IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME
PROGRAMME DU DIPLÔME DU BI
PROGRAMA DEL DIPLOMA DEL BI

MARKSCHEME

NOVEMBER 2006

PHILOSOPHY

Higher Level and Standard Level

Paper 1

Core Theme: What is a 'human' being?

1. (a) **Identify a philosophical concept or philosophical issue about the nature of the self raised by the passage.**   *[3 marks]*

    This passage highlights the centrality of free choice in establishing self-identity. It is also meant to stimulate reflection on the individual's achievement of selfhood and self understanding.

    (b) **Compare and contrast two different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified in (a).**   *[12 marks]*

    - **Existentialism**: My self is my project. I am 'condemned' to freedom. There exist no pre-packaged plans, no pre-ordained guidelines to direct me on the path to authenticity.
    - **Substance Dualism**: Is my self an immaterial substance different from and hidden by a material substance? Where is my self if it is different from my body? Is there an essential self which others cannot penetrate?
    - **Solipsism:** Can I ever know any self other than my self? Can I ever define and reveal my self to another? Does nothing exist except what I privately know behind the mask I present to the world?
    - **Intersubjectivity:** My self without definition, form, and meaning until I enter into significant relationships with others. I come to know myself reflexively in my encounters with the non-self.
    - **Materialism:** There is no immaterial inner self that needs to be worked out by my free choices. My self is completely and exhaustively accounted for and explained by the physical laws of nature.
    - **Theism:** I am born into a life that has design and purpose. However, I am given the free will to make decisions for which I shall be held accountable. How I live my life is always characterised by 'leaps of faith'.

    (c) **Critically discuss the statement that it is much easier for me to know what I am than it is for me to know who I am.**   *[15 marks]*

    - Mind, brain, and body and the possible interrelationships among them.
    - Mental events and brain processes needs; material and immaterial substances
    - The materialist and the immaterialist analysis of human experience
    - Contributions of the cognitive sciences to the philosophy of the person
    - Person as thing; person as activity; person as event
    - Who am I? What am I? Why am I?
    - Am I ever able to define myself? To myself? To others?
    - Does the self exist? If it does, where does it reside?
    - Can I separate *who* I am from *what* I am?
    - How would a person describe him/herself to another person?
    - What is involved in being a 'human person'?
    - Are the questions 'Who am I?' and 'What am I?' simply functions of grammar without philosophical significance?
    - Can you separate certain aspects of *what* you are (race, gender, age, socio-economic condition) from *who* you are?

2. **(a)** **Identify a philosophical concept or philosophical issue about the human condition raised by the image.** *[3 marks]*

This image highlights issues of isolation, alienation and the encounter with others. It may invite reflection on possible approaches to the meaning or meaninglessness of life.

(b) **Compare and contrast two different philosophical approaches to the philosophical concept or philosophical issue you identified in (a).** *[12 marks]*

- Possible philosophical approaches: existentialism, nihilism, atheism, theism, rationalism, materialism *etc*.
- Is life characterised throughout by anxiety?
- How does an individual face and resolve the issues of meaning and meaninglessness?
- Do all individuals find ways of making sense of life? What about those who do not?
- Are others only objects to us? Are we only objects to others?
- If we start life without a sense of its direction and meaning, how might we go about filling in the picture in an authentic manner as we live our lives?
- Is it the case that the meaning of life takes shape from the choices we make each day in our lives?
- Do we find meaning from within life or from outside life?
- If life has no meaning does that make life worthless?
- Does life have to contain meaning at all?

(c) **Critically discuss the idea that the possibility of a meaningful life is founded in the realization of human creativity in all its forms.** *[15 marks]*

- Being-in-the-world; Life as process
- Existence as contingent and questionable
- Language, social class, ethnic background, and gender *etc*. as factors that influence meaning for my life
- To question existence as a human activity
- Creating values, finding values, assimilating values, rejecting values about the human condition
- Is my freedom to create a personal meaning system regarding my life as an illusion?
- Why do I find it necessary to 'make sense' of life and the human condition? How can I know that I am successful at this activity?
- Does awareness of the end of life help me take life more seriously? More authentically?
- Must life have meaning?

SECTION B

Optional Theme 1: Political Philosophy

3. **To what extent does an increasingly well educated population no longer have need of governmental organization and control?**

    This question invites an investigation of whether an increasingly educated population might result in the declining need for the various roles government performs, and for government direction. In addition, the issue of whether more education can change the nature of people significantly enough to eliminate the need for government, might be discussed.

    Key points
    - The complexity of modern society and its various needs and pressures
    - Definitions of the role of government in terms of organizing various aspects of a society and control a complex society
    - The subtle difference in role of government in terms of organisation and control and protection domestic and foreign, and protection form one's own nature
    - The nature of education and whether it does empower individuals to take collective responsibility or individual responsibility for themselves within a society
    - How an end to government might be brought about and the mechanics of devolving government structures
    - The issue of anarchism.

    Discussion
    - The issue of whether increased education can produce an anarchic situation (the lack of need for government)
    - Whether education can change the nature of humans and therefore eliminate the need for protection of life and property, as education will produce the lack of threat to and from other humans. If the assumption is that people are 'bad' can education make them 'good'
    - The issue of whether people really want to take responsibility and participate in every aspect of what governments do
    - The possible comfort of representatives elected or otherwise taking responsibilities allowing the 'buck' to stop somewhere else not on one's own desk
    - The complexity of modern life and the need to resolve interstate relationships, as well internal issue with an absence of government
    - Whether the issue of increased regionalism and devolving layers of central government is a step towards diminishing government
    - Whether people want/can be educated for increased citizenship; this might lead to an evaluation of citizenship education programmes
    - The call for less government rather than no government.

4.   Critically discuss the claim that censorship should not exist in a democratic society.

The question invites a discussion of whether or not there needs to be limits on the freedom of expression that might seem to be inherent within democracy. There might be a conclusion that limits are necessary or not, reasons for that position could be presented.

Key points
- The features of democracy
- The nature of and forms that censorship could take
- The possible compatibility/incompatibility of these two concepts
- Areas in which censorship becomes an issue; access to information, freedom of expression and development of ideas, the need to protect sections of society (*e.g.* children)
- The cultural variations of the understanding of and in the application of censorship.

Discussion
- The rationale for censorship in terms of protection or control
- The issue of who is the censor and what rules and limitations are drawn up – centralised or localised *e.g.* film censorship restrictions, or in the family
- Whether the issue of censorship is that of restricting or advising
- The consequence of censorship – inaccessibility of information, limits to artistic expression, restrictions on the development of new ideas
- The issue of politics driving censorship (control of information) or morality (control of what people can encounter *e.g.* pornography)
- The issue of whether individuals can or should take responsibility and be aware of causing offence
- The issue of 'liable to cause offence' might be brought with a discussion of 'liable' and the problem of non encounter or accidental encounter with the offensive material being the issue rather than intentional. Perhaps the explorations of the phrase "if you proceed you may encounter adult material that may offend".
- Whether censorship hinders natural development (particularly in art and literature) and freedom of choice
- The issue of the imposition of one person's values upon another and whether there is one set of societal values that its member must adhere to.

Optional Theme 2: Knowledge

5. **Empiricist criticism of rationalism as an approach to knowledge say that it tells us nothing useful about the world. To what extent is this empiricist criticism justified?**

The question invites an investigation into the approach to knowledge adopted by rationalism and the critique of this approach mounted by empiricism in terms of knowledge about the world.

Key points
- Is rational knowledge primarily tautological?
- Hume's account of the world of empirical experience as opposed to the mere 'relation of ideas' pursued by rationalism
- In support of their position, rationalists will criticise knowledge gained by the senses as – at worst – open to error, and – at best – limited by being indirect; the gap in empiricism between the knower and the world as opposed to the direct knowledge offered by rationalism
- The laws of logic, grammar and mathematics suggest an underlying reality separate from the world of experience.

Discussion
- Rationalists and empiricists both avoid the possibility of error in their account of knowledge by restricting themselves to special areas of certain knowledge: at some stage the holder of each view must make a leap – like pragmatism/realism in the empirical tradition or consistency in the world of ideas (perhaps guaranteed by God) to some rationalists
- Is the polarisation of knowledge between the rationalist and empiricist account acceptable?
- Phenomenalism as an approach to sense experience and reality
- Possible implications of criticisms of rationalism – science as a driving force for a new ethical understanding in the 21st century.

6.   **"Understanding the methodology of science is of more significance for finding the truth than accepting science's assertions about reality." Critically discuss this statement.**

Answers to this question might seek to explore the nature of scientific knowledge and the confidence we can have in its method for leading us to truth. The question distinguishes between *how* science reaches its conclusions and *what* the content of scientific understanding is. This might lead to a discussion of the acceptance of science as truth by many observers. This is often achieved without considering the provisional nature of scientific assertions, as a result of its method – as illustrated by the history of science and current controversies.

Key points
- The induction problem as highlighted by Hume
- Pragmatic assumptions about the consistency of the world – truth is confirmed by experience and expedience
- Verification and Falsification as routes to scientific proofs – are they routes to truth?
- Is science conditioned by a world view assumed by those taking part in it?
- Kuhn's view of dominant (and changing) paradigms
- Can science ever achieve the detached observational stance claimed by many of its practitioners?
- Wittgenstein's work on language as proving a public realm but not a realm of separate objects of knowledge
- The degree to which scientific assertions are culturally based.

Discussion
- The dominance of physicalism and materialism in modern Western thought compared to Eastern approaches
- Science as proof rather than method – is this an inevitable development in an empirical culture?
- Common-sense faith in the consistency of cause and effect, trial and error
- Foundationalism, correspondence and coherence theories of proof
- Wittgenstein's example of different uses of 'truth' and 'proof' in different language games
- The dominance of science because of social structures rather than its method
- The problem of synthetic constructions and the unreliability of the senses.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of Culture

7.   **Critically discuss the idea of culture expressed here: "Humans are a knowledge-using, cooperative species, and culture emerges naturally from that lifestyle. Culture arises as people pool and accumulate their discoveries, institute conventions to coordinate their labours and to adjudicate on their conflicts."**

Answers should explain and evaluate the view of culture quoted.

Key points
- The view represented in the quote is opposed to the idea of culture as an impersonal set of roles and symbols that descend on passive individuals
- A person´s mother tongue is a learned cultural skill *par excellence*. A parrot and a child both learn something when exposed to speech, but only the child has a mental algorithm that extracts words and rules from the sound wave and uses them to utter and understand an unlimited number of new sentences
- Our minds are fitted with mechanisms designed to read the goals of other people so we can copy their intended acts. They are equipped with mental machinery that can extract the beliefs and values underlying peoples' behaviour so that the children themselves can become competent members of the culture.
- Culture is a pool of technological and social innovations that people accumulate to help them live their lives
- Culture can be grounded in psychology which can be grounded in computation, neuroscience, genetics and evolution.

Discussion
- The apparent caprice of cultural variation leads to the doctrine that culture lives in a separate domain from brains, genes and evolution, however, culture is the expression of the human phenotype.
- The view of culture presented in the quote is an oversimplification based on some very basic traits of human life.
- Cultures are as diverse as individuals, groups and communities are.
- Culture is not only or mainly a way to fulfill basic biological functions, but an expression of liberty and creativity of the human spirit.
- The view stated in the quote does not take into account the diversity of cultures
- The idea of the human possessing pre-cultural innate mechanisms which interpret experience and influence development.

8. **Cultural evolution or cultural revolution?   Analyze and evaluate the philosophical implications of cultural change.**

    This question provides the opportunity to examine attitudes to culture and cultural change. It also allows candidates to examine what creates and constitutes a culture.

    Key points
    - Different examples of cultural evolution or revolutions can be presented and discussed, *e.g.* cultural revolution in China.
    - Cultural changes can be quite different *e.g.* some linguistic changes have a different rhythm than some political or artistic changes.
    - The role of factors such as war, religion, art and technology and the rise and decline of cultures.
    - What does constitute a culture? Possible characterizations of what is to be understood by it. The elements that make up culture, for example, language; taboos; rituals; beliefs and traditions; that which organizes everyday life.

    Discussion
    - To what extent the notion of evolution goes beyond a biological approach.
    - What are the dynamics of culture? Can a culture be in decline, or in crisis, or only human beings can be in crisis?
    - All cultures are equally rich in their intrinsic values and internal contents. That is why one may speak of development only at the level of civilization, of technology *etc*.
    - Evolution or revolution could only be assessed from 'inside' a culture or would it be legitimate to judge it from 'outside'?
    - Notions such as 'progress', or 'modern' have pervaded public life, science and philosophy. To what extent should they be applied to culture?
    - Are cultural revolutions mainly political?
    - What should we try to keep, to restore, to abandon, and how?

Optional Theme 4: World Philosophies

9.   **With reference to at least one of the traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, explain and evaluate the importance that metaphysical or ethical principles have for human life.**

The question can be understood and developed from a metaphysical or an ethical point of view, or both. According to this and the students' choice, answers can be shaped differently.

Key points
- The earliest *Upanishads* developed views of a spiritual self, *ätman*, with respect to questions about a supreme reality, its nature and relation to the world, and how it is known. Generally, through the self the supreme being, *Brahman*, is to be found, and at places the self is proclaimed identical with it.
- Buddhism from the outset refrained from any form of metaphysical thinking. In the discourse to Mälunkkyaputta, the Buddha kept his silence on such metaphysical questions as whether or not the world is eternal.
- Buddhist reality begins and ends in enlightenment regarding the truth (true grounds) of existence, namely *nirvana*.
- Islams basic tenents stress that there is no other divinity than Allah, and therefore underline the fact of His being unitary. Everything is one in God.

Discussion
- The idea that there is something that is real, ultimate and in some way the basis of all there is seems to be in the origins of many traditions.
- All Hindu philosophers are, to say the least, empirical realists: the objects of empirical knowledge are admitted to exist independently of any knowledge.
- In contrast to Western philosophy, in these traditions metaphysical and ethical grounds have a common basis.
- In contrast to Western philosophy, Eastern philosophies have not been as concerned with questions relating to the nature of a single God as the universe's sole creator and ruler.
- The distinction between the religious and the secular tends to be much less sharp in Eastern philosophy, and the same philosophical school often contains both religious and philosophical elements.

10. **Explain and evaluate the contribution to the understanding of political life made by one or more of the world philosophies you have studied.**

Answers can include the analysis of one or more world philosophies. They should explain central political traits of the conception/s selected and evaluate their relevance.

Key points
- Islam teaches freedom, and guarantees it for the Muslim as well as for the non-Muslim. The Islamic concept of freedom applies to all voluntary activities of man in all walks of life. Man is born free from subjugation, sin, inherited inferiority, and ancestral hindrance. His right of freedom is sacred as long as he does not deliberately violate the Law of God or desecrate the rights of others. The priority of the community *(Ummah)* over the individual.
- Hinduism contends that the cause of suffering and inequalities must be sought not in what happens after death, but in the conditions before birth, and puts forward the doctrine of rebirth
- Human personality, according to the Buddhist standpoint, is a composite of psychical and physical components and its very nature is changing and impermanent. Its value does not depend upon the two principles, namely, the materialistic and the theistic, but is conditioned through human effort. This is reflected on social and political life.
- In the Buddhist tradition man possesses a free will and effort in the field of threefold action: thought, speech and deed. The glory of human life, individual as well as social, lies in this element, but it is also the source of difficulties and sometimes of degradation of mankind. Man has human value in the individual who acts in a worthy way for his own welfare and for that of others, and in general for the improvement of humanity.

Discussion.
- A comparison and contrast with other conceptions could be a valid approach as part of the answer. For instance, classical Greek ideas regarding aims of the State.
- The perspective on nature and wisdom transmitted by generations could become dated.
- Implications of the caste system, *e.g.* seemingly plausible and accepted theory is that probably the caste system was found by the Vedic people as a convenient means to integrate a multiracial society into one complex system
- Freedom in Islam begins with submission to the Divine Will, because life is completely sacred
- The distinction or the lack of distinction between public or social and religious or sacred spheres.

Optional Theme 5: Nature, Work and Technology

11. **"Consumer markets should decide what people produce and what people do for work. If the market does not require certain goods or industries, then it is right that they should cease." Critically discuss this statement.**

The intention of this question is to encourage the consideration of the nature and purpose of work and how different forces – especially the notion of the market – influence the type and spread of labour in society. It tests the view that the market could be seen as a non-moral arbiter of what goods and services society should provide. Answers might explore the questions of fairness and morality in relation to work and remuneration.

Key Points
- Is there any justification other than consumer need for the pattern of employment in a society? Social? Personal fulfilment? Vocational?
- What value can the market place work for its own sake?
- Are services provided by, say, health workers to be seen as consumer services or work 'for the public good'? What justifications are there for work 'in the public good'?
- What models are there for state intervention into labour patterns? Can/should a society justify propping up an ailing industry to avoid heavy social costs?
- What impact does an emphasis on work as providing for a market demand have on the individual and his/her sense of worth in a career?
- Is the market more likely to lead to exploitation?

Discussion
- Is it a moral problem to have a 'bottom of the ladder' – as required by a market?
- Is inequality necessarily a moral problem? Is inequality always unfair?
- How can a modern economy deal with unfairness?
- What safeguards can/should be employed to guard against the alienation of workers in a workplace dominated by consumer demand?
- The free market cannot account for different starting points – people with disadvantages of birth/background; political resolve must re-distribute money to the needy
- Is the link between a descriptive fact ('..the market does not require certain goods..') and a value statement ('..it is right they should cease..') questionable or justified?

12. **"Technology cannot be held responsible for any damage that it causes; responsibility must lie with the humans who develop and utilise it." Analyse and evaluate this claim.**

This question aims to explore the relationship between humans and the technology they encounter in the world. The types of damage may include environmental problems as well as more traditional moral problems created between people as a result of technology.

Key points
- Defenders of technology claim that it is only when humans apply technological innovations and inventions that any question of responsibility for outcomes arises. Like defenders of gun ownership in the USA, they say it is not the gun that causes trouble, but the use to which it is put. Is this reasonable?
- Some say the definition of technology assumes its use in an environment; so, can a legitimate distinction be drawn between science (the theory of what can work – like a nuclear weapon) and technology (actually developing it)? If there is, could science be legitimately described as ethically neutral while technology is not?
- Is technology ever purely a matter of intellectual pursuit – or is it a natural extension of human nature, expressing man's needs, desires and abilities at any given time?
- How technology relates to the environment; does the use of technology always imply an alien imposition on an otherwise 'natural' environment?
- Different types of damage; has technology destroyed working communities? Does technology alter the way humans function? Are we less fit than we used to be without the use of technological aids for transport, leisure and work – is it interfering with man's natural evolution?
- Implication of high costs of technology – for instance, can the West justify the huge cost it spends on medical technologies, when so many die so cheaply in the developing world?
- Implications of human alienation – are we less valuable than reliable machines? Do machines (like computers with applications like the web) encourage isolation from communities?

Discussion
- Can technology alter our moral compass? (See how the advances in foetal medicine technologies mean babies regularly survive earlier than the legal abortion limit)
- Different ways of evaluating technology – utilitarian cost/benefit analysis; appeals to intention/duty; intuition that technology challenges 'what makes us human'
- The debate about human mind/language and machine processing/functioning – is there an inevitable gap between humans and technological applications?
- Economic advantages inherent in possessing technological (often rather than human) resources.

Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of the Arts

13. **To what extent is the activity of the artist restricted to play and therefore of little or no value?**

The purpose of this question is to give an opportunity to explore the nature of the artistic activity and consequently of how value might be attributed according to status and context. An exploration of differing notions of 'value' might be developed.

Key points
- The variety of actions which are deemed to be artistic
- The concept of play relating or otherwise to these artistic actions
- Interpretations of 'value': economic, aesthetic, political and ethical
- Whether play by its nature is of no value
- The possibility that differing contexts (within one culture or across cultures) can create value for the action or not
- The issue and means of attributing value
- Who decides who the artist is and what art is?

Discussion
- The possibility that some artistic actions are play and not valued while other forms of artistic actions are not seen as play and might be of value.
- How society arrives at value in art through intrinsic or extrinsic value
- The changing status of the artist through time and cultural context
- The notion of one person's play may be another's hard work – the issue of who attributes value, and the problem of why play may not be worthy of value
- The importance of play as human endeavour but whether all play is art or all art is play
- It might be appropriate to explore the artistic act as a political act well beyond play and the tool of the state or a counter to the state.
- The issue of whether 'value' and artistic endeavour are compatible.

14. **Some artists see themselves as visionaries, others see themselves as recorders of the status quo. Evaluate these two differing perspectives on the role of the artist in society.**

This question presents the possibility of two polar positions about the purpose of the artist in society and asks for an investigation of the differing natures of these two perspectives and a judgement of which might be the better view.

Key Points
- The artist as the visionary, one who advocates change – social and political as well as aesthetic – offering new alternatives to the art form and to society as whole. A variety of examples might be offered to illustrate this type of activity such as art forms immediately after the revolutions in Russia in 1917.
- The artist as reflecting the status quo and attempting to maintain harmony. This might be seen as putting art close to religion, so placating people.
- The issue of whether art reflects society or society can be impacted upon by art given that access to the art form might be quite restricted.

Discussion
- Whether there are other purposes that supersede the two given perspectives
- Whether artists are aware of their purpose, that is the visionary impact was intentional or merely a by-product of the creative activity
- Examples might be used from differing art forms to show both positions in action at the same time because the real issue is of interpretation and who does the interpretation
- The differing cultural perspectives on whether art should reinforce current values and positions; examples might be the use of art as propaganda in authoritarian regimes like Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia
- The role of the State in attempting to restrict the visionary aspects in literature or theatre or the State sponsorship of artistic contributions that endeavour to promote accepted and approved of values
- That art has neither of these two functions put forward and they are far too restrictive an interpretation of the purposes of art.

Optional Theme 7: Philosophy of Religion

15. Critically discuss the claim that as so many people have religious experiences then everyone should believe in a God.

The issue of the nature of religious experience might be investigated and some judgement made as to whether what seems to be non universal encounters should impact upon the belief and action of everyone. There may also be some questioning of whether religious experience in itself displays any evidence of a God.

Key Points
- The varying types of the nature of religious experience *e.g.* states of being, direct awareness, the problem of private and public experiences
- The contrast between mystical experience and religious experience
- The nature of how belief might be acquired, fundamentally whether an experience is necessary
- The relationship between experience and belief if any
- Whether it is possible to universalize from a number of individual cases.

Discussion
- The issue of whether God causes religious experience
- The problem of proof and verifiability to convince everyone based on the experience of a few
- The difficulty of such a wide variety of individual descriptions of what religious experience is, might make it impossible to have an impact upon the larger group
- The cultural variation as to what might constitute religious experience might prevent an application to the universal. What is acceptable and credible in one cultural context might not be in another.
- The issue of credulity. What is perceived is as it is, might not be a firm foundation for general belief without everyone having the same experience or encounter
- The word 'should' might be developed from a perspective of a moral obligation which might not be a necessary condition for a step from limited experiences to universal belief.
- There might also be the question raised as to what is meant by 'so many'; who is doing the counting? How many constitute enough to make it applicable to be taken up by everyone?

16. **In an age of ever growing scientific knowledge and understanding, to what extent can a belief in a life after death be justified?**

This question gives an opportunity to evaluate how belief in the metaphysical or the scientifically not provable can be maintained when verifiability is increasingly reflective of scientific processes and a common component of all claims in our modern society.

Key points
- The difference between scientific knowledge and belief, particularly of 'life after death'.
- Some explanation of what is understood by 'life after death'. This could be multicultural and multi-faith
- Whether there are two realms which do not necessarily impact upon one another
- The link between religious belief and 'life after death' and the issue of resolving religious belief in a scientifically dominated world, along with giving purpose to the belief.

Discussion
- A challenge to the assumption in the question that the age is increasingly influenced by scientific knowledge and understanding
- Whether the lack of direct experiential evidence does invalidate belief in general and belief in particular in 'life after death'
- The issue of spirituality being beyond the scope of science and possibly with increasing scientific understanding spirituality is strengthened
- The psychological needs of people trying to explain what is beyond current scientific or rational explanation
- The need for a meaning/purpose to life that science might not provide
- The possibility that spirituality can exist without belief in life after death or that such a belief is redundant without raising the status of science (some Eastern mystical position take such a position)
- Life after death as a motivation for belief.

Optional Theme 8: Theories and Problems of Ethics

17.   Critically evaluate the claim that world poverty is an ethical issue.

The question can be approached in a variety of legitimate ways. Part of the discussion can include criteria to distinguish what is an ethical matter and what is not, but it should pay attention to the ways in which world poverty might or might not be of ethical concern.

Key points
- What might constitute an ethical issue?
- Starting from the fact that millions of human beings live in absolute poverty: hunger, malnutrition, widespread disease, high infant mortality *etc*., the question arises: does this world situation imply moral responsibility?
- Any set of criteria, which help to identify what a moral issue can be, can be analyzed.
- Ethical systems that may apply: ulitarianism, duty-based theories, virtue ethics, biological determinism
- Ethical, political or both? Someone said: "When I help the poor I am called a saint, but when I ask why they are poor I am called a communist "
- A matter of ethics, economy or both?
- When accepting it as an ethical issue, an objection to those who deny a duty of caring is the 'negative actions' thesis. It questions the distinction drawn between doing and letting happen. If killing a person is wrong, then what is so different about letting someone die?

Discussion
- Is there a duty to alleviate poverty?
- Justice or charity? We tend to think of charity in terms of the responses of individuals, whereas the idea of justice covers the general structures and relationships which exist, or ought to exist, in a society.
- The claim that charity begins at home. It often stands for a general objection to assistance for others, namely a refusal to see what happens in the rest of the world as being morally relevant at all.
- Individual ethics, global, or both
- Should world institutions care about global issues and governments only be concerned with their own citizens?

18.   Evaluate the extent to which moral action can be understood as determined.

Although answers are expected to discuss the degree to which moral action might be determined, there might also be the possibility of free will.

Key points
- Conditions for moral action according to different positions, including non-western traditions.
- Some think that nothing up to the point at which one chooses determines irrevocably what the choice will be. It remains an open possibility that one will choose something until the moment when it actually occurs. It is not determined in advance.
- Determinism claims that the circumstances that exist before we act determine our actions and make them inevitable.
- Up to now it has seemed that determinism is the big threat to responsibility. Some think that if determinism is true, no one can reasonably be praised or blamed for anything, any more than the rain can be praised or blamed for falling. Others think that it still makes sense to praise good actions and condemn bad ones, even if they were inevitable.
- Some sustain that free action is just a basic feature of the world, and it cannot be analyzed. There is a difference between something just happening without a cause and an action just being done without a cause. It is a difference we all understand, even if we can't explain it.
- Others think responsibility for our actions requires that our actions be determined, rather than requiring that they not be. The claim is that for an action to be something you have done, it has to be produced by certain kinds of causes in you.
- Uncaused (possibly random) action is not necessarily free.

Discussion
- Determinism does not claim that we can know all the laws of the universe and use them to predict what will happen. We cannot know all the complex circumstances that affect a human choice. Predictability is not the point. The hypothesis is that there are laws of nature which govern everything that happens in the world.
- Free action does not require that there be no determining cause at all: it means that the cause has to be of a familiar psychological type.
- To avoid the conclusion that the feeling of choosing something is just an illusion, it is necessary to explain (a) what you mean if you say you could have done something other than what you did, and (b) what you and the world would have to be like for this to be true.
- How responsibility for our choices makes sense if they are not determined? It is not clear what it means to say I determine the choice, if nothing about me determines it.
- We are not responsible for our actions whether determinism is true or whether it is false. If determinism is true, antecedent circumstances are responsible. If determinism is false, nothing is responsible. There is no responsibility. Therefore, what is responsibility?