



2008 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Advanced Higher

Finalised Marking Instructions

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Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Advanced Higher 2008

Philosophy of Religion Section A

1. Discuss the view that God caused the Big Bang.

Knowledge and Understanding might include:

- an account of the arguments of Aristotle/Aquinas
- criticisms by Hume and Russell
 - (a) that infinite series are possible
 - (b) the universe may have come into existence uncaused
- an account of the Big Bang theory.

10 marks

Analysis and evaluation might include:

- discussion of whether an infinite series requires a cause outside the series
- discussion of whether our being able to conceive of an uncaused event allows us to think such a thing possible
- the extent to which the Big Bang theory supports the idea of God as a first cause
- the best candidates will distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of the argument and counter-argument and draw on a range of sources which might include Davies, Swinburne, Hawking, Hick and others.

15 marks

5 additional marks for coherence of argument.

2. How persuasive are the arguments from design?

Knowledge and Understanding might include:

- an account of at least one argument from design, with reference to other Design arguments
- if the Paley/Watchmaker argument is discussed, an explanation of the relevance of evolutionary theory
- the merely probable conclusion of any design argument.

10 marks

Analysis and evaluation might include:

- discussion of the nature and strength of analogy argument
- discussion of the anthropic principle
- discussion of whether design gives reasons for belief in several gods
- discussion of the issues raised by evil and suffering
- the best candidates will distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of the argument and counter-argument and draw on a range of sources which might include Hume, Dawkins, Stannard, Tennant and others.

15 marks

5 additional marks for coherence of argument.

3. “Morality exists, therefore God exists.” Evaluate this claim.

Knowledge and Understanding might include:

- explanation of the argument that God is the source of morality
- mention of the morality of unbelievers, and its implications.

10 marks

Analysis and evaluation might include:

- explanation of alternative theories for the origins of morality
- evaluation of accounts of morality proposed as alternatives to the theory
- the best candidates will distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of the argument and counter-argument and draw on a range of sources which might include Kant, Hick and others.

15 marks

5 additional marks for coherence of argument.

Section B – Religious Experience

1. “The study of religious experience has never adequately examined its nature.”

Discuss the accuracy of this statement.

This question requires candidates to have an appropriate breadth of knowledge and understanding of issues regarding the nature and study of religious experience, and to have a reasoned view as to its study. A key concept in the question is what an ‘adequate’ examination would look like.

Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:

- examples of studies of religious experiences, accurately referenced
- details as to findings and conclusions from these studies as they pertain to defining the nature of religious experience
- reference to specific experiences, case studies or classifications
- definition/explanation of what ‘nature’ of religious experience might mean and conditions for its study
- understanding of the difficulties of classification and scientific (and other) study
- focus on concept of ‘adequate examination’, which could range in meaning from sufficient to full.

Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) might include:

- analysis should comprise a comparison between different studies of religious experience and their conclusions
- this comparison should be more than mere juxtaposition; it should compare to a definition of adequate and evaluate in that respect
- consideration of what adequate explanation might look like, with regard to the nature of religious experience, and evaluation of existing theories in relation to this
- implications if the statement is accurate/inaccurate.

Conclusions that may be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

2. “Many people who have undergone religious experiences have regarded them as life changes. These have been very significant in the development and growth of all religions.” Assess the evidence for this view.

This question links two things: the personal nature of religious experiences and their locus in the context in world religions. It offers much scope for discussion and candidates may take a variety of approaches.

Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:

- examples of recorded/reported religious experiences that may be taken to have been life changing
- examples of how lives have changed
- the contrary position
- examples of such religious experiences from within religious traditions seen as foundational to establishment and development
- definition or exemplification of what ‘significant’ might mean
- emphasis/interpretation placed upon religious experience by religious traditions.

Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) should be awarded for, eg:

- comparison of religious experiences both within and between religious traditions, and none
- evaluation of what comes first: the experience or the tradition for adherents, and implications in the context of the statement
- theological implications for individuals and faith systems, for example different categories of adherents with regard to religious experience, membership, sainthood, etc
- consideration of different definitions of religious experience as they pertain to the question.

Conclusions that might be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

3. How credible are psychological and sociological explanations for religious experiences?

This question hinges on what might be meant by 'credible'. Candidates should show that they understand this term may mean one thing for the social scientist but quite another for the believer. Approaches other than the two listed are acceptable.

Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:

- details of a variety of secular explanations
- presuppositions and method of these explanations
- strengths and weaknesses, limitations and consistencies/inconsistencies between different explanations
- 'credible' as meaning believable without necessarily providing 'proof' – this definition may apply to secular approaches and possibly also theological/faith views.

Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) might include:

- comparison of a variety of different approaches in relation to specific criteria, and conclusions drawn from such a comparison
- evaluation of the difficulties associated with studying and explaining 'experience', and hence a position taken as to the credibility of secular (or any) explanation
- consideration of fluidity of idea of 'credible'
- problems of objectivity, bias, methodology.

Conclusions that may be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

Section C – Bioethics

1. “All requests for IVF treatment should be granted.”

Assess the religious and ethical concerns arising from this statement.

Answers may include the following points:

- uses of IVF
- age limits
- designer babies
- genetic disorder
- gender choice
- statement of Christian positions
- statement of medical positions
- case studies.

Religious concerns:

- use of the embryo
- status of the embryo
- definitions of human life
- playing God
- abuse of freewill
- alternatives to childlessness
- too much interference
- status of sibling saviour
- embryo as a commodity.

Ethical concerns:

- embryo as a commodity
- can does not mean ought
- cost
- appropriateness of treatment
- success rate
- procurement of embryos
- selection of couples.

30 marks

2. **“Since organ transplants save lives, any religious or ethical concerns are of little importance.”**

Examine the implications of this statement.

Answers may include the following points:

- current uses of organ transplants
- success rates of organ transplants
- cost of transplants
- identification of areas of debate
- procurement
- distribution
- payment for cadaveric organs
- xenotransplants
- relevant case studies.

The answer can be very broad hence the range of questions that candidates might address have been included rather than specific points.

- Organ donation as an act of charity – should there be a choice in donation?
- Ownership of the donor body – who decides if organs are to be donated?
- The issue of consent – should consent always be sought?
- Is organ donation interfering with the divine will?
- Are organ transplants cost effective?
- Should organ transplants be given to the most deserving or the most needful?
- Why give to strangers?
- Should organs ever be paid for?
- What considerations should be taken into account when allocating organs?
- Is the transplant system fair?
- Should animals be used in the transplantation process?
- When is a person dead?

30 marks

3. **“I will neither give a deadly drug to anyone who asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect.”**

Why would there be a disagreement over this statement in religious and ethical thought?

Answers may include the following points:

- explanation of the Hippocratic Oath
- interpretation of the statement
- legal position regarding euthanasia in the UK
- BMA position on euthanasia
- Church positions on euthanasia
- types of euthanasia

- current debate on physician assisted suicide
- role of the physician
- playing God
- the right to a good death
- debate on the legalisation of euthanasia
- the autonomy of the individual
- responsibility for the decision
- the role of compassion in medicine
- the impact of double effect on the issue
- slippery slope issues.

30 marks

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]