



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **Philosophy 5171/6171**

**PLY 2      Moral Philosophy or Philosophy  
of Religion**

## **Mark Scheme**

*2007 examination – June series*

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The following notes are not prescriptive and do not constitute ‘model answers’: they are intended as an ‘aide-memoire’ for Examiners. Marks should be awarded in accordance with the levels of response marking criteria.

1

**Total for this question: 45 marks**

(a) Briefly explain how rule utilitarianism might be applied to any *one* of the following:

- abortion;
- our treatment of animals;
- euthanasia.

*(6 marks)***Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the term ‘rule utilitarianism’ and applies this to one practical issue. Rule utilitarianism (which might also be referred to as *indirect* or *restricted* utilitarianism) is the view that past experience informs us of those actions which, generally, in the long run tend to maximise pleasure or minimise pain thus allowing us to formulate rules which, on the whole, generate the best outcomes. Beyond this, there may be some reference to the problems involved in applying a utilitarian calculation to every instance of an act and/or to ‘two-level’ utilitarianism. The application to one practical issue will clearly reinforce knowledge and understanding. No marks are available for evaluation although knowledge and understanding of the concept may be present in evaluative answers. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented.

1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of rule utilitarianism by offering a partial explanation, eg a brief, accurate definition with little or no application to practical ethics, or a confused explanation, eg it is difficult to distinguish rule from act utilitarianism.

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

(b) Explain and illustrate **one** strength of virtue theory.

*(15 marks)***Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** strength of virtue theory. Candidates might outline a version of virtue theory before they identify a particular strength but full marks can be earned for responses that begin by describing a strength of this approach to ethics. The strength may be selected from these points: unlike other theories it does not ignore the character of the agent; it is in keeping with a holistic view of human beings; it provides a credible model of moral development; it does not over-simplify moral dilemmas by offering a decision-procedure (which might be impossible to apply anyway) or any other relevant point. No marks are available for evaluation but some relevant knowledge and understanding may be present in answers which become tangential. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented. Answers at the bottom of this band may identify several strengths and/or blur two or more strengths together.

- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding either by offering a very limited explanation, eg it is assumed that the illustration provided is self-explanatory, or by offering a confused account in which it isn't clear that the feature identified is a strength. Tangential accounts focusing on weaknesses but which display some knowledge and understanding of virtue theory should be placed at the bottom of this band.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### Selection and Application (9 marks)

Illustrations of at least one situation or moral dilemma in which a strength of virtue theory is revealed should be provided. This might be an outline of a situation in which the adoption of a particular virtue or virtues is positive for the individual and/or society or a situation in which other theories do not seem to work (although care should be taken to avoid sliding into critical accounts of deontology or utilitarianism). Examples might be drawn from the literature, from history or current affairs, or from fiction, or they may be constructed by the candidate.

- 7–9 Selects at least one relevant example and applies this to provide a clear, detailed, illustration in support of their explanation of **one** strength of virtue theory.
- 4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail or precision, of **one** strength of virtue theory. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and very brief but clear illustration.
- 1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague account of **one** strength of virtue theory (e.g. it is not clear that the example provided does reveal a strength) **or** a relevant example is used but application to the question is tangential (e.g. the focus is on weaknesses or difficulties) **or** the response consists of explanation only, no attempt is made to illustrate (locate answers in which the explanation provided is clear at the top of this band).
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

(c) Assess deontological ethics.

(24 marks)

### Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

Deontological ethics may be described in terms of Christian and/or (more likely) Kantian ethics. Certain themes will be emphasised, including the significance of duty; the establishment of maxims, principles or laws which apply universally; the importance of reason and autonomy; motive, intention and the good will; various formulations of the categorical imperative (universal law, respect for persons and the kingdom of ends).

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of deontological ethics.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of deontological ethics. Answers will lack depth, precision and/or detail.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### Selection and Application (9 marks)

Depending on the approach taken, some of the following, or equivalent, points will be raised:

- Some points may be selected to show how deontological thinking applies to moral issues: for example, duties to self and duties to others; perfect and imperfect duties; Kant's examples of suicide, falsely promising, developing talents and helping others; the contrast between duty and desire or inclination.
- Perhaps more likely is the selection of a range of critical points, for example: the tension between the autonomous rational will and the causally-determined lower self; whether Kantian ethics is too formal and/or abstract to be useful as a guide to action; whether it is too rigid and insensitive to feelings or circumstances; whether a moral community could be founded on reason and/or good intentions alone; the problem of conflicting duties or grounds of obligation; whether inclinations have no moral value; whether we could tell whether someone was acting out of a sense of duty or out of inclination; the problem that good intentions can produce bad consequences (and vice versa).
- Comparisons may be made to other normative positions: for example, the development of moral thinking may be seen as *a posteriori* rather than *a priori*.

7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about deontological ethics. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.

4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of philosophical arguments about deontological ethics, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues or listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated.

1–3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about deontological ethics **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a confused or tangential approach to the question.

0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

### Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible and note that evaluative points may feature in the treatment of various issues and points selected for discussion without any additional 'summing-up'.

- It could be argued that deontological ethics have provided an important contribution to moral thinking and/or connects to many aspects of our moral experience. For example, respect for persons may be connected to the concept of rights and/or to the idea that we do think that it is always wrong to... or never right to ...; we do consider intentions when we blame or praise someone, the law for example treats motive and intention seriously (for example, when distinguishing between murder and manslaughter); morality is a constraint on desire etc.
- It could also be argued, following points raised for discussion, either that the approach is too strict, demanding, unemotional etc or too vague or formal to be of much help (eg we know that we should treat others as ends but how exactly do we do this? Aren't completely different actions consistent with this aim?).

- 7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning deontological ethics is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged.
- 4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning deontological ethics but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation is limited or the supporting evidence is limited).
- 1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning deontological ethics is present *either* in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed *or* asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

**2****Total for this question: 45 marks**

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| (a) | Briefly explain what is meant by cognitivism in ethics. | (6 marks) |
|-----|---|-----------|

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of what is meant by cognitivism. This is the view that we can have moral knowledge, that there are moral facts or moral truths; moral properties, like other properties, are a genuine feature of the world, of people or of actions, that we can come to know, sense or appreciate; moral judgements, which may be right or wrong, are beliefs about how the world is; it is a meta-ethical or second-order moral theory. Explanations *may* be located within a particular theoretical approach, such as intuitionism or moral realism. Illustrative examples may be used to assist explanation. No marks are available for evaluative critiques of cognitivism although marks should be awarded for relevant knowledge and understanding contained within them. Locate answers in this band according to the depth and detail presented.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of cognitivism either by giving a brief accurate definition without further elaboration or by giving a confused or tangential account of cognitivism (eg some relevant knowledge is contained in a discussion of whether first-order theories are cognitive).
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

- |     |  |            |
|-----|--|------------|
| (b) | Explain and illustrate <b>one</b> criticism of prescriptivism. | (15 marks) |
|-----|--|------------|

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **one** criticism of prescriptivism. Candidates will probably describe prescriptivism as a non-cognitive meta-ethical position holding that moral language is (descriptive and) prescriptive. Moral thought involves a search for principles that we can commit to, commend, prescribe, universalise etc and moral reasoning involves uncovering the logical relations between our commendations. Some of this may be implicit in the selection of criticisms and full marks can be earned by responses which begin by identifying a criticism. This is likely to be drawn from: whether prescriptivism can distinguish moral from non-moral commendations; whether there is more concern for consistency than there is for correctness; whether it provides an adequate account of moral progress; whether there are limits to what we can commend; whether moral discourse is characterised by a necessary form and a contingent content; whether we can commend something, or someone, without choosing it, or their actions, ourselves; fanaticism; wickedness or any other reasonable point. At the lower end of the mark-band explanations are likely to include or blur together more than one criticism and possibly list criticisms.

1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of one criticism of prescriptivism by offering a confused account of a relevant point or by making a point which is not clearly a criticism of prescriptivism (eg the point and/or the explanation seems focused primarily on emotivism).

0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### Selection and Application (9 marks)

The criticism selected could be illustrated through reference to weaknesses in illustrative examples used in texts e.g. Sartre; illustrations drawn from the literature eg Foot, MacIntyre; illustrations drawn from general texts; or candidates' own illustrative examples.

7–9 Selects at least one relevant example and applies this to provide a clear, detailed illustration in support of their explanation of **one** criticism of prescriptivism.

4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example and applies this to provide a partial illustration, lacking detail or precision, of **one** criticism of prescriptivism. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and a brief but relevant illustration.

1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of **one** criticism of prescriptivism (eg it is not clear how the example provided relates to prescriptivism) **or** the response consists of explanation only, no attempt is made to illustrate (locate answers in which the explanation provided is clear at the top of this band).

0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

<p>(c) Assess whether relativism implies that we ought to be tolerant of moral values which differ from our own. (24 marks)</p>
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### Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

Relativism may be explained as the view (fact) that different societies, different groups within the same society and/or the same society at different times are characterised by different cultural values, norms and practices. Moral beliefs and practices are culturally specific so relative to particular cultures or subcultures at particular times. There are no (or few) moral absolutes.

Tolerance may be presented:

- *Either* as a possible result of the (non-cognitive) view that there are no moral facts or moral truths, so that my feelings, choices, commitments etc are of no more value than yours.
- *Or* as a possible result of moral relativism, so that what is right or wrong is relative to a given culture and members of one culture have no right to impose their values on members of another culture. Some may refer to 'vulgar relativism'.
- *Or* as the view that tolerance is, or can appear to be, a virtue, so that it is a moral fact that we ought to be tolerant.

Beyond this, candidates could focus on the status of the term 'ought' in this statement eg as expressing a value or as describing a truth.



- 4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of relativism and tolerance.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of relativism and tolerance. Answers will *either* lack depth, precision and/or detail *or* one of these concepts may be neglected in a poorly focused or tangential response.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### **Selection and Application (9 marks)**

Depending on the approach taken, candidates are likely to select and apply some of the following or equivalent points:

- Examples of different moral beliefs, standards and practices and/or of how, given the same situation, moral choices can differ.
- The view that morality only makes sense within a given moral tradition – which may or may not value tolerance.
- The view that, if non-cognitivism implies tolerance, non-cognitivism is wrong. Surely there are beliefs and practices that we should not tolerate eg human sacrifice, stoning to death adulterers, incest etc.
- The view that non-cognitivism does not imply tolerance. If morality is based on strongly felt sympathies or principles we are genuinely committed to then this is equally likely to produce intolerance.
- The same discussion in the context of relativism.
- Grounds for tolerance may be based on the difficulties of demonstrating that given beliefs, practices and standards are true and/or the difficulties of imposing moral standards on people or groups who do not accept them.
- Similarly, an account of the disastrous consequences of intolerance.
- It may be claimed that autonomy and/or diversity are facts and that tolerance, along with pluralism and/or liberalism is an appropriate value.
- There could be a discussion of tolerance and social progress and/or tolerance and social decay/moral decline.

- 7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear detailed analysis of philosophical arguments about whether we ought to be tolerant of moral values which differ from our own. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.
- 4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of philosophical arguments about whether we ought to be tolerant of moral values which differ from our own, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues or listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated. Answers in this band may present an intelligent discussion of the merits and/or demerits of tolerance with limited reference to philosophical literature.
- 1–3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about whether we ought to be tolerant of moral values which differ from our own, **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a confused or tangential approach to the question.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

### Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

Again, this depends on the approach taken. It might be argued that:

- While non-cognitivists might be either tolerant or intolerant non-cognitivism doesn't entail that they *ought* to be either. If there are no moral truths then it cannot be a moral truth that we ought to be tolerant.
- This point may also be stated in the context of cultural relativism: ie 'vulgar' relativists make the mistake of imposing a non-relative conclusion on the basis of accepting the fact of relativism.
- Cognitivism leads to relativism and to tolerance. If moral language describes facts then it is quite clear that these facts vary from culture to culture: moreover, what we ought to do (how we ought to be) varies from culture to culture. Tolerance of this promotes human well-being (diversity, autonomy etc)
- Alternatively, far from leading to human and social well-being, tolerance produces moral decline and social decay. Certain values and practices should not be tolerated (because they are simply wrong).

- 7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning whether we ought to be tolerant of moral values which differ from our own is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced and supported. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged, or a positive or negative conclusion might be reached.
- 4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning tolerance but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation or the supporting evidence is limited).
- 1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning tolerance is present either in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed or asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

**3****Total for this question: 45 marks****(a)** Briefly explain **one** objection to fideism.**(6 marks)****Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of one objection to fideism. Fideism will probably be briefly explained, for example as the view that faith, which is contrary to reason, is necessary for religious belief and that either reason is irrelevant to belief or that belief is irrational and opposes reason. *One* objection will be drawn from the status of beliefs held without warrant, how to assess one irrational belief against another or how to justify which is deserving of our commitment; whether or not we have faith makes no difference to reality; the view that faith is not opposed to reason or experience; the dangers of holding beliefs which are not subjected to critical scrutiny; reason is a gift from God and doesn't undermine faith or any other reasonable point. Brief illustrations may be used to explain the objection. At the bottom of this band more than one objection will be given, two points may be blurred together or a list of criticisms might be offered. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of one objection to fideism either by offering a partial explanation of fideism, e.g. a good account of faith is offered but the contrast with reason is neglected so that the objection offered is not clearly an objection to fideism, or an objection is briefly, and accurately, identified with little or no explanation.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

**(b)** Explain and illustrate **two** solutions to the problem of evil.**(15 marks)****Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **two** solutions to the problem of evil. The problem may be briefly stated as resulting from an (alleged) inconsistency between the characteristics of God as perfectly good, omniscient and omnipotent and the existence of moral and natural evils so that, allegedly, the propositions that 'the Christian God exists' and 'evil exists' are logically inconsistent. **Two** solutions to the problem may draw from attempts to deny or modify the attributes of God, such as process theology or non-realism and/or from attempts to construct a defence/theodicy such as: we have an imperfect grasp of good and evil and are not in a position to judge God's purposes; evil does not exist, only the comparative absence of good; evil has to exist for a greater good to be achieved and/or goodness emerges from evil; the view that humans are able to distinguish good from evil and seek what is good, so that evil contributes to morality; evil makes us more virtuous contributing to soul-making; evil is a consequence of human freedom which is itself a consequence of God's benevolent design; instability is part of God-given natural order etc. Answers should be placed in this band according to the depth and detail presented. Answers at the bottom of this band may list solutions.

- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding either by offering a very limited explanation, eg only one solution is identified, or by offering a confused account of two solutions. Tangential accounts insisting that the problem can't be solved but which display some knowledge and understanding of the problem should be placed at the bottom of this band.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### Selection and Application (9 marks)

Illustrations of at least one natural disaster or morally wicked act in which two solutions to the problem of evil are revealed should be provided. This might be an outline of an actual disaster or of a wicked act, such as 9:11, 7:7, the tsunami, murder, torture, child abuse etc. Examples might draw from the literature and describe, for example, trans-world depravity, epistemic distance, the relativism of evil or from history, current affairs, or fiction, or may be constructed by the candidate.

- 7–9 Selects at least one relevant example and applies this to provide a clear, detailed, illustration in support of their explanation of **two** solutions to the problem of evil.
- 4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example to provide a partial illustration, *either* of **two** solutions lacking detail or precision *or* focusing on **one** solution only. Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and very brief but clear illustration.
- 1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague account of **two** solutions to the problem of evil (eg it is not clear how the example provided illustrates a solution) *or* a relevant example is used but application to the question is tangential (eg the focus is on the weakness of the solution), *or* the response consists of explanation only and no attempt is made to illustrate (locate answers in which the explanation provided is clear at the top of this band).
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

(c)	Assess explanations of how religious language can be meaningful.	(24 marks)
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### Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

While the question doesn't call for an explanation of the opposite view, it is likely that some candidates will provide a background, rooted in cognitive theories of meaning of views that religious language is meaningless because it cannot be verified (Ayer) or because it cannot be falsified (Flew). This could provide the context for a discussion of:

- Responses to Ayer – Hick, Swinburne.
- Responses to Flew – Hare, Mitchell

Alternatively, approaches to how religious language can be meaningful might be rooted in

- Aquinas (and/or Swinburne) – religious language as analogy.
- Tillich (and/or Randall) – religious language as symbol.
- Wittgenstein (and/or Phillips, Braithwaite, Crombie) – the meaning of religious terms is given by their use in a religious language game.

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of explanations of how religious language can be meaningful.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of explanations of how religious language can be meaningful. Answers will lack depth, precision and/or detail.
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

### **Selection and Application (9 marks)**

Some of the following, or equivalent, points will be raised:

- Examples of the use of religious language.
- Examples of eschatological verification (eg Hick's story of travellers on the road to the Celestial City) and/or of how non-verifiable propositions are meaningful (eg Swinburne's example of toys that get up in the night).
- Examples of religious language expressing personal commitments (eg Hare's 'bliks') and/or of religious propositions that over-ride attempts to falsify them (eg Mitchell's resistance fighter).
- Examples of the analogous uses of religious language: attribution, proper proportionality and improper proportionality.
- Examples of the symbolic uses of religious language opening-up dimensions of reality and understanding; the work of symbols in motivating, integrating, communicating and clarifying.
- The expression of religious beliefs within the context of a religious language game, reflecting a commitment to (or immersion in) a particular form of life.
- A discussion of the nature of faith: as belonging to a particular form of life, as an activity, something that is actively engaged in. The view that all belief-systems revolve around certain givens and "what has to be accepted, the given, is...forms of life". To understand expressions of religious belief we need to look at how the language is used and its purpose within a religious form of life. Religious language involves symbols and myths, regarded as sacred by a culture or form of life, which are used to express awe, reverence etc and which integrate the culture around a set of moral and spiritual values. "To speak of God is to speak about the moral and spiritual goals we ought to be aiming at, and about what we ought to become."

- 7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear detailed analysis of philosophical explanations of how religious language is meaningful. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.
- 4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of philosophical explanations of how religious language is meaningful, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues or listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated.
- 1–3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical explanations of how religious language is meaningful **or** some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a confused or tangential approach to the question.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

## Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

A range of argumentation is possible:

- Cognitive critiques of religious language are successful – no account of how religious language is meaningful is convincing.
- Eschatological verification is a myth/statement of faith: it can't be falsified; neither will it verify that either God or heaven exists because, even if we retain our identity through death, we wouldn't be able to recognise our experience as an experience of God or heaven.
- Non-cognitive theories of meaning are convincing – expressions of faith, trust, and personal commitment are meaningful (and survive verification and falsification tests).
- But is this how religious believers use language? Is religious language used purely expressively? Are statements made within a language game immune to criticism from outside? Is it possible to identify religious language as a discrete language game; is it desirable to do so?
- Can religion survive in such an anorexic form? Doesn't it become merely a sub-category of sacred language (eg nationalism can also be seen as a 'form of life' employing sacred signs to inspire and reaffirm 'ideal unity')?
- Is it a case of either/or? In using religious language is one not both committing oneself to a set of values *and* making certain existential epistemological and ontological claims?

- 7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning philosophical explanations of how religious language is meaningful is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged.
- 4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning religious language but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation is limited or the supporting evidence is limited).
- 1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning religious language is present either in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed or asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused or tangential.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

4

Total for this question: 45 marks

(a) Briefly explain how morality might depend on God.

(6 marks)

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of what moral arguments for the existence of God involve. This might be explained *either* in terms of a critique of contemporary ethics (eg Anscombe's claims that moral concepts like moral law, obligation, duty and ought make no sense without God as law-giver) *or* as the view that the existence of God is the best explanation of our moral experience, our conscience, why we experience guilt, why we feel that there are moral imperatives etc *or* as the Kantian view that God's existence is necessary in order for us to reach the *summum bonum*. Any of these approaches, if explained well, is sufficient for full marks. No marks are available for evaluative critiques of such arguments, although marks should be awarded for relevant knowledge and understanding contained within them. Locate answers in this band according to the depth and detail presented.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge and understanding of moral arguments for the existence of God *either* by giving a brief accurate definition without further elaboration *or* by giving a confused or tangential account of a moral argument for the existence of God (eg some relevant knowledge is contained in a discussion of Divine Commands).
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.

(b) Explain and illustrate **two** ways in which miracles can be defined.

(15 marks)

**Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)**

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of **two** ways in which miracles can be defined. These are likely to draw from: a violation of a law of nature through a volition of the Deity; an incredible event, either within the course of nature or seemingly going against the normal course of nature (although not transgressing any law), which indicates God's intervention (typically referred to as a coincidence miracle); an inexplicable event deemed to have religious significance by believers. Any definition given should be clearly linked to Divine agency or purpose. No marks are available for evaluation although marks should be awarded for relevant knowledge and understanding contained within evaluative answers. At the lower end of the mark-band explanations of a second definition may be weaker and/or blur two definitions or blur miracles and life changing religious experiences.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic or partial knowledge understanding of **two** ways in which miracles can be defined either by offering an account of one definition only, neglecting a second definition, or by providing a confused account of two definitions (eg explanations of the miraculous are indistinguishable from explanations of religious experiences).
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.



### Selection and Application (9 marks)

The selected definitions could be illustrated through a combination of biblical examples, more recent ‘miracles’ (weeping statues etc.), examples given in the literature (fainting train drivers etc) or examples constructed by the candidate.

- 7–9 Selects relevant illustrative examples, or one example covering two points, and applies this to provide a clear, detailed illustration in support of their explanation of **two** ways in which miracles can be defined.
- 4–6 Selects at least one illustrative example and applies this to provide a partial illustration (eg only one definition is illustrated) or illustrations lacking detail or precision of **two** ways in which miracles can be defined (e.g. the connection to religious significance and/or Divine purpose is lost). Responses in this band may be characterised by detailed exposition and brief but relevant illustrations.
- 1–3 Provides a basic, sketchy and vague illustration of **one** definition of the miraculous (eg it is not clear that the example provided is miraculous) or the response consists of explanation only, no attempt is made to illustrate (locate answers in which the explanation provided is clear at the top of this band).
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are made.

(c) Assess the view that God’s existence can be known *a priori*.

(24 marks)

### Knowledge and Understanding (6 marks)

There should be a clear grasp of a priori knowledge as knowledge that is gained (or possessed) prior to or independently of experience.

Ontological arguments for the existence of God are *a priori* arguments which attempt to establish His existence without recourse to empirical evidence. From a purely formal consideration of the concept of God it is claimed that we can establish that God is a necessary being, that the concept of God is necessarily instantiated. Existence is part of the definition of God: to define God is to define a Being whose existence is necessary.

A version of an a priori argument as presented by eg Anselm, Descartes and (possibly) Malcolm or Plantinga should be outlined (ie versions of the ontological argument or Descartes’ trademark argument). It should be clear how God’s existence is supposed to follow from a consideration of His nature (‘a being than which none greater can be conceived’, ‘a being who cannot be thought not to exist’, ‘a supremely perfect being’, ‘a being whose existence is either necessary or impossible and not the latter’, ‘a being that exists in all possible universes etc)

- 4–6 Demonstrates precise and detailed knowledge and understanding of the view that the existence of God can be known a priori. Answers providing a good, clear account of one argument should be placed at the top of this band if their exposition is sufficiently detailed.
- 1–3 Demonstrates basic and partial knowledge and understanding of the view that the existence of God can be known a priori. Answers will *either* lack depth, precision and/or detail or some relevant material may appear in an otherwise poorly focused or tangential response (eg versions of the cosmological argument).
- 0 No relevant philosophical knowledge and understanding is presented.



### Selection and Application (9 marks)

Candidates are likely to select and apply some of the following or equivalent critical points:

- We can imagine the perfect island (or perfect anything else) and ontological arguments seem to bring these into existence.
- The argument has absurd consequences (the overload objection).
- The argument bridges a gap between the conceptual and the real but this is invalid, it is not possible to define something into existence. Conceptually there may be necessary links between subjects and their predicates but this does not imply that such a subject exists.
- Necessity does not apply to existence.
- Existence is not a perfection, property, predicate. Existence does not function like a predicate, it does not describe the subject; the application of a predicate already assumes there is a subject to which it belongs.
- It is inappropriate to use logic to demonstrate the existence of God – His existence is revealed experientially and our experiences of God do not include experiences of His logical necessity.
- There may also be a more general discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of arguing deductively from premises known a priori.

The best answers may also indicate possible responses to these criticisms – eg examples of where ‘exists’ might be used as a genuine predicate; whether the argument does have absurd consequences etc.

- 7–9 Selects relevant points and examples and applies these to provide a clear detailed analysis of the view that the existence of God can be known a priori. Answers in this band will develop a critical analysis of the points raised for discussion.
- 4–6 Selects relevant points and examples to provide a partial analysis of the view that the existence of God can be known a priori, either narrowly focused on a couple of pertinent issues or listing a wide range of points which are not discussed in any detail and which may not be precisely stated.
- 1–3 Selects and applies at least one relevant point to provide a basic, sketchy and vague explanation of philosophical arguments about whether God can be known to exist a priori or some relevant points feature among many irrelevant points in a confused or tangential approach to the question.
- 0 No relevant philosophical points are presented.

### Interpretation and Evaluation (9 marks)

Evaluation is likely to be present through the (critical) points selected for discussion ie these will be presented as an evaluation of ontological arguments and may lead candidates to reject such arguments. Beyond this:

- There may be an attempt to assess (and possibly reject) some of the standard criticisms.
- Objections about using logical reasoning confuse a point about the existence of God with a point about proving the existence of God.
- Some may argue that (a version of) the ontological argument appears to have a valid form.
- Some may argue, from a non–realist view, that the argument works. God is a concept that we must have.

- 7–9 A critical appreciation of arguments concerning the claim that God's existence can be known a priori is provided and a clear argument or position is advanced and supported. This may be balanced, ie strengths and weaknesses are acknowledged, or a positive or negative conclusion might be reached.
- 4–6 Evaluation is present within an exposition of arguments concerning the view that God's existence can be known a priori but is either largely implicit in the selection of points for discussion (eg it is assumed that critical points are fatal) or asserted with limited support (either argumentation or the supporting evidence is limited).
- 1–3 A simple and basic appreciation of arguments concerning a priori knowledge of God's existence is present either in a largely descriptive response, in which points are listed or asserted without justification, or in a response in which the argument is confused.
- 0 No relevant philosophical insights are presented.