

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Pre-U Certificate

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2014 series

9774 PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/01

Paper 1 (Introduction to Philosophy and Theology),
maximum raw mark 75

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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| | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|----------|-------|
| Page 2 | Mark Scheme | Syllabus | Paper |
| | Pre-U – May/June 2014 | 9774 | 01 |

1 Critically examine the epistemological role both of induction and of the concept of the mind as initially *tabula rasa*. [25]

Candidates are likely to begin their answers with a brief survey of the two contrasting epistemologies of rationalism and empiricism. Empiricist accounts argue that all knowledge starts with the senses; hence the emphasis in empiricist discussion is on the mind as initially *tabula rasa*, and the role of *a posteriori* reasoning and induction. Rationalist accounts argue that all knowledge starts with the mind; hence the emphasis here is on innate ideas and the role of *a priori* reasoning and deduction.

Induction refers to the process of putting forward an inductive argument – of using reasoning that can be reconstructed as an inductive argument. Inductive arguments are those in which the premises support the probable truth of the conclusion. No inductive argument can ever be logically certain, since certainty could only rest, in such a case, on the impossible task of performing all possible observations concerning the argument, including future observations. Inductive arguments nevertheless provide good reason to believe that the conclusion is true. Whereas the truth of deductive arguments is guaranteed by the truth of the premises, inductive arguments can appeal to any consideration which might be thought to establish the truth of the conclusion. Hence inductive arguments have a wide range of forms, including arguments about causal relationships, reference to statistical data, past experience, evidence, and so on. Candidates might analyse inductive arguments by comparison with deductive ones, or they might for example illustrate that fallacious deductive arguments are still deductive, and are not inductive.

The mind as initially *tabula rasa* is primarily associated with John Locke, although candidates might trace its antecedents in the writings of Aristotle, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Aquinas. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke argued that the mind was initially a ‘blank slate’, without any innate rules for processing data. There is no good evidence to support any doctrine that ideas are innate, since innate propositions would naturally be immediately perceived by infants and idiots as well as everyone else, but there is no evidence that they are. Both data and rules are learned from empirical experience, hence humans are free to develop their own character and possess natural rights by virtue of being members of the human race. Experience is of two kinds: sensation and reflection. Sensation tells us about things and processes in the external world, whereas reflection tells us about the operations of our own minds. Some ideas we get only from sensation, some only from reflection and some from both. Candidates are likely to analyse such claims by contrasting them with the view that knowledge is, at least to some extent, innate, for example with categories such as time, space, causality, comparison, language, etc.. Several are likely to refer to Cartesian arguments.

2 Evaluate the view that psychology offers a complete explanation of the conscience. [25]

The Specification refers to Butler and Freud, but candidates are free to refer to any psychological views concerning the conscience. Freud’s claims about *the super ego* might be judged to offer a complete account of the conscience in terms of its being the repository of parental and other influences that are rooted in the unconscious. Similar claims might be made in terms of Butler’s view that the conscience has autonomy as a secular aspect of mentality, arbitrating between the conflicting drives of prudence and benevolence, although the identification of such a mental faculty might be judged to be as elusive as Kant’s supposed ‘moral faculty’. Balanced against such claims, some might prefer to defend religious, evolutionary, or social accounts of the conscience, for example. Some are likely to argue that the conscience can be defined completely only through a composite of such factors, and so is a complex rather than a discrete mental function, a view which might be supported by neuro-science, which produces some evidence that the conscience involves different areas of the brain. Whatever arguments are offered, for the higher Levels, there needs to be some consideration of the word, ‘complete’.

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|--------|-----------------------|----------|-------|
| Page 3 | Mark Scheme | Syllabus | Paper |
| | Pre-U – May/June 2014 | 9774 | 01 |

3 'Divine command theory makes no moral sense.' Discuss. [25]

This question can be interpreted in different ways. Some might defend the connection between ethics and God along Kantian lines, arguing that there probably is a God who will help us to satisfy the demands of the autonomous moral law, so God is, morally, a postulate of practical reason. Some might argue the reverse, that the inclusion of God within an autonomous theory of morality does not work, since autonomy is lost, or at best consists of freedom whether or not to obey the rules. Divine command theory (DCT) provides a metaphysical basis for ethics that is objective, and so fits well with the preferences of those who believe moral standards to be objective. If moral standards are not somehow grounded in the world, then without some such grounding as DCT, it is difficult to see how moral rules can be derived from a non-moral starting point. There are clear problems with the DCT, not least the challenge from Euthyphro's Dilemma, and candidates are likely to analyse this. Also, the association of DCT with a system of *post mortem* rewards and punishments seems dubious, not least because it promotes a form of moral compulsion that does not sit well with the notion of moral duty that is freely chosen. For the higher levels, candidates need to consider the specific claim, in some fashion or other, that DCT makes *no* moral sense.

4 Consider the view that revelation consists of written propositions given by God to humans. [25]

Revelation is the concept of God's self-disclosure to humans. For those who accept this concept, revelation can be propositional or non-propositional (or both). Propositional accounts of God's revelation to humans are based on the idea that scripture is a collection of truths expressed in propositional form, written or spoken by God. Such propositions are held to be unambiguous truths to which believers assent, so faith in propositional revelation is an act of rational/intellectual assent. For Roman Catholics, the truths to which individual RC Church members assent in faith are authenticated by the collective mind and experience of the RC Church. For Protestants, scriptural truths are generally self-authenticating because they come from God, or else they are authenticated by the conscience. With the propositional view comes the distinction between natural and revealed theology: the former being those theological truths that can be worked out by using unaided reason (such as the existence of God), and the latter referring to truths that can be apprehended only following special revelation from God (such as the doctrine of the Trinity). The propositional view is open to many objections based on text, literary and form criticism; on the allegation that it amounts to a definition of faith as believing something based on sufficient evidence; and on the allegation that in order to have such a faith you must have a voluntarist approach and will yourself to believe, like Pascal or William James, which is objectionable to many. Candidates are likely also to evaluate propositional approaches to revelation by contrasting them with the Protestant non-propositional view that revelation is about God revealing himself personally to humans, e.g. through personal experience, so the emphasis is not on God's otherness but on his involvement. The Bible is not infallible/the word of God 'out there', but is inspired humanity trying to make sense of this personal encounter with God. Propositionalists see this as an attack on the status of scripture, and the removal of any basis for what can be known and agreed about God.