

# UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## MPHIL EXAMINATIONS 2000

for internal students

### The philosophy of Spinoza

Answer THREE questions.

1. Does Spinoza succeed in proving the existence of God?
2. Can a case be made for regarding Spinoza as an atheist? How do you think Spinoza might respond to such a description of himself?
3. How does Spinoza account for the apparent interaction between mind and body?
4. How, for Spinoza, is the human mind capable of achieving knowledge of God? Does it make sense to think of such knowledge as a mere mode of thought?
5. According to Spinoza, the ideas we gain through the imagination are inadequate, yet the imagination contains no error. Are these two claims reconcilable?
6. 'The Mind, as far as it can, strives to imagine those things that increase or aid the Body's power of acting.' (*Ethics*, III P12) How should we understand this claim? Is it defensible?
7. 'Music is good for one who is melancholy, bad for one who is in mourning, and neither good nor bad to one who is deaf.' (*Ethics*, IV Preface) Is Spinoza an ethical relativist?
8. Why does Spinoza think that men who are governed by reason 'want nothing for themselves that they do not desire for other men'? (*Ethics*, IV 18 s3) Is there any sense in which he is right?
9. What effect does clear and distinct knowledge have on the passions?
10. What part does security play in Spinoza's conception of freedom?
11. Assess Spinoza's account of prophecy.
12. What role does the social contract play in Spinoza's account of the State?

END OF PAPER