

2005 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Advanced Higher

Finalised Marking Instructions

These Marking Instructions have been prepared by Examination Teams for use by SQA Appointed Markers when marking External Course Assessments.

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Advanced Higher 2005

Philosophy of Religion Section A

Question 1

Knowledge and Understanding may include:

- an account of the arguments of Aristotle/Aquinas
- an account of a Kalam argument
- criticisms (of the above) by Hume and Russell
 - (a) that infinite series are possible;
 - (b) that, in any case, nothing requires to have a cause: so in particular, the Universe may have come into existence uncaused.

10 marks

Analysis and Evaluation may include:

- distinguishing between a first cause in a temporal series and a sustaining cause of an infinite series
- discussing whether an infinite series requires a cause outside the series
- discussing whether our being able to conceive of an uncaused event allows us to think such a thing possible
- discussing the relevance (to the above) of science, eg from Newton to the Big Bang.

20 marks

Question 2

Knowledge and Understanding may include:

- an account of at least one argument from design, with reference (at least) to the existence of other Design arguments
- if the Paley/Watchmaker argument is discussed, explore the relevance of evolutionary theory
- the merely probable conclusion of any design argument
- alleged relevance of the extent of suffering
- arguments from order of succession and/or “fine tuning”.

10 marks

Analysis and Evaluation may include:

- discussion of the nature and strength of analogy argument
- consideration of whether the first DNA could have happened by chance
- discussion of whether the uniqueness of the universe excludes our arguing from design
- discussion of whether design gives reason for belief in several gods.

20 marks

Question 3

Knowledge and Understanding may include:

- distinguishing meanings of the theory that morality is based on God: is it
 - (a) about the meaning of moral language?
 - (b) about the nature of morality?
- noting the morality of unbelievers, and its implications
- asking whether, if true, the theory allows God to be praised for goodness
- asking whether the theory forces us to hold that cruelty is good just so long as God commands it.

10 marks

Analysis and Evaluation may include:

- considering the implications of moral dialogue between believers and non-believers
- discussing the implications of the last two issues noted in Knowledge and Understanding above
- discussion of whether the theory will encourage moral scepticism in unbelievers
- evaluation of accounts of morality proposed as alternatives to the theory.

20 marks

Section B

1. “Research into religious experience has relevance and validity in today’s world.”

Evaluate this claim.

Candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of studies into the nature of religious experiences. These should then be evaluated in comparison to one another and also to the two criteria stated in the question. Conclusions, which may be found throughout, should derive from an argument.

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Research undertaken by the Alister Hardy Research Centre (formerly Religious Experience Research Unit)
- The work of David Hay
- Earlier research of eg James, Greeley, Hood
- American Religious Experience Project
- Contemporary scientific investigations
- Spirituality in children (work of Rebecca Nye).

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

- Comparison of different views of relevance of research
- Consideration of meaning of relevance, eg relevant due to commonality, or relevant due to effects
- Speculation as to the strength of the converse, ie research into religious experience is not relevant, or even irrelevant
- Exegesis of ‘validity’
- Assessment of validity of research in terms of limitations, eg scientific method, dependence on self-report, unrepeatability etc.

Only limited credit should be given for a litany of research.

2. **“Faith perspectives on religious experiences are strengthened by the finding that such experiences are very widespread, and contain widely shared core components.”**

Discuss.

Candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of those elements claimed by some to be common to humanity. These should then be applied to religious traditions. The faith perspectives that might be strengthened thereby should be isolated, and the contrary position considered. Conclusions, which may be found throughout, should be drawn, based upon a discernible argument.

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Explanation of alleged core components
- Research basis for such claims
- Examples of religious experiences from a variety of traditions
- Attitudes of these traditions to such experiences
- The place and role of religious experience in religion
- Sources hostile to the claim made in the stimulus.

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

- Comparison and evaluation of different attitudes within religious traditions to religious experience
- Assessment of the nature and credibility of ‘findings’ on religious experiences
- Evaluation of the views that common elements are due to either common evolutionary heritage or else God
- Discussion of difficulties in maintaining exclusive truth claims if religious experiences are not unique to any one tradition but common to all.

3. Assess the force of the secularist challenge that religious experience is just ordinary experience interpreted in a religious way.

Candidates should outline the secularist challenge, using a range of sources to exemplify the challenge. These may be drawn from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, philosophy, or even theology. Strengths and weaknesses should then be discussed. The theistic (non-secular) response may be included, and good answers will compare the two in presenting an argument that addresses the question directly.

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Details of secular theories of religious experience
- Details of a secularist critique of theistic interpretations of religious experience
- Examples of religious experiences cited by secular authorities as being just ‘ordinary experience’
- Critics of secular approaches
- Theistic/non-secular bases for interpreting religious experience as distinct from ordinary experiences
- Comparison of religious and ‘ordinary’ experiences, eg classic religious and drug-induced experiences.

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

- Assessment of relative merits of secular approaches – strengths, weaknesses, consistencies, inconsistencies
- Discussion of different understandings of secular
- Consideration of cumulative case – whether there is sufficient agreement within secular approaches to warrant a single case being made
- Analysis of responses to secularist challenge, together with assessment of the extent to which they meet the secular objections
- Evidential force of religious experience method.

Section C

1. **“Using embryos for research purposes is fundamentally opposed to religious principles.”**
With reference to one or more religious traditions, how far do you agree with this statement?

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Preamble tackling the question which explains and defines the topic under consideration with reference for example to the correlation (and significant differences) between “religious thinking” about embryo research today and current laws surrounding the topic
- Outline of the religious view of the topic – likely to be centered upon the sanctity of life argument, though not exclusively. This would lead to the conclusion that religious people either reject embryo research completely or have serious ethical doubts about using people in this way. Marks should be awarded for accurate references to the religious principles which may be taken into consideration – eg Biblical teachings; Church teachings, etc
- Topicality is likely to attract additional discretionary marks.

No marks awarded for Secular responses to the issue as this is not relevant to the question.

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

- It is expected that there would be some discussion of the extent to which the embryo can be considered a person/have any moral value/when life begins, etc
- However, good candidates may demonstrate that religious people are often pragmatic in this respect and that sanctity of life is not an absolute for all religious people or indeed religions, for example taking life in other contexts – eg war. Some reference to arguments used by religions based on the greater good would be relevant
- Good answer will refer to possible benefits of embryo research and that religious people might support research if it can have benefits for others
- If more than one religious tradition covered then some comparison of the similarities and differences between these traditions can be explored
- Where only one tradition is discussed some reference to varieties of viewpoint within that tradition should be awarded merit
- However, if only one tradition is covered credit should be awarded even where there is no reference to disagreements within that tradition provided that the line or argument is coherent and cogent.

Appropriate credit should be given for the use of supporting references for the line(s) of argument and complexity, coherence and depth of analysis of these references.

2. **“Making money by selling your organs is no different from making money by selling the family silver.”**

Discuss the religious and moral implications of this statement.

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Explanation of which organs may be sold and why– however, this descriptive element should be kept to a minimum
- Reference to the current legal and medical regulations surrounding organ donation
- Opting in versus opting out approaches to organ donation and associated discussion
- Topicality is likely to attract additional discretionary marks.

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

Selling organs is no different to selling anything else

- No different to selling anything else – eg labour etc
- Organs are yours, your choice what to do with them
- May be the only way for some to make needed money
- It’s a matter of personal freedom – why should selling your organs be outwith the scope of the individual’s right to choose?
- Freedom is to be valued above all else – regulating this leads to a nanny state...
- May take a secular Utilitarian stance – if the benefits outweigh the drawbacks
- A good candidate may set out the distinction between selling organs which can be thought of as “spare” – eg one lung, one kidney, etc, but may draw a clear boundary between this and selling organs where the seller’s death would be the result – eg heart, etc – however, this could be justified if the need was clear enough – eg to raise enough money to save your child’s life, etc...
- May be a necessary evil, and regrettable but unavoidable...

Selling organs morally differs from selling anything else

- Not everything should be sold, organs are not labour etc
- Religious argument – body belongs to God, not you, you should treat it with care – temple of the Holy Spirit, etc
- Human freedom is not absolute, has some limitations. This is one of them
- Sets a bad precedent – if legal, may lead to people being pressurised into selling when they really don’t want to (for all kinds of reasons)
- Could also lead to people being killed in order to take their organs for sale
- Is an abuse of the poor by the wealthy – people should never be in such dire straits as to need to do this – failure of whole society to protect the vulnerable – could lead to further abuses of the poor by the rich
- Puts the medical profession in a morally dubious position – should they be involved in the procedures where an individual has freely chosen to sell his heart? ...
- Implications of selling organs might be discussed in a theoretical way or more practically – so for example could be supported as a practical response to shortage or refuted as going beyond the boundaries of the rights a person has over their own body. Some comparison of religious viewpoints and viewpoints independent of religious belief would be likely to be present.

Appropriate credit should be given for the use of supporting references for the line(s) of argument and complexity, coherence and depth of analysis of these references.

3. “There are times when religious people and secularists might agree that switching off life support is the right thing to do”.

Evaluate this statement.

Knowledge and Understanding may include (max 10):

- Possible reasons why life support is used and the variations in the kind of life support available
- Some attempt at this stage to identify the conditions in which it is usually decided to ‘switch off’ such life support systems
- This descriptive medical and moral background should be minimal at this stage since it is to be expected that details will be raised as the issue is discussed in relation to the positions of the religious person and the secularist
- There may be some reference both to British law as well as the situation in other countries – Netherlands for example
- Topicality is likely to attract additional discretionary marks.

Analysis and Evaluation may include (max 20):

Secularist

- In explaining and analysing the secularist viewpoint, the candidate should be discussing the issue of the quality of life. Perhaps the most predominant secular view is that life is only worth living where it is of value to the person living. It should be clearly identified and supported, eg Singer’s modern Utilitarian arguments
- There may also be discussion of secular viewpoints which do not relate solely to the quality of life argument for the person on the machine, but the Utilitarian argument for others – ie someone on life-support may be taking up vital medical expertise and equipment which could be used with a more ‘hopeful’ case...
- Discussion of the motivation behind the possible switching off of support systems and of whose rights are pre-eminent
- A secular response could also take into account the effect on relatives, etc – if the person is already ‘dead’ in secular eyes, then the burden or moral responsibility falls to minimising potential negative effects for the family...
- A good candidate however, may develop the argument from within secularism that ‘switching’ off life support has to be done according to strict protocol. Secularists don’t want a world where such decisions are taken lightly – that is not in the general interest.

Religious

- It would be expected that the candidate’s approach would be related to the sanctity of life position. This could lead to a line of argument which supports the view that it is *never* right to switch off life support as it is a God-given means to prolong life. The candidate could develop the view that life should be preserved at all costs... Switching the machine off is a hopeless act which denies the possible intervention of God at some point
- Religious people would also be wary of ‘switching’ off too readily because of the negative effects on society which this could bring in terms of the value of life. They would reject pretty convincingly any pressure on anyone to switch off life support for practical reasons like bed space in the hospital for example – though some religious people might support switching off so that the expertise and technology might be used on more ‘hopeful’ cases
- However, there is also a strong religious tradition supporting the view that switching off life support is not inconsistent with a religious view because thereafter the person *is* in

God's hands – switching the machine off shows just as much faith.... It also allows for the miraculous

- Good candidates will identify the distinction within religious traditions of killing and allowing to die. They will be able to expand and develop the subtle distinction between these two – when is switching off life support killing and when is it not?
- It is probable that most candidates will respond with reference to Christian traditions. Some comparison of different Christian traditions should be credited though following one Christian line of argument should still be able to achieve full marks
- Candidates may also answer from other religious traditions. If so, it is likely that the argument will still hinge on the benefits/drawbacks for individuals and society of switching off life support, either in relation to the wishes of the divine or in relation to the effects on some moral code or Karmic consequences, for example.

- Candidate should identify the similarities and differences between the two approaches.
- Clear that the extremists in both camps are unlikely to agree but that more moderate views from religion and the secular position can meet in the middle – for example in the case of switching off where more hopeful cases might secure more benefit than the person on the machine.
- Again, the balance of the answer need not be exact. A candidate may develop one viewpoint more fully than the other if this supports their own line of argument – for example if the candidate feels that secularists are more likely to support the switching off of life support than religious people, then this may be the bulk of the answer.

As this is a 'compare and contrast' question however, candidates cannot gain full marks for presenting either the religious or the secular arguments alone.

Knowledge and Understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of complex concepts and issues

Make selective reference to context of sources and their contents

Analysis

Present a detailed and balanced analysis of complex concepts and issues

Evaluation

Make considered judgements on:

- interpretation of texts/sources

- the relative merits of viewpoints

Coherence of argument

TOTAL

TOTAL	
5	
5	
5	
5	
5	
5	
30	

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]