



**PHILOSOPHY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 1**

Thursday 17 May 2007 (afternoon)

2 hours 30 minutes

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer one question.
- Section B: answer two questions, each chosen from a different Optional Theme.

*In answering questions, candidates are expected to:*

- *present an argument in an organized way*
- *use clear, precise and appropriate language*
- *identify any assumptions in the question*
- *develop a clear and focused argument*
- *identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response*
- *identify counter-arguments to their response, and address them if possible*
- *provide relevant supporting material, illustrations and/or examples where appropriate*
- *conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.*

### SECTION A

*Answer **one** question from this section. Write approximately 800 words divided into: part (a) 50 words, part (b) 250 words, part (c) 500 words.*

**Core Theme: What is a ‘human’ being?**

*Either*

1. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

“Life is an island in an ocean of solitude and seclusion. Life is an island, rocks are its desire, trees its dreams, and flowers its loneliness and it is in the middle of an ocean of solitude and seclusion. Your life, friend, is an island separated from other islands and continents. Regardless of how many boats you send to other shores you yourself are an island and far away in its compassion and hidden in its secrets and mysteries.”

[Source: K Gibran, *Mirrors of the Soul*, Page 66 Carol Publishing 1992]

- (a) What philosophical issue could be identified from this extract? *[3 marks]*
- (b) Compare and contrast **two** different philosophical views that explore the issue that you have identified. *[12 marks]*
- (c) “The essence of our relations with other people is conflict.” Critically discuss. *[15 marks]*

*Or*

2. Study the picture below and then answer the following questions.



[Source: Wang Jiazeng *Staring man*, 1999]

- (a) What philosophical issue could be identified from this picture? *[3 marks]*
- (b) Compare and contrast **two** different philosophical views that explore the issue that you have identified. *[12 marks]*
- (c) To what extent are people unique individuals as well as representatives of the whole of humanity? *[15 marks]*

## SECTION B

*Answer two questions from this section, each chosen from a different Optional Theme. Each question in this section is worth [30 marks].*

### **Optional Theme 1: Political Philosophy**

3. Explain and discuss the following statement: “Individuals can be brought to justice only under the laws of their own country, not on the basis of an international law, even if they have committed serious misdeeds such as genocide or crimes of war.”
4. Assess the merits and drawbacks of the notion of “Social Contract”.

### **Optional Theme 2: Knowledge**

5. Assess the extent to which it is legitimate to justify knowledge claims on the basis of sense experience or reason.
6. Can the sciences provide true knowledge?

### **Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of Culture**

7. Intellectual progress is an essential element for the survival and maintenance of cultures. Explain and discuss.
8. To what extent do you agree that economic dominance leads to cultural dominance?

### **Optional Theme 4: World Philosophies**

9. Analyse and discuss the idea of transmigration in the context of Buddhism, Hinduism or both.
10. “As an agent, one is necessarily responsible for one’s actions.” Analyse and discuss this statement from at least one of the three ethical views: Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam.

**Optional Theme 5: Nature, Work and Technology**

11. Critically evaluate the claim that there is a philosophically justifiable hierarchy of labour (*e.g.* those near the bottom, manual workers, have less status than those at the top, managers).
12. Explain and discuss the consequences of defining the quality of civilization based solely on sophistication of technology.

**Optional Theme 6: Philosophy of The Arts**

13. Critically assess the following statement: “True art should have political effects.”
14. Can a TV commercial be considered a work of art?

**Optional Theme 7: Philosophy of Religion**

15. Critically assess the claim that the use of language in describing and expressing religious experience is useless because religious experience is beyond reasoned explanation.
16. Explain and discuss the impact of religious belief on ethics.

**Optional Theme 8: Theories and Problems of Ethics**

17. Critically discuss the role scientific knowledge should play in the application of ethics.
  18. Neither duty nor the benefit of the majority are adequate principles for a moral theory because they undervalue the role of personal sentiments and emotions. Explain and discuss.
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