



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

GCE Philosophy

PHIL3

Unit 3

Key Themes in Philosophy

Final

Mark Scheme

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GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME

	Knowledge and Understanding	Interpretation, Analysis and Application	Assessment and Evaluation
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 5	<p>13–15 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level provide a comprehensive, detailed and precise account of philosophical arguments, positions and concepts relevant to the question, demonstrating a full understanding of the issues raised.</p>	<p>13–15 marks</p> <p>A range of points are selected to advance discussion. Points made and examples used are pertinent and judiciously selected; the nuances of the question will be specifically addressed.</p> <p>Answers in this level critically analyse the range of points and examples selected for discussion to advance a clear, directed and analytical treatment of the issue.</p> <p>The implications of positions discussed are considered and explored.</p>	<p>17–20 marks</p> <p>Reasoning and argumentation are effective, penetrating and expressed with some insight and sophistication. The construction of argumentation is relevant and sustained and reads as a coherent and integrated whole.</p> <p>Answers in this level advance a clear evaluative judgement: at the lower end of this level this may consist of a balanced summary of the strengths and weaknesses of positions or points evaluated throughout.</p> <p>The response is legible, employing technical language accurately and appropriately, with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The response reads as a coherent and integrated whole.</p>
Level 4	<p>10–12 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either provide a clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range of positions and arguments relevant to the question so that, while the response is clearly focused, detailed and precise, it is not comprehensive and some avenues remain unexplored. Or the range of points selected and applied may be quite full but descriptions of philosophical positions, arguments and concepts may lack some detail. Understanding, while good, may not always be precise.</p>	<p>10–12 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either critically analyse a relatively narrow range of relevant points and examples to provide a clear, detailed and pithy analysis of philosophical arguments and positions. Or consider a wide range of material without fully exploiting it, so that some points are not analysed in detail or with precision and some implications are not explored. Critical discussion is focused and generally sustained although some points may not be clearly directed.</p>	<p>13–16 marks</p> <p>The critical appreciation of points raised is employed to advance a reasoned judgement although this may require further support.</p> <p>Some material will be explicitly evaluated although the construction of argumentation may lack some insight or sophistication and positions reached may not convince completely. At the bottom of this level evaluative conclusions might acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses of relevant positions.</p> <p>The response is legible, and technical language is employed with partial success. There may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response reads as a coherent whole.</p>

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME continued

	Knowledge and Understanding	Interpretation, Analysis and Application	Assessment and Evaluation
	A01	A02	A03
Level 3	<p>7–9 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either present a range of knowledge generally and prosaically so that relevant positions are identified and explained but specific arguments will be rare and those given will lack detail and precision (this type of response may be quite lengthy and pedestrian). Or relevant positions, concepts and arguments are introduced and accurately stated but exposition fails to develop beyond a bare outline.</p>	<p>7–9 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either select a range of relevant points and examples to provide a focused discussion of relevant philosophical positions, arguments and concepts in which analysis is brief, lacking in detail and precision. Or interpretation is very narrowly focused, and analysis centres on a partial appreciation of the issue.</p>	<p>9–12 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either evaluate some relevant points and argumentation but may not advance a position or reach a judgement in relation to the issue as a whole. Or positions are listed and juxtaposed so that evaluation is implicit in the order or number of points made and judgements may be made on the basis of limited argumentation.</p> <p>At the bottom of this level juxtapositions lack depth, detail, subtlety and precision.</p> <p>The response is legible, employing some technical language accurately, with possibly some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>
Level 2	<p>4–6 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either demonstrate a basic grasp of relevant arguments and positions through offering a sketchy and vague account lacking depth, detail and precision. Positions may not be clearly described and, at the bottom of this band, descriptions may also be inaccurate and confused in places. Or answers may be relevant but very brief and undeveloped.</p>	<p>4–6 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either select some relevant points but analysis may be basic, sketchy and vague so that critical points are not developed. Or apply and analyse a range of philosophical concepts and arguments without sustaining a focus on the question.</p> <p>Answers lower in the level may exhibit both of these tendencies in discussions of a limited range of points where the focus on the question may be largely implicit.</p>	<p>5–8 marks</p> <p>Answers in this level: Either exhibit a limited attempt to develop argumentation, rather they describe a view. Or argumentation is confused in places. Judgements may be reached which do not seem to be justified by the reasoning provided.</p> <p>The response may be legible, with a basic attempt to employ technical language, which may not be appropriate. There may be frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 GENERIC MARK SCHEME continued

	Knowledge and Understanding	Interpretation, Analysis and Application	Assessment and Evaluation
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 1	1–3 marks Answers in this level demonstrate a very limited grasp of relevant positions and arguments. Knowledge and understanding of at least one aspect of relevant positions, arguments or concepts will be present.	1–3 marks Answers in this level provide a limited analysis of philosophical arguments and positions: Either through offering a brief, fragmentary, interpretation and analysis of the issues. Or through offering a tangential account in which some points coincide with the concerns of the question but relevance is limited.	1–4 marks Argumentation is likely to be brief, judgements may be asserted without justification and reasoning is confused, misdirected or poorly expressed. Technical language may not be employed, or it may be used inappropriately. The response may not be legible and errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive.
0 marks	No relevant philosophical knowledge.	No relevant philosophical points.	No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

GCE PHILOSOPHY UNIT 3 QUESTION-SPECIFIC MARK SCHEME

Examiners should note that the content suggested in the question-specific mark scheme is intended as an indication of the range of issues candidates are likely to draw from but is not exhaustive, and other relevant material and approaches should be credited. Note also that the range of potentially relevant material mentioned is not intended as a prescription as to what candidates' responses ought to cover and examiners should refer to the Generic Mark Scheme when awarding marks.

Section A
Philosophy of Mind

EITHER

01 Assess the view that the mind is purely physical.

(50 marks)

AO1

Candidates should recognise that the view in question is claiming that mental states and processes are reducible to (or identical with) physical states and processes and it is likely that they will contrast this view with dualist accounts of the mind.

The question invites assessment of materialism in general and so a range of possible arguments and positions may be selected for discussion.

Appropriate knowledge of the view could be demonstrated through discussion of whether an ontological reduction of mental to physical can succeed. The mind-brain identity theory is likely to figure most prominently in responses (type-type and token-token versions).

The view that mental states are reducible to their causal role (functionalism), might also figure as a version of materialism. As might non-reductive materialist positions (anomalous monism or biological naturalism).

Candidates might also approach the question through discussion of logical behaviourism, but responses that simply focus on the issue of whether the mental is analytically reducible to behaviour without addressing the issue of whether behaviour can be considered 'purely physical' should be considered narrow and be awarded accordingly.

AO2

(0-15 marks)

Candidates may draw on some of the following or equivalent points:

Arguments for the view include:

- The difficulty that substance dualism has with explaining the causal interaction of mental and physical.
- Appeals to science: There is no room for non-physical substances or properties within physics. The physical universe is causally closed. A causal influence from outside the physical universe would contravene the principle of the conservation of energy. The purely physical origins, and physical constitution of each individual human being, and the strictly material evolutionary origins of the species, favoured by scientific (and common sense) accounts of human nature mean there is no place for an immaterial mind. Avoids problem of nomological danglers.
- Evidence for the neural dependence of all mental phenomena (the affects of drugs and brain damage, MRI of the brain) is best explained by supposing them to be physical.
- Explanatory power: the success of the neural sciences in explaining behaviour and experience in terms of neurological processes.
- Ockham's razor: materialism is to be preferred over dualism as the simpler theory, so long as it explains the phenomena (at least) as well as dualism.
- Introspection may not reveal how things really are within the 'mind'.

- The identity theory is consistent with other successful reductions in the history of science (e.g. sound to compression waves of air). The identity of mind and brain is not analytic, and so cannot be known a priori. Rather it is contingent and will be confirmed by empirical investigation.

Arguments against the view:

- Introspection as a source of direct knowledge of the immateriality of the mind.
- Reduction of the mental to the physical leaves out the important bit: the way it feels to be conscious. The irreducibility of qualia (e.g. Jackson. Responses e.g. Papineau). [Responses that appeal to the irreducibility of qualia commit the ‘phenomenological fallacy’ of supposing we infer real objects from phenomenal ones. To perceive an after-image is not directly to perceive a phenomenal object, but to have an experience normally associated with perceiving a real object (Place).]
- The irreducibility of intentionality.
- Identifying mental with physical commits a category mistake.
- Leibniz’s law: since body and mind have different properties (e.g. extended/unextended, non-intentional/intentional, etc.) they must be numerically distinct. [The response that Leibniz’s law doesn’t apply in intentional contexts. The masked-man fallacy.]
- Our vocabulary of mental states and processes does not *mean* the same as our vocabulary of physical states and processes occurring in the brain and so we cannot be talking about the same things. [The distinction between meaning and reference may be used in response to this argument.]
- Zombies or a zombie world are conceivable or logically possible and would be different from the actual world. (The claimed identity between mental and physical cannot be contingent. True identity statements are necessary but discoverable empirically [Kripke].) Therefore there must be more to others than the physical. [Responses, e.g. verificationism, private language argument, genuine zombies are not conceivable or would be conscious (Dennett).]

Responses which approach the question through other versions of materialism or logical behaviourism will be credited so long as they maintain focus on the issue of whether the mind is purely physical.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the view, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

(0-20 marks)

The central issue concerns whether the mind can be accounted for without recourse to any non-physical substances or properties and candidates should make a clear, reasoned judgement on this.

- Candidates might argue that mental states cannot be reduced and defend a version of dualism, that the mental supervenes on the physical, anomalous monism or biological naturalism.
- It might be argued that no materialist theory establishes that the mind is purely physical: reductive positions seem to have predicate or property dualism built in; non reductive positions can be accused of reinventing epiphenomenalism.
- Alternatively, they may argue that the mind can be reduced to the physical and defend a reductive view of the mind.
- In between these two positions candidates might argue that certain mental states are likely to be reducible while others are not.

- Candidates may defend a *particular* materialist theory such as the type-type identity theory or versions of the multiple-realisation thesis (token-token versions of the identity theory, anomalous monism, biological naturalism or functionalism), but focus should be on why the theory selected establishes the mind as purely physical
- Judgements which question the terms of the question are also possible, e.g. that the mind is neither physical nor non-physical because the distinction involves a category mistake and talk of the mental is in reality talk of actual and potential behaviour (logical behaviourism); or talk about the mental is part of a theory (folk-psychology) which is false (eliminativism); or that it doesn't matter what the mind is, it is what mental states do that matters (functionalism).

OR

02 Evaluate the possibility that yours is the only mind that exists.

(50 marks)

A01

The question concerns solipsism, the problem of other minds and the problem of whether philosophical zombies are possible or conceivable. Candidates need to show understanding of the sceptical challenge to belief in minds other than their own:

The possibility is likely to be seen as a consequence of the dualist picture of the nature of mind, or more broadly, of the view that first person ascription of mental states have epistemic priority over 2nd or 3rd person ascription. If I come by knowledge of my own mind through direct inner inspection, then knowledge of other minds is by contrast indirect. All I directly observe in others is their behaviour, not their minds. The sceptic can, therefore, question the reliability of any inferences made on the basis of others' behaviour concerning their states of mind. More radically the possibility opens up that such inferences are radically mistaken and others do not enjoy an inner world of mental states but are 'zombies'. Others exhibit all the complex behaviours normally associated with human beings, but they are not conscious.

A02

Arguments purporting to solve the problem of other minds:

- The argument by analogy with my own case: I learn the connection between behaviour and internal mental states by observing it in my own case. Subsequently I suppose that there is an analogous connection between the behaviour of other people and internal states I do not observe (Mill, Russell).
- [Difficulties with the argument by analogy: e.g. analogical arguments are weak, especially when starting from just one case; the impossibility of making independent checks that others have minds; that we are unaware of making such inferences; Wittgensteinian approaches: the argument presupposes we can identify others.]
- The apparent unlikelihood of me being the only human being with a mind. Given our shared biological nature, others are likely to be like me in this respect.
- The argument to the best explanation: It is possible that others are zombies. However, folk psychology provides a powerful theory by which to predict and explain complex

human behaviour and is the best explanation available. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that others are minded. The Cartesian argument that without minds it is inconceivable that others would be capable of complex linguistic behaviour, or exhibit unpredictable behaviour.

- [Difficulties with this argument: e.g. at best it makes the existence of other minds probable. Solipsism remains a logical possibility.]
- Materialism: the mind is the brain, we know others have brains, so we know others have minds. Arguments for and against materialism may be explored.

Attempts to bridge the epistemic gap between behaviour and mind:

- Phenomenology: I am *directly* aware of the existence of other minds when I encounter other people. This immediate awareness is not something inferred, but an integral part of my experience of being-in-the-world. Consequently, the issue of whether I am justified in believing in other minds doesn't arise.
- The Criteriological approach: there must be certain publicly observable rules or criteria which we apply in ascribing mental states to others and which determine correct and incorrect ascription, since otherwise it would be impossible to learn the language of mental states. So, if others meet certain behavioural criteria, then we are justified in saying they are minded. Arguments for and against this view.
- Analytical behaviourism: the attempt to defuse the problem by denying that there is anything over and above behaviour the existence of which needs inferring. Ryle's dispositional analysis. Arguments for and against this view.
- The concept of a person is primitive and that to which both mental and psychological predicates can be correctly applied. The identification of other persons presupposes that they are minded, so the claim that zombies are possible begs the question.

Arguments which question the Cartesian starting point:

- The impossibility of starting from one's own case in ascribing mental states. The impossibility of instituting a private language and the consequence that correct ascription of mental states to myself requires a public language in which others are ascribed mental states (Wittgenstein).
- Problems of recognising my own mind. The behaviourist critique of privileged access, attacks on introspection as a source of self-knowledge.
- Arguing for solipsism is pragmatically self-defeating since there would be no one to communicate the arguments to. Presuppositions of my having a language.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the view that other minds exist, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should form a clear, reasoned judgement about whether theirs is indeed the only mind.

Candidates may defend either view, on a range of grounds and precisely what is meant by accepting or rejecting the view in question (what is meant by 'mind') will depend on the theoretical position defended (see under AO2).

Other than defending the view that theirs is the only mind or the view that others do have minds, candidates might question the terms of the question and conclude that materialism entails that others don't have minds, and neither do I. (Logical behaviourism, eliminativism.)

Section B Political Philosophy

EITHER

03 Evaluate the libertarian view that redistribution of property by the state cannot be justified.
(50 marks)

AO1

The view should be identified as the libertarian claim that any attempts by the state to transfer wealth from the rich to the poor are unjust. Government has no business interfering in the property holdings of individuals since to do so violates their rights. Taxation is theft or forced labour. Proper respect for individual liberty requires that property distribution be left to the free market and to voluntary charitable donations. The view is likely to be associated with Locke or Nozick.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

Arguments for the view:

- Redistributive taxation violates the natural right to property which the state is instituted to defend. Arguments concerning the justice of property acquisition might be advanced to show we have such a natural right, e.g. we have a right to take from the common store what we need for survival so long as we leave 'enough and as good' for others; or people own their bodies and so have a right to the fruits of their labour (Locke).
- Redistributive taxation violates principles of proper respect for individual liberty, the ownership over one's self and the products of one's labour. It treats citizens as a means to an end. It violates the principle of desert: individuals deserve the benefits of their labour and their natural talents.
- In the absence of any agency responsible for distribution of property, appeal to principles of fairness, desert, or need, are inappropriate. Since property is appropriated from nature and transferred in a decentralised way, justice requires a non-patterned distribution of property. Nozick's entitlement theory: a just distribution is one in which all property has been acquired in accordance with principles of just acquisition and transfer.
- Any patterned distribution is inherently unstable since it is liable to disruption by the freely made economic decisions of individuals. But it would be wrong of the state to interfere to prevent people making such decisions. Therefore, if the new pattern is unjust, then all patterned distributions must be unjust (Nozick).
- Redistribution of wealth doesn't recognise the importance of individual responsibility. People should live with the consequences of their life-style choices. Those choosing to work hard shouldn't be made to subsidise those who choose leisure.
- Practical considerations: Wealth distribution should be left to the free market. Taxation of the wealthy discourages industry and trade. Welfare for the poor encourages idleness.

So keeping taxation to a minimum provides the best conditions for wealth creation, making us all richer (trickle down economics).

Arguments against the view:

- Appeals to principles of:
 - Equality: Justice requires that property tend towards an equal distribution in order to pay proper respect to the value of all individuals in society.
 - Need: The urgent claims of those in need of resources and welfare require redistribution of property.
 - Desert: Taxation can be used to ensure individuals receive a just return on their contribution to society through their labour and talents.
- Utilitarian arguments:
 - The principle of diminishing marginal utility suggests that equality of distribution will provide the optimum happiness for the majority.
 - More equal societies are happier.
 - Taxation is required to provide public goods which make us all better off. Public goods once provided cannot be withheld from any individual (the free rider problem), so all must be forced to pay.
 - Welfare programmes which promote human well being require taxation. Welfare programmes promote other social goods, e.g. positive freedoms.
- Since we all benefit from the state then we all have a duty to contribute to the less fortunate (arguments from fairness). In accepting the benefits we consent to be taxed (tacitly or hypothetically) to allow minimum standards of living for all.
- Redistribution is necessary to mitigate against differences in people's life prospects due to circumstances over which they have no control, e.g. social background, ill health, lack of natural abilities.
- Arguments focusing on the issue of consent. Redistribution is just so long as those taxed consent (tacitly, hypothetically, through voting).
- Welfare liberalism: Unfettered markets lead to great inequalities in property and power.
- From behind the veil of ignorance we would choose a society with the most equal distribution of resources. The difference principle: inequalities are justified only to the extent that they benefit the worst off (Rawls).
- Feminist arguments. Redistribution is needed to address historic inequalities. The state should ensure women are compensated for child rearing. Divorce laws should ensure women are compensated and have equal share of the value of the marriage.
- Candidates might also explore the issue of whether distributive justice applies globally.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the view, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be employed to support a range of positions from claiming that redistribution cannot be justified (libertarianism) through to the claim that wealth should be distributed equally among all citizens (egalitarianism).

Between these positions candidates might defend the justice of some level of redistribution, e.g. to prevent extremes of poverty, establish some form of welfare state, provide economic opportunities for citizens, etc.

OR

04 'Too much freedom is a dangerous thing.'
Discuss what limits, if any, the state should place on individual liberty. *(50 marks)*

AO1

The question is fairly permissive and different approaches may be taken. Candidates are likely to focus on the question of what restrictions can be placed on individual freedom by the state and the relationship between law and freedom. Individual freedom may be optimised by legal constraints.

The distinction between positive and negative liberty may be drawn in order to explore how restrictions on negative liberty may provide a basis for increases in positive liberty.

Candidates may also explore the issue of why freedom is valuable, e.g. it promotes human flourishing, shows proper respect for individual autonomy, is an intrinsic good.

Examples of how freedom can be dangerous are likely, such as drug taking, the unhappy condition of man in a state of nature, licentiousness, undermining of social cohesion.

AO2**Arguments for the view that too much freedom is dangerous:**

- Unconstrained freedom would lead to anarchy: Hobbes' 'war of every man against every man'. A state of liberty without natural law would be a state of licence (Locke).
- Freedom is open to abuse. It can be used to exploit and harm others. So freedom needs protection by the law. If no constraints are placed upon individual freedom then their actions will encroach on others' freedoms. Thus freedom needs to be limited by the liberty or harm principle.
- Freedom is only valuable for members of a civilised community with the full use of their rational faculties. Allowing children and 'barbarians' too much freedom would be counterproductive (Mill).
- Liberty must be restricted by considerations of utility. Too much freedom need not be conducive to the general happiness. Human beings are likely to choose life-styles and actions which are not in their best interests. People don't learn from their mistakes, so need guidance in how to live.

- Paternalism: restrictions on individual liberties are necessary to protect citizens from themselves and ensure they act in their own best interests.
- Conservatism: Human moral weakness (original sin) means freedom may lead to moral corruption, (e.g. through pornography, prostitution, etc.) whence the need for legislation to protect traditional morality.
- Positive freedoms are promoted by collective living and so require restriction on negative liberty. People need to be forced to be free. True freedom is only possible through legislating for oneself and through conformity of one's own with the general will.
- Deontological approaches: Too much freedom may license others to infringe our natural rights. The state is justified in limiting individual liberty in order to protect those rights.
- Economic arguments: laissez-faire capitalism is the freedom to exploit.

Arguments for the view that restrictions on freedom are not justified:

- Anarchism: no restrictions by a state can be justified. The 'principle of private judgement': that individuals must determine their duties for themselves (Godwin).
- Proper respect for individual autonomy requires that citizens be allowed to make their own choices.
- If negative freedom is seen as valuable, then any laws that restrict it should be kept to a minimum.
- Utilitarian defences of freedom: Freedom leads to happiness. Allowing citizens freedom encourages them to develop independence of judgement and autonomy which are necessary for human flourishing and social improvement. Few restrictions on individual freedom will encourage experiments in living.
- Arguments concerning freedom of expression and thought, e.g Mill's arguments: freedom of expression is most likely to lead to the truth, true opinions will be strengthened, etc.
- The argument that restrictions on individual liberty should operate in the sphere of other regarding actions. Those affecting only the self and consenting adults should not be restricted.
- Economic arguments: laissez-faire capitalism and the free market will lead to greater wealth for all.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the view, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Candidates should reach a clear, reasoned conclusion and a range of positions might be defended depending, in part, on how candidates define 'freedom'.

- At one end, candidates might defend an anarchist position and argue that no restrictions on individual liberty are justified. You cannot have too much freedom.
- Or for a socialist or Marxist position, that true freedom will only be realised once private property is abolished, exploitation and alienation are at an end and the individual can choose how to labour ('fishing in the morning, criticising in the evening'.) You cannot have too much genuine freedom.
- At the other they might argue the state is justified in imposing whatever restrictions it deems necessary to keep the peace (e.g. Hobbes) or to ensure social cohesion. Any freedom is dangerous.

Otherwise, candidates might attempt to draw the limits in a variety of ways, for example:

- They might defend the liberal view that the state should place constraints on individuals' freedoms to the minimum extent compatible with like freedoms for others.
- Justice requires the protection of basic liberties (freedom of speech, conscience, assembly, etc.)
- Man is a social animal and emphasis on individual freedom and autonomy is not a thick enough 'glue' to hold society together.
- Welfare liberalism: There is a trade off between types of freedom. In order to maximise citizens' positive freedoms (by providing education, health care provision, etc.), legislation which restricts their negative freedoms, such as universal taxation, is necessary.
- Conservatism and the argument that freedom should be limited by other social goods such as the rule of law, respect for political institutions, social harmony and traditional morality.

Section C
Epistemology and Metaphysics

EITHER

05	Assess the view that knowledge is the same thing as justified true belief.	<i>(50 marks)</i>
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AO1

Candidates should recognise that the view in question is the traditional, tripartite analysis of knowledge. It claims that if S knows that p, then S has a belief that p, p is true, and p is justified. To say knowledge and justified true belief are the same thing is to say that these three conditions are individually necessary, and jointly sufficient for knowledge: you have knowledge if and only if you have a justified true belief.

Candidates may elect to explore further the concepts of belief (e.g. the dual component view, instrumentalism and realism) justification (e.g. internalism, externalism) and truth (e.g. correspondence, coherence), although a good knowledge base need not engage in such details.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

Considerations concerning the necessity of each condition:

1 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is or is not possible without *belief*:

- Knowledge entails belief. It is contradictory for S to know that p but not to believe that p. The point is likely to be illustrated through examples, e.g. I cannot both claim to know it is raining but not to believe that it is raining.
- Apparent counter examples might also be discussed, e.g. being unable to believe what is staring you in the face because of shock (counter to this that you still believe although it is emotionally difficult to deal with the belief); the diffident student who has studied hard for an exam, but doubts the answers he gives although they are correct. Knowledge concerns appropriate behaviour rather than belief. (A counter to this: that selecting the correct answer demonstrates a sufficient level of belief.)
- Instrumentalist accounts of belief might be used to suggest that a belief is not a representation of a state of affairs in the world, but a disposition to behave in certain ways. Thus knowledge may be analysed in terms of such dispositions without reference to belief. Reference might be made to logical behaviourism or Dennett's 'intentional stance'.
- Incompatibilism. Knowledge and belief are distinct ways of apprehending reality. They are distinct faculties characterised by infallibility and fallibility respectively (e.g. Plato's *Republic*).

2 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is or is not possible without *truth*:

- You can't know what is not true. It is contradictory for S to know that p but for p to be false, even if the belief is well justified. Expect examples, e.g. people used to believe the

earth was flat and had good evidence for this belief. However, because their belief was false it doesn't count as knowledge.

- Apparent counter-examples of having very good justification for p and being convinced of p, but p being false might be examined, e.g. 'Ordinary people in the ancient world "knew" the earth was flat'. However, while we may sometimes use the word 'know' to mean 'convinced', this is not the standard usage. Such examples fail to distinguish subjective certainty from objective certainty. Truth is an external criterion.
- The strength of justifications for belief is context relative, so that it is always possible for a justified belief to be defeated by new information. A complete justification is impossible (Hesiod's Wagon). Hence the need for the truth condition.

3 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is or is not possible without *justification*:

- The way in which one acquires a belief is important to whether it counts as knowledge. It is possible to have true belief which is not properly justified, or which is acquired by luck, and therefore doesn't count as knowledge. Expect examples, e.g. a gambler who is convinced her horse will win and it does.
- Possession of true belief without an understanding of the reason why it is true makes such beliefs less steadfast in the mind. Examples from mathematics might be used, e.g. being told the answer to a sum would give one true belief, but to have knowledge you have to work out the answer for yourself.
- Certain propositions can be known without justification because they are epistemically basic, e.g. knowledge of my own existence, propositions concerning one's immediate experience, simple mathematical propositions, principles of reason, knowledge of God (faith).
- It is possible to have knowledge without being able to give a justification for how you know, e.g. knowing that the Battle of Hastings took place in 1066, without being able to recall how you acquired the knowledge. Externalism might be used to suggest that an internal justification is not necessary for knowledge so long as it is reached by a reliable process. Whether animals and infants can possess knowledge.

Arguments and examples concerning whether the conditions are jointly sufficient:

- Whether a level of conviction or subjective certainty going beyond mere belief is also necessary for knowledge. Examples purporting to show that someone can be justified in believing that p, but not be sure and so not truly know.
- Whether S needs to know that they know in order to know. Whether S needs not just to have a justification, but be able to recognise that justification.
- Gettier-type objections to show that it is possible to have justified true belief which isn't knowledge. Expect examples from the literature, (e.g. Jones' Ford, the job interview, sheep in field, recorded tennis matches, etc.) but hopefully candidates will be able to produce their own.
- Reactions to Gettier:
 - Strengthening the justification condition, e.g. infallibilism, Chisolm. (Difficulties for this approach, viz. (i) however we strengthen the condition, Gettier scenarios can

still be generated, and (ii) strengthening the condition makes the conditions for knowledge too stringent opening the way to scepticism about everyday cases of knowledge.)

- Knowledge is true belief in which the justification involves no (relevant) false belief. (Problems for this approach, e.g. we hold many false beliefs and so again it opens the way to scepticism.)
- A fourth condition is needed for knowledge. Knowledge is *indefeasibly* justified true belief. There are no further facts that would undermine the belief were they to come to light. (The problem that this may make the truth condition redundant since a genuinely indefeasible belief must be true).
- Causal theories of justification, externalism, reliabilism. Knowledge is true belief acquired by an appropriate causal process. There is a reliable connection between the belief and what the belief is about. (Difficulties for this approach, e.g. Goldman's Barn County).
- Nozick's truth tracking account.
- Logical issues/defeats in Gettier's examples, e.g. use of ambiguous descriptions.

AO3

Assessment should figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments.

Candidates concluding that knowledge is indeed the same thing as justified true belief should deal with Gettier in some other way, e.g. internal justification needs to be stringent and genuine knowledge is in fact limited, or justification must involve the belief being caused by a reliable process.

Candidates denying that knowledge is justified true belief may do so on a range of grounds discussed above, because the conditions are not individually necessary, or because they are not jointly sufficient (e.g. knowledge is true belief that is appropriately caused), or both.

Candidates might also question the usefulness of the attempt to provide a logical analysis of the concept, e.g.

- The attempt to discover necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept is misguided. We should attend to the use of the word not search for the essential meaning.
- The traditional analysis doesn't tell us what counts as a proper justification. If what counts as an adequate justification is relative to context the JTB account is unhelpful.

The view applies only to propositional knowledge and so it doesn't cover practical knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance.

OR

06 Assess the claim that there can be no knowledge of what lies beyond sense experience. (50 marks)

AO1

The question concerns the extent and limits of human knowledge; the relationship between sense experience and knowledge; appearance and reality. Candidates focusing on whether we can acquire knowledge in ways other than via the senses risk missing the nuances of the question.

The claim that there can be no knowledge of what lies beyond sense experience is likely to be identified with empiricism generally, with verificationism or falsificationism, phenomenism, or with scepticism. And given the content of this module, discussions are most likely to focus on the problems of perceptual knowledge or realist claims about universals (Plato's forms).

However, the question is fairly permissive and particularly open to synoptic links with other modules so that candidates may elect to examine a range of different types of knowledge claims about an extra-sensible reality: such as religious claims (the existence of the soul, the possibility of life after death, heaven and hell, God); realism in ethics, mathematics, aesthetics; a physical world beyond sensation (common sense and representative realism, transcendental idealism); the problem of other minds and solipsism; scepticism about knowledge of the past and future.

AO2

Depending on the approach taken expect discussion of the following points:

- Hume's fork: the dichotomy between relations of ideas and matters of fact suggests that all talk of a world beyond sense experience is 'sophistry and illusion'. Analytic propositions are knowable *a priori* but tell us nothing about the world and synthetic propositions are knowable only *a posteriori*. These avenues to knowledge are mutually exhaustive.
- Difficulties for Hume's fork: The Kantian claim that synthetic *a priori* knowledge is possible, e.g. of mathematics and geometry, the categories or morality. Discussion of whether mathematical and geometric propositions are reducible to logical truths (logicism) might be discussed. The issue of whether Euclidean geometry does describe (phenomenal) reality, or whether mathematics describes or reveals the underlying structure of reality.

Discussions focused on the meaning of propositions concerning what lies beyond sense experience:

- Verificationism: a statement is meaningful only if it is empirically verifiable or analytic. So metaphysical statements (about a world beyond sense experience) are either analytic but empty, or unverifiable and meaningless. The truth or falsity of claims about what lies beyond sense experience can make no difference to experience and so are not factually significant. Problems with verificationism: e.g. the verification principle itself is neither analytic nor verifiable and so fails its own test for meaningfulness.
- Falsificationism: a statement is meaningful if, and only if, there is a possible experience that would falsify it. Problems with falsificationism, e.g. it fails its own test for meaningfulness. Might be a test for whether a proposition is scientific (Popper).

Issues in philosophy of perception:

Scepticism about an extra-sensible reality:

- The self-evidence of immediate data of sense contrasted with judgements reached by inference from beliefs about sense data. The veil of perception and scepticism about any inference made concerning material reality. Arguments from illusions, hallucinations, dreams, evil demons, brains in vats may be invoked.

Possible solutions to the problem:

- Mitigated scepticism: no deductive proof can be given of the existence of a super-sensible reality, (matter, the future) but natural inclinations ensure we cannot but believe in one.
- Representative realism. The inference is justified e.g. because different senses corroborate each other (Locke); positing the material world is the best explanation for the coherence and regularity of sense experience.
- Transcendental arguments. Positing the existence of a reality beyond sense experience is a necessary condition for objective experience. Knowledge of the form experience must take is possible a priori (e.g. space and time, and the categories, [e.g. causality, substance]), where the 'form' is 'beyond' sense experience.
- Phenomenalism: No knowledge of what lies beyond sense experience is possible. Knowledge claims about reality are reducible to actual and potential sense data.

Other points:

- The senses are deceptive and knowledge of physical reality is only possible by the use of reason or intuition. Candidates might explore claims made by rationalist thinkers such as Descartes (knowledge of substance, the wax example) Leibniz (knowledge of metaphysical claims or principles of reason).
- Sense experiences are not the primary objects of knowledge, rather we are directly aware of physical objects and only derivatively of sense experiences.
- Arguments to show that we can have knowledge of real non-sensible entities such as numbers and geometric shapes; ethical and aesthetic universals (Justice, Beauty), etc. e.g. that knowledge of such entities cannot be derived from experience; or arguments to the best explanation: claims about a reality beyond sense experience may provide the best explanation of what we do experience, e.g. the existence of God, while not empirically verifiable may be the best explanation for the existence and nature of the world, or a moral reality may be the best explanation of (and presupposed by) moral disputes.
- Problem of induction: Knowledge claims concerning what lies beyond immediate sense experience cannot be deductively established. The status of statements about the past and future.
- The possibility and status of non-sensory experience might also be explored: Religious (e.g. of God or near-death), aesthetic and moral experience. Whether such experience could be verified or falsified. Eschatological verification. Gnosticism, fideism. Alternatively it might be argued that such experience is non-cognitive, as expressions of feeling rather than descriptive of an extra-sensory reality, and therefore does not provide *knowledge*.

A03

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments.

Beyond this candidates may argue that knowledge is confined to sense experience:

- and all other claims are metaphysical nonsense (Hume's fork, verificationism, falsificationism).
- and all knowledge claims about what lies outside experience need to be reduced to claims about experience (phenomenalism).
- but it is possible to have knowledge of the form experience must take (transcendental idealism).
- but while metaphysical, religious, aesthetic and moral claims must be passed over in silence, they can be shown (Wittgenstein).
- but beliefs about such a reality can be meaningful and reasonable to hold (e.g. mitigated scepticism).

Alternatively candidates may regard difficulties for positivist and other approaches sceptical of the possibility of knowledge of what lies beyond sense experience as fatal and conclude that this opens up the way for meaningful talk about, and knowledge of what 'lies beyond'.

Such a position may find support from a range of forms of realism about an extra sensible reality, e.g.

- Representative realism: positing the existence of a material world is justified e.g. as the best explanation of the coherence of experience, mitigated scepticism.
- transcendental idealism (positing the existence of an external world is a necessary condition for the possibility of sense experience).
- We can have knowledge based on non-sensory experience such as of religious, aesthetic and moral realities.
- Other avenues to knowledge of an extra sensible reality - e.g. in ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, universals) such as reason, intuition (rationalism, the synthetic a priori), - or religious truths (fideism).

Section D

Moral Philosophy

07 Evaluate the claim that moral values cannot be derived from facts. (50 marks)

AO1

The question concerns the distinction between facts and values or between what *is* and what *ought* to be.

The distinction between facts and values might be drawn in different ways: Facts concern what is the case in the world, while values guide practice. Factual propositions are descriptions of reality and are informative, while value propositions are prescriptions and recommend action. Factual propositions admit of truth and falsehood, while value judgements do not. Factual propositions can be known while value judgements are non-cognitive (e.g. prescriptive or emotive).

The claim is likely to be identified with Hume's law: One cannot move by deductive argument from what is the case to what ought to be, since what is not in the premises cannot legitimately turn up in the conclusion. An expression of attitude or an exhortation to action cannot be entailed by a description of the facts.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

Arguments for the view that values *cannot* be derived from facts:

- Hume's law: no factual description of an action can entail a value judgement concerning it. The point might be related to the thesis that reason alone cannot provide motivation for action or that beliefs are distinct from desires.
- Logical positivism: Judgements of *value* do not admit of empirical test or *verification* while judgements of *facts* do. Values cannot be detected by the senses. Facts can be verified by experiment, they can be *measured* while values cannot. Facts are objective, and values merely subjective.
 - Emotivism and the claim that propositions about facts *describe* a state of affairs; statements about values *express* an attitude. Apparently descriptive statements of value-type-facts are in reality logically equivalent to exclamations (Ayer), or
 - Prescriptivism. Moral judgements do not describe reality they are exhortations to action (Hare).
- The open question argument: Any attempt to define 'good' in terms of facts leaves open the question as to whether the facts really are good. So no reductive analysis of good to any set of facts can be completed and 'good' is indefinable. Naturalistic attempts to define the good are guilty of the naturalistic fallacy. If an action has the natural property N, which the naturalist claims is equivalent to its being good, the question remains open as to whether it really is good for an action to have the property N (Moore).
- That the naturalist changes the subject. Any attempt to reduce values to facts involves changing what is being spoken about.

General arguments against moral realism may also be used to argue for a gap between natural facts and value judgements, e.g.

- The argument from queerness: Moral realism is committed to the existence of natural entities, qualities or relations of a queer sort. Moral facts would have to be essentially linked to motivation, but it is unclear how any description of facts could prescribe action. Realism is also committed to the queer epistemological thesis that we possess a faculty of moral perception radically unlike any other faculty (Mackie).
- The relativity of moral judgements (e.g. across different cultures) and the apparent irresolvability of many moral disputes suggest there are no moral facts.
- Facts just are, but we are free to choose our values. There is nothing in the nature of things which makes them intrinsically valuable (existentialism).

Arguments for the view that values *can* be derived from facts:

Forms of realism:

- It is a matter of *fact* what our moral duties are: e.g. Platonism: the good can be known through reason and knowledge of the good is sufficient to motivate us to pursue it. Kant: practical reason can discover objective standards of conduct. Categorical imperatives are universally binding. (Problems for these approaches, e.g. there is no universal agreement concerning the good; reason can determine the form, but not the content, of our moral judgements.)
- Divine command theory: morals are given us by revelation. If God's commandments determine our duties we move from facts to moral values. (Problems for this approach, e.g. The *Euthyphro* dilemma shows that it remains an open question whether we should obey God's commands.)
- Naturalism: moral terms are equivalent in meaning to non-moral terms, e.g. goodness means 'conducive to producing the greatest happiness'. (Problems for naturalism, see above.)
- Virtue ethics: natural facts about the proper functioning of human beings mean that human flourishing is to be achieved through developing the virtues and a virtuous character.

Other arguments for realism:

- The analogy with secondary qualities: Vice and virtue are not facts in the world, but concern our feelings about the facts (Hume). But the way humans perceive the facts is a fact of human nature and so is universal. Thus moral judgements are subjective in so far as they depend on how the facts are perceived, but objective in the sense that normal human observers recognise the facts as entailing certain demands on action. (Whether such a view commits the naturalistic fallacy by claiming that moral judgements are reducible to facts of human nature.)
- Moral obligations follow from facts about social institutions. It follows from the fact of having made a promise that you ought to keep it (Searle). (Objection to this approach, e.g. that the attempt to bridge the gap makes implicit appeal to values in the premises [you ought to keep your promises]).
- While moral values may not be analytically reducible to natural facts, they are nonetheless not free floating. The nature of the facts determines the moral judgements we make and so moral judgements supervene on facts.

- The is/ought problem as seen by moral realists: the tension between the objectivity and practicality of moral judgements: How can beliefs about moral facts motivate behaviour? The response that moral beliefs concern *reasons* for action, and so are objective relative to human desires (a relational property) (Smith).
- Although (logically speaking) we may be able to choose any values, the facts about what is conducive to human well-being place constraints on what can meaningfully be considered morally praiseworthy. Certain values are inescapably part of what is 'good' for mankind e.g. pleasure, happiness, self realisation, etc.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the claim, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should reach a clear judgement on whether or not values can be derived from facts.

- Candidates may argue that the values cannot be derived from facts on a range of grounds and defend a non-cognitivist position such as emotivism, prescriptivism, relativism, error theory, or nihilism
- Alternatively they may defend the view that moral values can be derived from facts and defend a version of moral realism such as Platonism, Kantian ethics, naturalism (e.g. virtue ethics, utilitarianism, ethical egoism) or intuitionism.

Note, though, that a clear judgement can be made without the candidate endorsing a particular meta-ethical theory.

OR

08 'Always act so as to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number.' Using a practical moral problem of your choice, discuss whether utilitarianism provides an effective guide to action. (50 marks)

AO1

Candidates need to show an understanding of utilitarianism and its practical application in moral decision making. The theory may be described as teleological and hedonistic. They are likely to identify the quotation with the utility principle and/or act utilitarianism, and the view that the moral worth of each action is to be determined by its contribution to the sum total of human happiness. However better responses will explore other versions of hedonistic utilitarianism, in particular rule utilitarianism.

Candidates should also demonstrate understanding of a particular moral issue or dilemma and be able to apply utilitarianism to it. The issue to be discussed is open, but AO1 credit should be given for the level of detail of the problem candidates are able to draw on.

AO2

The nature of the points of analysis and interpretation that are made about the effectiveness of utilitarianism as a guide to action will depend in part upon the nature of the ethical problem selected for discussion. However, expect some of the following general points:

Strengths of utilitarianism in guiding action:

- Utilitarianism provides a simple mechanism for making moral decisions; it is sensitive to the demands of particular situations since it requires consideration of the real life consequence of our actions which are objective and measurable. Discussion of the specific consequences of different courses of action when applied to an ethical problem could be explored to show this. Candidates might contrast the practicality of utilitarianism with the abstract nature of deontological principles.
- The adoption of utilitarian principles by governments has the practical consequence of improving the general well-being, e.g. relief of poverty. So they are effective.
- Rule utilitarianism might be defended as being more effective than act utilitarianism in relation to the moral problem discussed.

Limitations of utilitarianism in guiding action:

- Practical difficulties: human happiness cannot realistically be calculated, e.g. because different individuals' pleasures are incommensurable, or the problem of comparing higher and lower pleasures; it is not possible to determine how far into the future our calculations should be extended or to determine whether long or short term pleasures should weigh more heavily; the crudeness of the hedonic calculus.
- Utilitarianism is too demanding: we cannot expect people to put the majority happiness above their own or their loved ones'.
- Focusing on the consequences of particular actions opens the way to offending against important moral principles, such as those which defend individual rights (e.g. to life), deserts, the interests of minorities or animals, fairness, justice, etc.
- Means-ends reasoning can be used to justify committing immoral acts. Some actions are always wrong regardless of the good that may come of them (e.g. torture).
- Actions should be guided by the proper motive and not by considerations of the consequences. Utilitarianism ignores the important role individual responsibility and moral integrity play in ethical choices.
- Utilitarianism confuses moral duty with conditional imperatives. Genuinely moral judgements are categorical and universal.
- Standard objections to act utilitarianism which involve sacrificing individual rights to calculations of general utility, or the impracticality of individuals calculating each situation anew, may be used to argue for rule utilitarianism: the view that general rules for conduct the adoption of which leads to the greater sum of happiness should be adopted.
- Happiness may be the consequence of achieving one's goals in life, not the goal itself. Happiness is not the only good. If we aim exclusively at human happiness other goods may be sacrificed, such as liberty, equality, justice, knowledge of one's true situation, etc.

- Criticisms of hedonistic utilitarianism may lead candidates to explore preference utilitarianism as an alternative.

While the above or equivalent points can be credited in the abstract, better responses should explore and illustrate them through a practical ethical problem.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which should be used to support a clear, reasoned judgement. Candidates might conclude that:

- Utilitarianism is effective in guiding action by contrast with virtue ethics or deontology.
- One version of utilitarianism is effective by contrast to with other versions.
- Utilitarianism is not as effective as virtue ethics or deontological approaches.
- Utilitarianism is not effective since its recommendations are not (always) moral.
- Utilitarianism is not effective because of the practical difficulties making calculation face.

Section E Philosophy of Religion

EITHER

- 09** 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'
Assess whether the existence of the universe requires God as a first cause. (50 marks)

The question concerns the cosmological argument for the existence of God. A good knowledge base might draw on any number of different versions of the argument, such as Aristotle's argument for the prime mover, the Kalam argument, Aquinas' three ways, or Swinburne's argument to the best explanation.

Details of different versions vary, but the argument begins by drawing attention to some feature of the universe, e.g. that its existence and that of all things in it is contingent, that all things in the universe are in a state of motion or that all events have causes. Appeal is made to the principle that nothing can come from nothing, that nothing can move itself or be the cause of itself, or the principle of sufficient reason. Some versions then reduce the idea of an infinite chain of causes, movers or contingent beings to absurdity (an infinite series would never have started) in order to conclude that there must be a prime mover, first cause, necessary being, God.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

- Paradoxes of infinity to show the absurdity of an actual infinite series: That an infinite series has no beginning and so could not have started; or that if the present is at the end of an infinite series it wouldn't have been reached yet; an infinite universe couldn't get any older.
- Arguments against the absurdity of an infinite series: the idea of an infinite regress of causes involves no contradiction and what is not contradictory is possible, so the universe may have no cause. Contemporary mathematics can handle infinite series without contradiction.
- The claim that all events are caused is not knowable *a priori* and so it is not contradictory to suppose the universe was uncaused. It is not even a true empirical generalisation as it doesn't hold in quantum physics. The big bang as an uncaused event. Problem of pre-existing matter.
- Scientific explanations are limited to explaining how things come to be within the universe. But the existence of the universe cries out for an explanation. So an explanation in terms of the intentions of a personal agent is needed - God (Swinburne).
- Once an explanation is given of the parts, there is no further explanation needed of the whole. Conceiving the universe as a whole is 'an arbitrary act of the mind' (Hume).
- The universe as a brute fact. The fallacy of composition. What is true of individuals within a set need not be true of the set as a whole, so while all events within the universe may have a cause it doesn't follow that there must be one cause of all events. The argument cannot establish the existence of a single cause for all causal series in the universe. Similarly, just because the existence of all things within the universe is contingent, it doesn't follow that the existence of the universe is contingent (Russell).

- Causal concepts have application only within the universe and cannot be employed to explain the appearance of the universe as a whole (Hume, Kant).
- The argument is contradictory since it claims all events have causes (or are contingent), but concludes that God is cause of himself (is necessary). And if God is an exception to the rule that all beings must be created, then why shouldn't the universe itself be self-causing (necessary)? Logical difficulties with *causa sui*.
- The argument at best establishes a cause of the universe, but not the existence of the God of classical theism, or a personal God.

Better responses will not simply present arguments for and/or against the cosmological argument, but demonstrate awareness of how arguments on one side respond to arguments on the other. Such responses will attempt to develop a critical line through consideration of different positions.

AO3

The above arguments or equivalents should be deployed to advance a clear reasoned position. Possible judgements include that:

- God is a good (or the best) explanation for the existence of the universe, because, e.g. it is simpler than the alternatives, gives a complete explanation by reference to a person's intentions, avoids a regress.
- The universe just is and no explanation is required of why there is something rather than nothing.
- God doesn't explain why there is something rather than nothing, since we still haven't explained God.
- God cannot explain why there is something rather than nothing since the existence of the universe is inconsistent with the existence of God, e.g. because the act of creation would detract from God's perfection, the existence of evil conflicts with the divine attributes.

10 Assess whether belief in miracles is rational.

(50 marks)

AO1

(0-15 marks)

The focus of the question concerns the *rationality* of belief in miracles. Miracles (unlike religious experiences) are publicly observable events and so whether or not it is rational to believe they have occurred typically depends upon whether the evidence of testimony is or could be sufficient. So whether it is rational to believe in miracles is a matter of balancing probabilities. Candidates are likely to refer to evidentialism: the claim that 'the wise man proportions his belief to the evidence' (Hume).

Whether or not such belief is rational also depends on one's definition of 'miracle' and some candidates are likely to approach to the question by examining possible definitions:

- Miracles are extraordinary events caused by God's intervention in the regular course of nature/ a violation of the laws of nature due to a supernatural cause. Expect references to Hume ('a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity') and Aquinas's ('those things ... which are done by divine agency beyond the order commonly observed in nature' and/or to Aquinas' different types of miracle).
- In addition miraculous events may be defined as those which have some religious significance or purpose (Swinburne).

It may be pointed out that miracles are often adduced in support of belief in the existence of God, so that the rationality of belief in miracles depends in part on whether it is rational to believe in God.

This consideration may lead candidates to ask whether belief *in* miracles is different from believing *that* they have occurred. Is this a matter of faith rather than of rationality? Candidates approaching the question from this direction are likely to question whether miracles need to contravene natural laws and define them as coincidences with religious significance or 'signs' (Holland). Experiencing an event as miraculous depends on interpreting it from a religious perspective (Hick). No particular events are miraculous, rather the whole creation is the real miracle (Wiles). This may be related to the idea of 'seeing as'.

While candidates are likely to focus on whether testimony provides sufficient evidence, it would also be relevant to consider whether observing a miracle would be sufficient to make it rational to believe. However, care needs to be taken to distinguish clearly issues pertinent to miracles from those relevant to the status of religious experience.

AO2

(0-15 marks)

Arguments against the view that it is rational to believe:

Arguments focused on whether testimony provides sufficient evidence for rational belief in miracles:

- Hume's main argument about the balance of evidence: Our beliefs must be proportioned to the evidence and beliefs about the world are based on causal inferences grounded in observed regularities. We should believe a miracle only if it is less miraculous than the possibility of the testimony being flawed. Given what we know about the unreliability of human testimony, it is never rational to believe a miracle occurred. 'No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish.' 'There is a mutual destruction of belief and authority'.
- Additional Humean arguments about the reliability of testimony:
 - Human beings have an inclination to believe stories of 'surprise and wonder'.
 - The people who tend to report miracles (Hume's 'ignorant and barbarous nations') are predisposed to believe by their religious background or lack of scientific knowledge and so are unreliable. They are often eager to establish a particular religion.
 - The miracles of different religions are all used to validate the truth, but they can't all be right, and so they count against each other.

More general arguments against the rationality of belief in miracles:

- Belief in miracles is irrational as the idea is logically incoherent: A genuine law of nature cannot be violated, so a miracle is impossible by definition. Any actual transgression of a natural law would falsify the law, and so wouldn't be miraculous. Science describes what happens so any unusual event simply needs to be brought under a new law. [Swinburne's defence that a non-repeatable counter-instance need not falsify a law.]
- Naturalistic explanations can always be found for any supposed miracles.
- Since the laws of nature accord with the will of God, miracles cannot transgress them, but only the laws as we understand them. So any apparent miracle is merely an event demonstrating we may have been wrong about a law of nature (Augustine, Spinoza).
- Hume's Fork: Reason alone can provide us with the basis for belief only concerning relations of ideas. It cannot tell us anything about matters of fact. Thus beliefs concerning matters of fact not in current experience, whether miraculous or mundane, is non-rational.
- Is it rational to believe in the laws of nature? Hume's views on the nature of causation may be explored and it questioned whether if such belief is grounded in habit it is rational. If not does this mean belief in miracles is no less rational?

Theological arguments against the rationality of belief in miracles:

- The idea of a miracle is inconsistent with the divine attributes. If God is omnipotent and omniscient, then there can be no mistakes in the divine plan. But intervention implies the need to redirect the course of nature. This again leads to the claim that apparent miracles are as much part of the divine law as all other natural events.
- The difficulty of explaining how an atemporal God *could* intervene in the temporal order.
- God's interventions might be accused of being arbitrary. There is no apparent rationale for his choice of intervention. This might be related to the problem of evil if God can intervene to alleviate suffering, why doesn't he do it more often?

Arguments in support of the rationality of belief in miracles:

- Candidates might argue that the weight of reliable testimony makes belief in at least some miracles rational. As publicly observable events many miracles would be hard to misperceive. Many have independent corroboration (e.g. the 500 witnesses to Christ's resurrection related by St Paul). Witnesses may have nothing to gain by their testimony; and no predisposition to believe (e.g. converts).
- Swinburne's Principles of Credulity and Testimony: it is rational to believe things are as they seem unless we have good evidence that we are mistaken. And it is rational to believe the testimony of others if we have no positive reasons for scepticism. Argument to the best explanation.

- If testimony is insufficient would observing a miracle oneself make it rational to believe? (Hume might say even here that it would not, since it would still be more miraculous than that one's senses are deceptive.)
- Hume's argument is too strong, since it implies it is never rational to believe testimony about novelties and yet, novelties occur. The example of the Indian prince who doesn't believe in frost might be used against Hume. (Hume's distinction between miracles and marvels – the latter are not contrary to past experience.)
- The objection that Hume's argument begs the question: to determine whether a miracle has occurred by asking whether it conforms with past experience is to presuppose that only events that conform to past regularities can occur. But this is to presuppose that a miracle cannot occur.

Candidates who consider belief in miracles to be a matter of 'seeing as' or interpreting events from a religious perspective may argue that belief in miracles is part of commitment to the religious life. Such belief is independent of evidential or rational support. It is a mistake to employ cannons of scientific rationality within religious discourse (a different language game).

AO3

(0-20 marks)

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which should be employed to support a position.

Candidates focusing on the view of miracles as events which are inconsistent with the laws of nature are likely to argue that:

- The idea entails a contradiction and so it is not rational to believe in them. This position may be linked to the idea that so-called miracles are in reality explicable in terms of natural laws.
- Miracles are logically possible, but physically impossible, i.e. inconsistent with scientific laws. Since it is only rational to believe in events that conform to the laws of nature, it is not rational to believe in miracles. Apparent miracles merely show our ignorance of the relevant laws and so, again, this is likely to be linked to the view that science is committed to revising its account of natural laws to account for any unusual event.
- Events which contravene the known laws of nature are possible, but it is not rational to believe testimony which claims they occur, since this would involve believing the greater miracle.
- The evidence of testimony to the occurrence of miracles is sufficient to make it rational to believe they have occurred.

Candidates may focus on the issue of divine intervention and argue e.g.

- that we can never determine whether any unusual event is a miracle or not as we have no means of discovering whether supernatural intervention has taken place within the natural world. So it is not rational to believe.
- Since God lies outside of space and time he cannot intervene in the temporal order, and so miracles are impossible and so irrational to believe in.

Alternatively candidates who question the traditional definition in terms of breaking physical laws or divine intervention might argue, e.g.

- that miracles are wondrous events which are part of the divine plan on a par with events in the rest of nature and therefore that it is rational to believe they occur.
- Miracles are extraordinary events with religious significance and depend on how one interprets the world. So it is rational for the religious person to believe in them.
- Belief in miracles is not rational because not based on evidence and reason, but on faith.
- It is rational to believe in what will open one's life up to the possibility of communion with God, so it is rational to choose to believe.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID

A2 Assessment Objective	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective
AO1	15
AO2	15
AO3	20
Total	50

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion