

General Philosophy

July 2022

Answer ALL questions in Section A in the OMR sheet provided.

1. The four main divisions of Philosophy are metaphysics, epistemology, and _____

A. Logic

B. Bioethics

C. Aesthetics

D. Categorical Logic

2. "What is knowledge?" and "What is truth?" are in the branch of Philosophy Known as _____

A. Logic

B. Aesthetics

C. Metaphysics

D. Epistemology

3. Micheal believes in honesty and tries to tell the truth in every situation; how he also thinks it is correct to lie to avoid hurting people's feelings. This example of _____

A. Belief

B. Absurd-ism

C. Metaphysics

D. Justification

4. Which of the following is an example of a value?

A. Justice

B. Security

C. Happiness

D. All of the above

5. Kant claimed that the basic rule of determinism, _____ was one of them by which people interpret every experience.

A. the principle of universal freedom

B. the principle of universal causation

C. the principle of universal indeterminism

D. the principle of universal soft determinism

6. If you assume that a set of statements is true, and yet you can recognise a false absurd statement from it; then the original set of statements as a whole must be false. This kind of argument is known as _____

A. Modus Tollens

B. Modus ponens

C. Hypothetical syllogism

D. Reduction ad absurdum

7. According to Socrates, a clear sign that a person has _____ is the exclusive pursuit of social status, wealth, power and pleasure.

A. worldly wisdom

B. an unhealthy soul

C. exceptional desires

D. philosophical ambition

8. Which branch of philosophy is primarily concerned with the question of being?

A. Marxism

B. Humanism

C. Platonism

D. Existentialism

9. What does "tabula rasa" mean?

A. Clean slate

B. Red tablet

C. New knowledge

D. Rise tomorrow

10. Existential nihilism insists that _____

A. death is not the end

B. knowledge is limited

C. humans are naturally co-dependent

D. the human condition has no meaning

11. Metaphysics is the study of _____

A. Ethics

B. Politics

C. Existence

D. Knowledge

12. A moral theory explains_____

A. why people do what they do

C. where a moral agent got its values

B. why an action is right or wrong

D. why one moral event caused another

13. According to Kant, nothing can be called 'God' without qualification, except_____

A. happiness

B. right action

C. a good will

D. good consequences

14. An important formal characteristic of art is _____

A. coherence

B. social meaning

C. faithful representation

D. the power to evoke strong emotions

15. Making a lying promise would be wrong because_____

A. most people condemn the practice

B. people can cause harm to others by making a lying promise

C. it is impossible to say that everyone should make a lying promise

D. you can be arrested if you make a lying promise by the state laws

16. _____ argue that objects do not exist independent of mind.

A. Realists.

B. Idealists

C. Objectivists

D. Materialists

17. The social sciences ask questions about how people think and act; philosophy the study of_____

A. philosophers' questions which have no answers

B. questions that can be answered by using scientific experiments

C. the meaning of beliefs and whether diverse beliefs are justified

D. how people with diverse backgrounds disagree with each other

18. _____justice refers to the fairness with which a community distribute benefits and burdens among its members.

A. Formal

B. Retributive

C. Distributive

D. Contributive

19. Which of the following explains a materialistic philosophy?

A. Recycling objects will make a person happy.

B. Sharing material goods makes a person happy

C. Having more material goods makes a person happy.

D. Having experiences are more important than material goods.

20. Which of the following explains intrinsic motivation?

A. Buying a second house to appear wealthy.

B. Buying a boat because you love fishing.

C. Buying a big meal because you are hungry.

D. Buying an expensive car to impress your friends.

21. Which of the following demonstrates moral luck?

A. Only the consequence matters in a moral judgement.

B. The reasons are placed systematically before a decision is made.

C. No matter how much a person tries, the individual cannot reason for the right thing to do

D. The principles by which people judge others are similar to the principles use to judge ourselves.

22. Deserved suffering (retributivism) is_____

A. not justified as it leads a lot of suffering

B. justified as it leads to moral responsibility

C. can be justified as it shows all about suffering

D. not effective as it increases the cost of finding a solution to the suffering

23. According to Socrates, a clear sign that a person has_____shows the exclusive pursuit of social status, wealth, power and pleasure.

A. worldly wisdom

B. an unhealthy soul

C. exceptional desires

D. philosophical ambition

24. Relativism means_____

A. what is right or wrong depends on the concerned culture

B. what is right or wrong depends on the education a person has

C. what is right or wrong depends on the grandparent's education

D. what is right or wrong depends on the games played by children

25. Philosophy originated from_____

A. questions about life

B. questions from people

C. questions about religion

D. questions from politicians

SECTION A: SHORT ESSAYS (30 MARKS)

Answer THREE (3) questions only.

1. When, if ever, is taking of a human life justified. Explain with an example.

Ans:- The question of when, if ever, taking a human life is justified is a deeply philosophical and ethical one, often debated in the realms of morality, law, and individual beliefs. Different ethical frameworks and legal systems offer various perspectives on this matter, but it is crucial to note that opinions may vary widely.

One common justification for taking a human life is self-defense. In situations where an individual's life is under immediate threat, and there is no reasonable alternative to prevent harm, many ethical systems and legal codes recognize the right to use lethal force as a means of protecting oneself or others. This principle is embedded in the concept of justifiable homicide.

For example, consider a case where an individual is confronted by an armed assailant who poses a clear and imminent danger to their life. In such a scenario, the use of lethal force may be deemed justified as a means of self-defense. This justification often relies on the idea that preserving one's own life, or the lives of innocent individuals, takes precedence over the inherent value of the aggressor's life in that specific moment.

However, it's important to highlight that the criteria for justifying the taking of a human life may vary across different legal systems, cultural norms, and ethical perspectives. Some argue for a more restrictive approach, emphasizing non-lethal alternatives whenever possible, while others may argue for broader circumstances in which the use of lethal force is deemed acceptable, such as in wartime or certain law enforcement situations.

Ultimately, the question of when taking a human life is justified is complex and subjective, and answers may differ based on individual beliefs, cultural norms, and legal principles.

2. Laws are based on ethics. Explain with an example.

Ans:- Laws and ethics are intertwined concepts that shape the functioning of societies. While laws are formal rules established by governing bodies, ethics refers to the moral principles that guide individuals' behavior. In many cases, laws are indeed based on ethical principles, reflecting the shared values and beliefs of a community. One example that illustrates this connection is the prohibition of theft in many legal systems.

The ethical principle underlying laws against theft is the concept of property rights and the respect for others' possessions. In most societies, there is a widely accepted ethical norm that individuals have a right to own and enjoy their property without the fear of unauthorized taking. This ethical belief forms the basis for laws that criminalize theft.

Consider a legal system that defines theft as the unlawful taking of another person's property with the intent to permanently deprive them of it. This legal definition aligns with the ethical principle that individuals have a right to own and control their possessions. The law, therefore, reflects and enforces this ethical norm by prescribing penalties for those who violate the property rights of others.

In this way, the prohibition of theft exemplifies how laws often derive from underlying ethical principles. Laws against theft not only serve to maintain order in society but also uphold a fundamental ethical value – the right to property. This connection between laws and ethics highlights the role of shared moral principles in shaping legal systems and promoting a just and orderly coexistence.

3. Materialism is a belief that owning and acquisition of the right properties is the vital ingredients of happiness. Explain two objections to materialism. Include an example.

Ans:- Materialism, the belief that the accumulation of possessions is essential for happiness, is a worldview deeply ingrained in modern society. However, this perspective faces substantial objections that highlight the limitations of equating possessions with genuine happiness. Two prominent objections to materialism are the transient nature of material pleasure and the neglect of intrinsic values.

Objection 1: Transient Nature of Material Pleasure

One fundamental criticism of materialism lies in the fleeting and ephemeral nature of material pleasures. Possessions, no matter how coveted, tend to lose their allure over time as individuals adapt to their surroundings. The initial joy derived from acquiring a new car, for instance, may diminish as the novelty wears off. This phenomenon, known as hedonic adaptation, suggests that the pursuit of happiness through material possessions is a constantly escalating cycle. A poignant example is the smartphone industry, where the latest models generate excitement upon release, only to be overshadowed by newer versions within a short span. The relentless pursuit of material upgrades can result in a perpetual quest for satisfaction, preventing individuals from finding enduring happiness in their possessions.

Objection 2: Neglect of Intrinsic Values

Materialism often sidelines the importance of intrinsic values such as relationships, personal growth, and experiences. The emphasis on external acquisitions can lead to a neglect of meaningful connections and experiences that contribute significantly to overall well-being. For instance, prioritizing the accumulation of wealth and possessions over spending quality time with loved ones may lead to a sense of emptiness and isolation. Research indicates that strong social relationships and personal development contribute more substantially to long-term happiness than the mere possession of material goods. In this context, a poignant example is a workaholic individual who relentlessly pursues career success and material wealth but, in doing so, sacrifices crucial moments with family and friends. Eventually, the loneliness and lack of meaningful connections may undermine the purported happiness derived from material success.

4. People's beliefs and attitudes on moral matters differ considerably from society to society Explain with an example.

Ans:- People's beliefs and attitudes on moral matters indeed vary significantly across different societies due to cultural, historical, religious, and philosophical influences. One example of such cultural diversity in moral perspectives can be observed in the contrasting views on euthanasia between Western societies and certain Eastern cultures.

In many Western countries, there has been an increasing acceptance of euthanasia, particularly in cases of terminal illness or unbearable suffering. This perspective often emphasizes individual autonomy and the right to make decisions about one's own life, including the choice to end it under certain circumstances. Legal frameworks in some Western nations, such as the Netherlands and Belgium, have been established to accommodate these beliefs, allowing for assisted dying under specific conditions.

On the other hand, in certain Eastern societies, particularly those influenced by religious traditions such as Hinduism or Buddhism, the perspective on euthanasia may be more conservative. In these cultures, the sanctity of life is often emphasized, and the idea of intentionally ending one's life, even in the face of suffering, may be viewed as conflicting with the principles of karma or the cycle of reincarnation. In such societies, there might be a stronger emphasis on the interconnectedness of life and a belief that enduring suffering can have spiritual significance.

This example illustrates how deeply ingrained cultural, religious, and philosophical values shape people's moral perspectives. The divergence in attitudes towards euthanasia highlights that what is considered morally acceptable or unacceptable can vary significantly from one society to another. Understanding these cultural differences is crucial for fostering global dialogue and cooperation while respecting the diversity of ethical beliefs around the world.

5. Explain the difference between morality and ethics. Give an example for each.

Ans:- Morality and ethics are related concepts that are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings.

Morality refers to the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. It is often shaped by cultural, religious, and societal norms. Morality is more personal and can be seen as an individual's internal compass guiding their actions based on a sense of right and wrong.

Example of Morality

Consider an individual who believes lying is always wrong, regardless of the circumstances. This person follows a moral principle that lying is inherently bad, and they strive to be truthful in all situations.

Ethics, on the other hand, refers to a systematic study of and reflection on morality. It involves the rational examination of moral principles and how they apply to specific situations. Ethics often provides a framework for analyzing and resolving moral dilemmas in a more systematic and reasoned manner.

Example of Ethics

In a professional setting, a code of ethics may guide the behavior of employees. For instance, a medical professional adhering to medical ethics might face a situation where disclosing the full truth to a patient could cause harm. Ethical considerations in this context may involve balancing the principles of truthfulness and avoiding harm to make a well-reasoned decision.

In summary, morality is the set of principles or values that an individual holds regarding what is right or wrong, while ethics is a systematic and reasoned study of morality, often providing a framework for evaluating and resolving moral dilemmas in various contexts.

SECTION B: CRITICAL ESSAYS (30 MARKS)

Answer ONE (1) question only.

1. Many people believe in science and not religion. Explain the benefits and disadvantages of this belief. Give an example for a benefit and an example for a disadvantage.

Ans:- Belief in science over religion represents a paradigm shift in the way individuals perceive and understand the world around them. This perspective is often associated with a commitment to empirical evidence, reason, and the scientific method. While it has its advantages, it also comes with certain drawbacks.

Benefits

1. Empirical Understanding:- One significant benefit of prioritizing science over religion is the emphasis on empirical evidence. Science relies on observation, experimentation, and the collection of data to formulate theories and draw conclusions. This empirical approach fosters a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the natural world.

For example, the theory of evolution, supported by a vast body of scientific evidence, provides a comprehensive explanation for the diversity of life on Earth.

2. Technological Progress:- Another advantage lies in the tangible outcomes of scientific inquiry, namely technological advancements. The scientific method has been instrumental in driving progress in medicine, communication, transportation, and various other fields.

For example, the development of vaccines, medical treatments, and innovative technologies has significantly improved human well-being and quality of life.

Disadvantages

1. Limits to Explanation:- One notable disadvantage is that science has limitations in explaining certain aspects of human existence, such as subjective experiences, consciousness, and morality. Science often focuses on observable and measurable phenomena, leaving gaps in our understanding of the metaphysical or subjective dimensions of life. Religion, on the other hand, attempts to provide answers to these existential questions.

2. Lack of Moral Framework:- While science can inform ethical discussions, it does not inherently provide a moral framework. Religion, for many, serves as a guide for moral conduct and the cultivation of virtues. The absence of a shared moral foundation in a society that predominantly embraces science can lead to ethical dilemmas and challenges in establishing universally accepted ethical norms.

In conclusion, the choice between prioritizing science or religion reflects individual perspectives on knowledge, truth, and the nature of reality. The benefits of a scientific worldview include empirical understanding and technological progress, while the drawbacks may involve limitations in explaining certain aspects of existence and the absence of a built-in moral framework. Ultimately, the coexistence and dialogue between science and religion contribute to a richer and more comprehensive exploration of the complexities of human experience.

2. Choose any three (3) of the following:

war, abortion, racial discrimination, labour union, drugs, COVID vaccination

Which of the above are social issues and which are considered political issues? Explain ,

with an example for each issue.

Ans:-

Social Issues

Abortion:- Abortion is primarily a social issue as it involves ethical and moral considerations related to a woman's right to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy. The debate revolves around individual freedoms, women's reproductive rights, and the sanctity of life.

Example:- The abortion debate in the United States often centers on the legal and ethical aspects of a woman's right to choose versus the protection of the unborn fetus. Different societal groups hold diverse perspectives on when life begins and what rights should be afforded to the mother.

Racial Discrimination:- Racial discrimination is a social issue that pertains to the unequal treatment of individuals based on their race or ethnicity. It involves societal attitudes, prejudices, and systemic inequalities that impact various aspects of people's lives.

Example:- The Black Lives Matter movement addresses racial discrimination, particularly police brutality against Black individuals. The movement seeks social and systemic changes to address issues of racial injustice and inequality.

Drugs:- Drug abuse is both a social and health issue, as it involves the impact of substance abuse on individuals and communities. The social aspect encompasses factors such as addiction, rehabilitation, and the stigma associated with drug use, while the health aspect involves the physical and mental consequences.

Example:- The opioid epidemic in the United States is a social issue, with widespread addiction affecting communities. Efforts to address this problem involve a combination of social programs for prevention and treatment, as well as political initiatives to regulate the pharmaceutical industry.

Political Issues

War:- War is primarily a political issue as it involves the use of military force and foreign policy decisions by governments. Political leaders make decisions related to declarations of war, peace negotiations, and the allocation of resources for defense.

Example:- The Iraq War (2003-2011) was a political issue driven by geopolitical considerations, intelligence assessments, and policy decisions. The decision to go to war was made by political leaders, and the consequences had long-lasting political, social, and economic implications.

Labour Union:- Labour unions are both social and political entities, but they have a significant political dimension. They involve collective bargaining for workers' rights, fair wages, and better working conditions. The political aspect comes into play when unions engage in advocacy and negotiations with governments for labor laws and policies.

Example:- The formation of labor unions and their involvement in political activities, such as lobbying for pro-worker legislation or negotiating with employers, highlights the political nature of this issue. For instance, debates over minimum wage laws involve both social and political considerations.

COVID Vaccination:- COVID vaccination is a political issue due to the involvement of government policies, public health decisions, and international cooperation in managing the pandemic. The distribution, accessibility, and promotion of vaccination programs are influenced by political decisions.

Example:- The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the development and distribution of vaccines, involves political decisions by governments and international organizations. Debates over vaccine mandates, distribution strategies, and public health campaigns are all political aspects of the broader issue.

3. The invisible gardener

Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in a jungle. In this cleared area, there were many flowers and weeds. Explorer A says, "Someone has taken care of this area." Explorer B says, "There is no gardener." So, they decide to stay and watch to see if anyone is taking care of the flowers and weeds. They do not see anyone. However, Explorer A still believes that there is an invisible gardener who is taking care of the place. They decide to put up an electric fence and brought some dogs to catch the person who was taking care of the place. No one comes near the place. Explorer A still believes that an invisible person is looking after the place.

Is the claim that God exists similar to the claim that a gardener exists? Explain your view.

Ans:- The story of the invisible gardener is a classic philosophical allegory that was popularized by the philosopher Antony Flew in his essay "Theology and Falsification." The narrative serves as a metaphor for the debate surrounding the existence of God and highlights the contrasting perspectives of two explorers regarding the presence of an invisible caretaker.

In the context of the story, Explorer A represents a believer in the existence of God, asserting that there is an invisible gardener who tends to the flowers and weeds in the clearing. This belief is analogous to religious faith, where individuals maintain that there is a divine being or creator responsible for the order and beauty in the universe. Despite the lack of direct evidence or observable manifestations of this invisible gardener, Explorer A holds onto the conviction that such a caretaker exists.

On the other hand, Explorer B represents an atheist or agnostic perspective, rejecting the idea of an invisible gardener. Explorer B insists on empirical evidence and direct observations. In the absence of any observable signs of a gardener, Explorer B concludes that there is no evidence to support the existence of such a being. This skepticism mirrors the stance of atheists and agnostics who demand tangible proof before accepting the existence of God.

Now, drawing parallels to the claim that God exists, the analogy becomes apparent. Those who believe in God argue that there is a divine being overseeing the universe, providing purpose, order, and meaning to existence. This belief often relies on faith, personal experiences, or philosophical reasoning rather than direct empirical evidence. The invisible gardener, in this context, symbolizes the unseen and transcendental nature of God.

Conversely, skeptics and atheists adopt a position similar to Explorer B, asserting that in the absence of concrete evidence or observable phenomena attributable to a divine presence, there is no basis for belief in God. They argue for a naturalistic worldview that relies on empirical observations, scientific inquiry, and logical reasoning to explain the origin and functioning of the universe without invoking a supernatural deity.

In summary, the claim that God exists shares similarities with the claim of an invisible gardener in the sense that both involve beliefs in unseen, transcendent entities that influence the observable world. The story underscores the philosophical tension between faith and empirical evidence in discussions about the existence of God, inviting individuals to reflect on the nature of belief, evidence, and the limits of human understanding.