

General Certificate of Education

Philosophy 5171/6171

PLY6 Synoptic Study

Mark Scheme

2006 examination –June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Synoptic Study PLY6

General Guidance

In order to ensure that the knowledge, understanding and evaluative skills acquired in all units of the AS and A Level course are integrated, and to ensure that candidates are aware of the relationships between different aspects of the course, all candidates for the A Level must complete an extended essay which *either* assesses the relative contributions of two philosophers to a major debate, *or* assesses the impact of one philosopher on the development of ideas within a philosophical theme. This 'synoptic' element will account for 20% of the total A Level assessment. The essay should be researched in advance (individually and/or in groups) but the final version will be produced by candidates individually, in supervised class sessions totalling up to four hours, during the final spring term. The essays will be marked by an AQA-appointed Examiner.

Essays must be chosen from the relevant list specified by AQA for the correct year of examinations, eg candidates entering the examination in June 2006 must answer a title from the 2006 list, and candidates entering in June 2007 must answer from the 2007 list, and so on.

With effect from the 2004 examination onwards, a word limit of up to 1000 words of researched notes may be brought into the class and used for reference. All notes brought into class at the writing up stage *must* be headed 'Rough Notes' and submitted to AQA with the finished essay.

Both the Comparative study and the Complementary study are designed to test the extent to which candidates are able to integrate and otherwise link the work of philosophers in the specification with individual broad areas or debates within philosophy, and in particular with the issues raised in the themes in Modules 1, 2 or 4. The extended essay paper is therefore designed to encourage and test candidates' ability to establish bridges between Modules 1, 2 and 4 (Themes) and Modules 3 and 5 (Texts). Both the Comparative Study and the Complementary Study are designed to be equally demanding and are assessed in the same way and against the same marking criteria.

Essays will be based on **one** of the **six** titles below in Alternative A - Comparative Study, **or one** of the **six** titles in Alternative B - Complementary Study.

The titles for June 2006 are shown on the next page:

Alternative A – Comparative Study

Candidates choosing the Comparative Study are required to assess the contributions of two philosophers to a major philosophical debate or area of concern. The philosophers should be seen as adopting differing, contrasting or opposing positions.

- (a) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions Aristotle and Descartes make to our notion of a person.
- (b) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions of Plato and Hume concerning the nature and scope of human understanding.
- (c) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions Descartes and Sartre make to our understanding of self-knowledge.
- (d) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions Marx & Engels and Sartre make to the possibility of a social science.
- (e) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions Nietzsche and Mill make to our understanding of political and social tyranny.
- (f) Compare and contrast the philosophical contributions Aristotle and Hume make to our understanding of explanation and justification.

Alternative B – Complementary Study

Candidates choosing the Complementary Study are required to assess the contribution of one of the set authors or texts to the development of a debate within one of the set themes.

- (g) Assess Ayer's contribution to the philosophical understanding of evaluative discourse.
- (h) Assess Russell's contribution to the philosophical understanding of perception.
- (i) Assess Mill's contribution to the philosophical understanding of the value of individuality.
- (j) Assess Marx & Engels' contribution to the philosophical understanding of religion.
- (k) Assess Nietzsche's contribution to the philosophical understanding of truth.
- (l) Assess Plato's contribution to the philosophical understanding of the nature and value of justice.

Marking should be conducted in accordance with the Generic Marking Criteria published in the specification and reproduced below.

AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (10 marks available)		AO2 Selection and Application (20 marks available)		AO3 Interpretation and Evaluation (30 marks available)	
Level 0 0 marks	The work does not meet the threshold criteria for knowledge and understanding.	Level 0 0 marks	The work does not meet the threshold criteria for selection and application.	Level 0 0 marks	The work does not meet the threshold criteria for interpretation and evaluation.
Level 1 1-2 marks	There is little evidence of knowledge or grasp of the philosophical issues and concerns. Mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling are significantly intrusive.	Level 1 1-4 marks	The essay is seriously incoherent or fragmentary, displaying little or no skills in selection, application or recognition of relevance. No substantial links are made between authors and themes.	Level 1 1-6 marks	Incoherent and fragmentary, with either no interpretation or evaluation, or evaluative and interpretative points that are largely not relevant to the title. Supporting material as evidence or example is either absent or ineffective.
Level 2 3-4 marks	While some grasp is demonstrated and a number of important points are identified, much understanding is superficial and/or basic. There may be errors of grammar, punctuation and/or spelling, and these may significantly intrude on the argument being made.	Level 2 5-8 marks	The candidate selects material in a basic way, with little discrimination, and applies it crudely. Relevance is not sustained and the title is only partially addressed or answered. Some material is effectively deployed. Links between authors and themes are weak and infrequent.	Level 2 7-12 marks	Weaker responses demonstrate significant errors of reasoning and many evaluative or interpretative points are wrong, confused or seriously inaccurate. In better responses, interpretative and evaluative points are simplistic or crude, or are asserted without argument. Supporting material is unconvincing or is not appropriate.

AO1 Knowledge and Understanding (10 marks available)		AO2 Selection and Application (20 marks available)		AO3 Interpretation and Evaluation (30 marks available)	
Level 3 5-6 marks	Generally accurate knowledge and adequate grasp of most of the main points. The understanding often goes beyond the superficial and basic, but it is not sharp. There may be errors of grammar, punctuation and/or spelling, but these do not significantly intrude on the argument being made.	Level 3 9-12 marks	Much relevant material is selected but is not always well applied, or a limited amount of material is selected but is usually well applied. The response to the question is direct but lacks coherence, or is coherent but misdirected. Some effective links are made between authors and themes. Relevance is sustained for substantial passages.	Level 3 13-18 marks	Evaluative and interpretative points are largely correct, clear and accurate. There is some evidence of reflection, although this is not sustained or comprehensive. Some discussion is developed or telling.
Level 4 7-8 marks	Key philosophical issues are understood in some detail, although there is evidence that some issues of significance for the title are not. The response is capable but not exact. Much of the response demonstrates insight. There may be only occasional errors of grammar, punctuation and/or spelling.	Level 4 13-16 marks	Largely relevant material is selected and applied well but is not fully drawn out or important points are left out. The essay is mostly coherent and direct and contains a substantial response to the title. Much material is effectively deployed. Links between authors and themes are made frequently and effectively.	Level 4 19-24 marks	There is clear evidence of an ability to scrutinise and reflect. The discussion is a very competent and largely systematic treatment of the issues. Most arguments are subtle and/or compelling and much of the supporting material is convincing and appropriate. Alternatively, the discussion is narrow but it is impressively analytical and pithy.

Level 5 9-10 marks	The philosophical issues are thoroughly understood and the response demonstrates sophisticated insight. There are few, if any, errors in grammar, punctuation and/or spelling.	Level 5 17-20 marks	Relevant material is selected and applied and the implications of the material fully drawn out. All material is effectively deployed and few, if any, important points are left out. Relevance is sustained and the essay is coherent and direct. Links between authors and themes are made frequently and effectively.	Level 5 25-30 marks	Evaluative and interpretative points are correct, clear and accurate and the discussion reads as a sustained critical engagement. There is evidence of reflection, initiative and imagination. Arguments are subtle and/or compelling and supporting material is convincing and appropriate.
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