

# PHILOSOPHY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Are there bad pleasures?
2. Should hate speech be legal?
3. Can a professor truly announce that she will give a surprise examination in one of the remaining six seminars of the term?
4. How should Frege have dealt with Russell's Paradox?
5. 'Freedom is what you do with what has been done to you' (SARTRE). Discuss.
6. Are propositional attitudes well modelled with neighbourhood (SCOTT-MONTAGUE) semantics?
7. Is chemistry reducible to physics?
8. Why does Spinoza's *Ethics* have so much metaphysics in it?
9. What is the relationship between belief and credence?
10. Does it make sense to say that music expresses emotions? If so, whose emotions?
11. What is a number?
12. What is the difference between *phronesis* and *sophia* in Aristotle's ethics?
13. What is a norm of assertion? Are there any?
14. What is the relationship between a statue and the marble it is made of?
15. Is there such a thing as epistemic injustice?
16. When should a mentally ill person be held responsible for their actions?
17. Is a Ramsified scientific theory less ontologically committal than the original scientific theory?
18. Does Kant successfully refute Hume's skepticism?
19. Should it be lawful to convict someone for a crime based on purely statistical evidence?
20. What is the luck-based argument for egalitarianism? Is it good?
21. What does it mean for a speaker to presuppose something? What does it mean (if anything) for a sentence to presuppose something?

[OVER]

22. Do we have a duty to preserve the world for the next generation, and if so, to whom is our duty?
23. Can murder ever be a right action?
24. Does pornography cause or constitute silencing?
25. 'I believe the various disjunctivists have collectively failed to make a single successful point in favour of disjunctivism—or against the natural alternative' (BURGE). Discuss.
26. Zeno worried: 'That which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal.' What exactly is the problem, and how is locomotion nonetheless possible?
27. If you may eat an apple, then does it follow that you may eat an apple or a pear?
28. Is logic descriptive or normative?
29. Can non-human animals have rights?
30. Do perceptual experiences have representational contents?
31. Is economics a predictive science?
32. Does supervenience solve the mind-body problem?
33. Should reparations be paid to the descendants of slaves? If so, by whom?
34. What is paradoxical about Meno's paradox?
35. Lewis (1969) proposed that linguistic communication rests on a convention of truthfulness and trust. Would a convention of untruthfulness and distrust work just as well?
36. Is there such a thing as consistency in one's actions? What is it?
37. Mathematicians have verified the Four Colour Theorem by programming a computer to check a large number of cases. Does such a verification count as a proof?
38. 'We're all born naked, and the rest is drag.' Assess.

## PHILOSOPHY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. ‘ “If p, q” together with p entails q.’ Assess.
2. ‘No man chooses evil because it is evil; he only mistakes it for happiness, the good he seeks’ (WOLLSTONECRAFT). Discuss.
3. If nobody can tell the difference between an original and a copy, is the original or the copy more valuable?
4. What does generative syntax teach us about the mind?
5. Are we the causes of our actions?
6. ‘It may be as Appiah claims that “there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask race to do for us” (Appiah 1992, 45), if our project inevitably inherits the concept’s complex history; but we might instead ask “race” to do different things than have been asked before’ (HASLANGER). Discuss.
7. Does the CPT symmetry of physical laws provide any reason for doubting the objectivity of time’s direction?
8. Does belief require certainty? Does knowledge?
9. Is (physical) disability just a social construction?
10. Which is worse: lying or corroding the true-false distinction?
11. Is it possible to disagree about whether something is tasty? If so, must one person be incorrect?
12. If legal obligations are not moral obligations, then do they have normative force?
13. What are Aristotle’s three kinds of friendship? Is this taxonomy exhaustive?
14. Was Kant a compatibilist?
15. Discuss the benefits or drawbacks of Tarski’s definition of semantic consequence as preservation of truth in all models.
16. Is evolutionary theory fundamentally teleological? If so, is this a problem?
17. What is gaslighting? Does it shed any light on theories of perception or hallucination?
18. What does higher-order vagueness tell us about first-order vagueness?
19. Does subjective experience require self-consciousness?

[OVER]

20. Does democracy necessarily degenerate into tyranny?
21. Is there a coherent structuralist account of the complex numbers?
22. How should we understand scientific claims about probability, for instance in statistical mechanics or climate modeling?
23. What can an analytic philosopher learn from a continental philosopher?
24. Is the difference between Yablo's Paradox and the Liar Paradox important?
25. Should we be four-dimensionalists or three-dimensionalists?
26. May institutions use affirmative action in admissions? Should they?
27. 'If her functioning as a female is not enough to define woman, if we decline also to explain her through "the eternal feminine," and if nevertheless we admit, provisionally, that women do exist, then we must face the question: what is a woman?' (DE BEAUVOIR). Discuss.
28. What is the value of ideal theory in political philosophy?
29. Where does Berkeley's idealism go wrong?
30. At what point does killing a totalitarian leader become justifiable for a citizen?
31. Do Gödel's incompleteness results (or Turing's uncomputable functions) show that the mind is not well modelled as a computer?
32. Is this a hand I see before me?
33. 'Not only our faults, but our most involuntary misfortunes, tend to corrupt our morals' (HENRY JAMES). Discuss.
34. If A has legitimate authority over B, then are A's reasons for action immediately also B's?
35. What is the role of 'it' in 'If a man owns a donkey, he beats it'?
36. Is it more laudable to do the right thing in accordance with one's desire or despite one's desire?
37. What is imagination?
38. 'A kind of question that doesn't get asked often enough is: what are modal intuitions intuitions of? Consider, for example, the intuition that water is necessarily H<sub>2</sub>O. How do things have to be for it to be right? Or wrong? What's its "truth maker", to use the philosophical jargon?' (FODOR). Discuss.

# PHILOSOPHY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'I have tried to show that what matters in the continued existence of a person are, for the most part, relations of degree' (PARFIT). Discuss.
2. Could there be causes without laws?
3. If something is possible, is it necessarily possible?
4. Did McTaggart prove that time is unreal?
5. 'Objectivity is the epistemological stance of which objectification is the social process, of which male dominance is the politics, the acted out social practice. That is, to look at the world objectively is to objectify it' (MACKINNON). Discuss.
6. What is the relationship between understanding and knowing?
7. What are the dimensions of the space of reasons?
8. What can a genealogy of knowledge teach us?
9. Should we be Bayesians?
10. Is the golden rule a good guide to morality?
11. What is distinctive about moral disagreement?
12. Were ancient slave-holders bad people?
13. Do we have reasons to love those we love?
14. Does switching from classical logic to intuitionistic logic help in solving the Paradox of the Heap?
15. Is it possible to refute those who deny the Law of Non-Contradiction?
16. Is there an important logical distinction between *all* and *any*?
17. Does indeterminacy of translation imply indeterminacy of sense?
18. Describe how the word 'the' contributes to the meanings of the following statements: 'The tallest man in England is dining alone'; 'The five tallest men in England are dining together'.
19. 'If we could recover our pre-Fregean semantic innocence, I think it would seem to us plainly incredible that the words "The earth moves", uttered after the words "Galileo said that", mean anything different, or refer to anything else, than is their wont when they come in other environments' (DAVIDSON). Discuss.

[OVER]

20. 'To believe that  $P$  is to be prepared to act as if  $P$ , when it matters whether  $P$ .' Discuss.
21. If I order a gin and tonic, and unbeknownst to me the bartender serves me paint thinner on ice, do I have any reason to drink it?
22. Are there non-intentional actions? If so, what distinguishes them from mere bodily movements?
23. Is there any more reason to doubt the existence of  $\sqrt{-1}$  than to doubt the existence of  $\sqrt{2}$ ?
24. Does the Generalized Continuum Hypothesis have a truth-value?
25. Does a scientific explanation raise the probability of what it explains?
26. Is quantum non-locality consistent with the Special Theory of Relativity?
27. How should we individuate biological species?
28. Is liberalism racist?
29. Can we be forced to be free?
30. **EITHER** Which historical philosopher is most misunderstood? **OR** Which historical philosopher exercises too much influence?
31. Did Leibniz believe that this is the best of all possible worlds?
32. **EITHER** Was Hume an idealist? **OR** Was Nietzsche a naturalist?
33. 'Transcendental idealism is deeply attractive. Unfortunately, it is also incoherent.' Discuss.
34. Does music have meaning?

## PHILOSOPHY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is any form of relativism coherent?
2. Is there an example of a successful transcendental argument in philosophy?
3. Do you have temporal parts?
4. How radically does the General Theory of Relativity force us to revise our ordinary spatial concepts?
5. Is scepticism irrefutable?
6. Is the Given really a myth?
7. What is it to know how to ride a bike?
8. Is it time to abandon the distinction between internalism and externalism about epistemic justification?
9. 'Ethical claims only answer to other ethical claims.' Is this true?
10. Should we be effective altruists?
11. Can we acquire moral knowledge from testimony?
12. Are desires inconsistent in the same sense in which beliefs are?
13. Must adherents of rival logical schools attach different meanings to the logical connectives?
14. Could convention be the mother of necessity?
15. Is entailment transitive?
16. Is knowing a statement's truth-conditions either necessary or sufficient for knowing what it says?
17. Suppose that 'If Hitler invades England, he will win the war' (said in 1939) lacks a truth-value. Does it follow that 'If Hitler had invaded England, he would have won the war' (said in 2017) also lacks a truth-value?
18. What is the relationship between *langue* and *parole*?
19. What, if anything, unifies surprise, anger, sorrow, disgust, guilt, contempt, amusement and wonder as emotions?

[OVER]

20. 'Our most basic awareness of ourselves is as performers of actions' (O'BRIEN). Is this true? If so, does it offer the prospect of an illuminating account of self-knowledge?
21. 'Having an experience is surely one good way, and surely the only practical way, of coming to know what that experience is like. Can we say, flatly, that it is the only possible way? Probably not' (DAVID LEWIS). Discuss.
22. Is there a satisfactory logicist account of the real numbers?
23. Are there any infinitesimal quantities?
24. Does it make sense to say that one false scientific theory is closer to the truth than another?
25. What is the best interpretation of probabilities in quantum mechanics?
26. Why is there so little philosophy of chemistry?
27. Is freedom merely the absence of interference?
28. Can there be injustice where no one has done wrong?
29. Are there property rights?
30. Is the distinction between rationalism and empiricism an unhelpful anachronism when writing the history of early modern philosophy?
31. What can we learn from Hegel?
32. 'What we can't say, we can't say, and we can't whistle...either' (RAMSEY). Discuss.
33. Does the advent of speculative realism herald the end of the divide between analytic and continental philosophy?
34. What does the distinction between 'modern' and 'post-modern' amount to?
35. **EITHER** Is philosophy continuous with the sciences? **OR** What is the goal of metaphysics?



# PHILOSOPHY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Should we be eliminativists about race?
2. Is there moral luck?
3. Is the *de se* simply another mode of presentation?
4. 'There is no answer to the question, "Why not be cruel?" There is no noncircular theoretical backup for the belief that cruelty is horrible.' (RICHARD RORTY) Discuss.
5. What can psychology and/or evolutionary theory teach us about morality?
6. What's wrong with blackmail?
7. Is knowledge first?
8. What is the most effective form of scepticism?
9. 'I know P. Therefore, any evidence against P is misleading and I can disregard it.' Discuss.
10. How can we distinguish kitsch from art?
11. Does the aesthetic value of a work of art relate to the impact it has on our lives?
12. Does implicit bias have philosophical significance?
13. How much does diminishing marginal utility help us justify the value of equality?
14. Do victims have special rights?
15. Is higher-order vagueness paradoxical?
16. What is infinity?
17. How do we best explain epistemic modals?
18. Do propositions have parts?
19. Is there such a thing as weak will?
20. Is introspection a reliable guide to the nature of experience?
21. What are sounds?
22. Has research in neuroscience lead to any advances in the philosophy of mind?

23. What are the weaknesses of four-dimensionalism?
24. Can I survive my own death?
25. ‘The acceptance or rejection of abstract linguistic forms, just as the acceptance or rejection of any other linguistic forms in any branch of science, will finally be decided by their efficiency as instruments, the ratio of the results achieved to the amount and complexity of the efforts required.’ (CARNAP) Discuss.
26. Did Kant have a metaphysics?
27. Was Mill an act utilitarian?
28. What is phenomenology?
29. Is the concept ‘horse’ an object?
30. ‘That every will must consider every other will its equal—would be a principle hostile to life, an agent of the dissolution and destruction of man, an attempt to assassinate the future of man, a sign of weariness, a secret path to nothingness.’ (FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE) Discuss.
31. ‘What makes it so plausible to assume that hypocrisy is the vice of vices is that integrity can indeed exist under the cover of all other vices except this one. Only crime and the criminal, it is true, confront us with the perplexity of radical evil; but only the hypocrite is really rotten to the core.’ (HANNAH ARENDT) Discuss.
32. What is the role of *phronesis* in Aristotle’s ethics?
33. ‘On those who step into the same rivers, different and different waters flow.’ (HERACLITUS) Discuss.
34. How does physics inform metaphysics?
35. Should philosophy be problem orientated?

## PHILOSOPHY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. 'The being cannot be termed rational or virtuous, who obeys any authority, but that of reason.' (WOLLSTONECRAFT) Discuss.
2. What is wrong with virtue ethics?
3. Can theories of probability help us in determining whether someone's action was wrong?
4. Is it possible to be in a situation in which, whatever one did, one would act wrongly?
5. Is there a palatable form of moral relativism?
6. What is the point of blame?
7. Is there such a thing as epistemic injustice?
8. What is the aim of belief?
9. Is faith a matter of choice?
10. What's really at stake in the debate between the epistemic internalist and externalist?
11. What can music teach us about the philosophy of art?
12. What could constitute merit for the purpose of distributing goods by merit?
13. Is political philosophy just moral philosophy applied to the political realm?
14. 'Hard cases make bad law.' Discuss.
15. Are there any reasons for accepting the law of excluded middle but rejecting the principle of bivalence?
16. Are axiomatic theories of truth tenable?
17. Is second-order logic just set theory in sheep's clothing?
18. What is representation?
19. Explain the difference between ambiguity, non-specificity and vagueness.
20. What does 'subtract' mean in 'What is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?' (WITTGENSTEIN)?
21. Is pragmatics a wastebasket?

22. What role can chance play in an account of free-will?
23. Can animals experience freedom?
24. Does the notion of acquaintance have any role to play in the philosophy of mind?
25. Can objects be causes?
26. 'The study of semantics is no more exhausted by the claims of analyticity than is the metaphysics of identity exhausted by the claims of necessity.' (KIT FINE) Discuss.
27. Is Kant's account of freedom satisfactory?
28. What is the role of moral education in Kant's moral philosophy?
29. What did Hume, Locke and Berkeley agree about?
30. Was Nietzsche a psychologist?
31. Compare and evaluate Plato's and Aquinas' theories of the soul.
32. What are the pros and cons of Plato's view in the *Republic* on the availability of healthcare?
33. Is Stoic Ethics an advance over Aristotelian Ethics?
34. Why is there so much philosophy of physics and biology and so little philosophy of chemistry?
35. What is the value of the history of philosophy?
36. Can radically different scientific theories talk about the same entities?

# PHILOSOPHY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Does the cosmos as a whole ground the existence of its parts?
2. Can a conditional analysis of dispositions address the possibility of finks, masks, and mimics?
3. Should we believe in the 'moving spotlight' theory of time?
4. Is evidence of cosmological fine-tuning evidence for the existence of God?
5. Are there different kinds of knowledge?
6. Should we still believe in belief?
7. Should we be epistemic consequentialists?
8. How do resolutions stop us succumbing to temptation?
9. Must pains be painful?
10. Is there any sense of 'function' in which the function of a state of mind is essential to understanding its nature?
11. What do forms of amnesia teach us about personal identity?
12. Is the meaning of the word 'the' of any particular philosophical significance?
13. Is there a special category of *de se* beliefs?
14. Should we have a theory of reference? If so, what form should it take?
15. Is moral judgment a hybrid of cognitive and non-cognitive states?
16. How, if at all, can we distinguish between 'thick' and 'thin' ethical predicates?
17. Is 'better than' transitive?
18. How, if at all, does intent matter to permissibility?
19. What, if anything, is morally wrong with speciesism?
20. What, if anything, is morally wrong with human cloning?
21. Are principles of justice dependent on facts?
22. If I believe that individual autonomy is of paramount value, does that make me an anarchist?
23. What can Aristotle teach us about *akrasia*?
24. Is Western philosophy a series of footnotes to Plato?

[OVER]

25. 'I think it is helpful to compare the method of doubt [in Descartes' *Meditations*] to a game, a game whose rules demand that players do things it would be ridiculous to do if they weren't playing the game.' [JANET BROUGHTON]. Is it?
26. Are Kantian 'appearances' mental objects?
27. Did Marx believe capitalism to be unjust?
28. Should the Black Notebooks change how we read Heidegger?
29. What is the point of a scientific model?
30. How should Bayesians respond to the problem of old evidence?
31. Are there emergent phenomena in science?
32. Can causation be understood in terms of counterfactuals?
33. What does the nature of our emotional engagement with art tell us about **EITHER** the nature of emotions **OR** the nature of art?
34. **EITHER** Why care if beauty is in the eye of the beholder?  
**OR** Are beauty norms racist?
35. What, if anything, can empirical psychology tell us about the epistemic standing of our moral judgments?
36. Is the study of subjective well-being by economists and psychologists neutral with respect to philosophical theories of well-being?
37. **EITHER** 'Gender is not to culture as sex is to nature.' [JUDITH BUTLER]. Discuss.  
**OR** Should we think of gender as a continuum or as a divide?
38. What is the point of philosophical conversation?

## PHILOSOPHY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Must there be a fundamental layer of reality?
2. What, if anything, is objective probability?
3. Is it reasonable to doubt that ordinary composite objects exist?
4. Is there virtue in skepticism?
5. Is expressivism about epistemic normativity tenable?
6. Can justification be defeated by higher-order evidence?
7. **EITHER** When is the privation of knowledge a form of injustice?  
**OR** If knowledge is power, should epistemology be politicized?
8. Must norms of rationality govern the ascription of propositional attitudes?
9. What, if anything, do **EITHER** hallucinations **OR** illusions **OR** after-images reveal about perception?
10. Do we know our own minds better than cognitive scientists do?
11. What makes manipulated agents unfree?
12. Why is it appropriate to say 'I find this tasty', but not to say 'I find this red'?
13. Why is language vague?
14. **EITHER** What does philosophy of language have to learn from linguistics?  
**OR** What does philosophy of language have to learn from psychology?
15. Does the reliance on mathematics in science commit scientific realists to mathematical platonism?
16. Is normativity irreducible?
17. Should moral philosophers aspire to be ethical experts?
18. In what sense must a moral theory be action-guiding?
19. Is the Repugnant Conclusion 'one of the few genuine, nontrivial theorems of ethics discovered thus far' [MICHAEL HUEMER]?
20. What, if anything, is morally wrong with insider trading?
21. Must doctors always respect do-not-resuscitate orders?
22. Suppose a foreigner is rightfully convicted of a crime in this country. Is it morally permissible to expel him once his sentence has been served?

[OVER]

23. When, if ever, is a wartime political leader under an obligation to authorise acts which are normally illegal in peacetime?
24. Should prisons be abolished?
25. Is Aristotle right to claim that the good man's friend 'is another self'?
26. Do contemporary arguments for the harmfulness of death undermine the therapeutic ambitions of Epicureanism?
27. Is Hume a naturalist or a skeptic?
28. Is Leibniz an idealist?
29. What role should critique play in philosophy?
30. Is the role of Reason 'to give contingency the form of necessity' [HEGEL]?
31. Is Everettian quantum mechanics more parsimonious than the Copenhagen Interpretation or less so?
32. At what biological level does natural selection act?
33. How do mechanisms explain?
34. What makes an object an artwork?
35. Is there a credible difference between the naked and the nude?
36. To what extent are philosophical intuitions culturally variable?
37. Is it a problem if the concept of health is normative?
38. **EITHER** How far can individual identity be determined by acts of self-identification?  
**OR** Compare and contrast the role of acts of self-identification in the construction of **two or more** of the following: gender identity, racial identity, religious identity, national identity, sexual orientation.
39. Is pornography hate speech?
40. Is it time to rethink the philosophical canon?



[With effect from 2015, the College decided to include in the Philosophy papers a larger number of questions, representing a wider range of sub-disciplines than the past papers below.]

## PHILOSOPHY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is a person's gender socially constructed? Is a person's sex?
2. Does anger have a legitimate role to play in politics?
3. Does the status quo have any moral privilege?
4. 'What distinguishes actions which are intentional from those which are not? The answer that I shall suggest is that they are actions to which a certain sense of the question "Why?" is given application; the sense is of course that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting' [ELIZABETH ANSCOMBE]. Discuss.
5. What can we learn about the mind by considering its disorders?
6. Can emotions be reasons for decisions?
7. Is higher-order evidence just more evidence?
8. How do apologies work?
9. Should epistemology be naturalised?
10. Can there be substantive disagreement in the absence of fact?
11. What is it to beg a question?
12. What is it to win a philosophical argument?
13. Should we seek to eradicate blame?
14. Are philosophers experts?
15. Is every consensual arrangement morally permissible?
16. Is Bill Gates a moral hero?
17. What divides Analytic and Continental philosophers?
18. What can slur words teach us about the philosophy of language?
19. 'The sentence adjacent to this one is not true. The sentence adjacent to this one is not true.' Discuss.
20. Are there clear borderline cases?
21. 'If it is now true that you will go to Paris next year, then it is pointless for you to choose not to go to Paris next year.' Discuss.

[OVER]

22. Are there ineffable truths?
23. What is the significance of *Naming and Necessity*?
24. Is there a privileged description of the world?
25. Is studying the history of philosophy more likely to widen or to narrow your perspective on issues in contemporary philosophy?
26. Is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* a work of epistemology or of metaphysics?
27. Does it matter if someone misrepresents the view of a dead philosopher in order to support her own philosophical theory?
28. Is irony of philosophical interest?
29. Should analytic philosophers take postmodernism seriously?
30. Choose a work of art and discuss its philosophical significance.
31. Do universals exist – and, if so, how?
32. What should we make of the fine-tuning problem?
33. What (if anything) is problematic with David Lewis' theory of possible worlds?

## PHILOSOPHY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is contemporary ethics essentially bourgeois?
2. What should philosophers make of dog-whistling?
3. Is there a mind-body problem?
4. Are we in a better position to know our own minds than those of other people?
5. What is it I do when I 'make up my mind'?
6. What is the relationship between permissibility and blamelessness?
7. What's wrong with hypocrisy?
8. 'The utilitarian is like the external world sceptic – there's no point in talking to him.'  
Discuss.
9. Is raising children with religion a form of child abuse?
10. Can there be non-epistemic reasons for belief?
11. Is there such a thing as rational persuasion?
12. Should we abandon the internalist/externalist distinction in epistemology?
13. What philosophical problem is it time to stop discussing?
14. Does experimental philosophy rest on a mistake?
15. If race is socially constructed, can racial identity still be used as a basis for resistance to racism?
16. Could we make do without modus ponens?
17. 'Missing woman unwittingly joins search party looking for herself' [*Toronto Sun*].  
Why is this occurrence of interest to the philosophy of language?
18. 'How she resembles her mother!' Does this sentence have a truth-value?
19. How does metaphor work?
20. What philosophical purpose can the notion of a 'language game' serve?
21. What should we be eliminativists about?
22. How does time differ from space?

[OVER]

23. What are particulars?
24. Are ancient theories of perception still relevant?
25. What changes would have to be made to the political and social structures of Plato's Kallipolis to render it democratic?
26. Can there be relations without relata, as structural realists claim?
27. If it is impossible to know whether God exists, is it irrational to pray?
28. Are genes real?
29. Is there a coherent pragmatism?
30. Can art tell the truth?
31. Is the beauty of an artwork one of its properties?
32. Is the Absurd a reason for nihilism?