 'on a par' with forced labour?
10. Should rights be regarded as side-constraints or goals?
11. What does Rawls mean by an 'overlapping consensus'? What role does it have in his theory?
12. EITHER (a) Are there any natural rights?
OR (b) Are there any natural rights to property?

END OF PAPER