



OXFORD UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY TEST

Wednesday 30 October 2019

Only to be taken by applicants for the Philosophy and Theology joint degree.

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

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Surname	
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Other names	
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School/College name*	
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*If you are an individual candidate, taking this test away from a school or college, please write the name of your examination centre in this box.

Centre Number						Candidate Number	X						
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UCAS Number (if known)				-									
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Date of Birth			-			-		
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Oxford College of Preference	
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You have 60 minutes (one hour) for this test.

Candidates should attempt Part A, which consists of one question, and ONE QUESTION ONLY from Part B. The two questions you answer will be given an equal weighting, so you are advised to spend half of the available time on each of them.

Any planning and rough working should be completed in this test booklet, and clearly indicated as such. There are 10 pages available for you to write on, including those with the printed questions; no additional pages are available, and none should be used. You must use a black pen. No dictionaries of any kind are permitted.

The Philosophy Test is a test of philosophical reasoning skills. There is no expectation that candidates will have undertaken any formal study of philosophy, and it is not a test of philosophical knowledge.

Credit will be given for precise and careful reasoning which answers the question asked, with particular merit being given to answers which anticipate and are able to answer objections to the reasoning given. No credit will be given for irrelevance, nor for the mere statement of opinions without evidence or argument to support them.

Answer **PART A** and **ONE QUESTION ONLY FROM PART B**.

Spend half an hour on each and do as much as you can within that time.

PART A

1. Read carefully through the following paragraph, and answer the questions which follow it.

It is true that what we call conscious knowledge appears to be very closely bound up with certain processes of action; so that not only does conscious knowledge of any kind always tend to produce appropriate action, but also action appropriate to a certain kind of knowledge tends to produce that knowledge in consciousness, where it was absent before. Thus we may say that in the history of the race conscious knowledge of the world has been produced, at least in very large measure, by the doing of actions appropriate to that knowledge after a more or less instinctive and unconscious fashion. And the same law holds of the relation between action and consciousness in the individual. The popular recipe for optimism is to keep smiling; and it is not so absurd as it sounds. Action appropriate to cheerfulness can produce cheerful views and beliefs. Spoken affirmations may be regarded as part of the action appropriate to the belief affirmed; and undoubtedly men come to believe things by repeatedly affirming them in speech... In cases of practical knowledge (*i.e.* knowing *how* to swim, bicycle, etc.) it does not require demonstration that the quickest way to learn is not to study the theory of the art first, or to attain conscious knowledge of how it is practised, but simply to start practising, leaving it to instinct in the main to guide the bodily movements. At the end of an hour of such apparently blind effort, quite undirected by conscious knowledge, the normal beginner 'knows how' to bicycle.

OC Quick

- a. Explain in your own words the thought of the passage.
- b. Discuss the truth of **ONE** of the following claims: **EITHER** 'conscious knowledge of any kind always tends to produce appropriate action' **OR** 'action appropriate to a certain kind of knowledge tends to produce that knowledge in consciousness'.

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Please turn over (Page 1 of 10)

PART B

2. Is direct action a form of terrorism?

3. We shall call a sentence ambiguous if the ordinary meaning of the words combined as they are in that sentence could be interpreted in more than one way. For example,

‘Bank runs are never a good thing’

could refer to the inadvisability of taking exercise at the edge of a river, or to problems associated with people disinvesting from a type of financial institution. We can sometimes recognize which way to interpret a sentence by the surrounding sentences which give it a context. Thus, ‘Jamie fell in the river the other day. He was asking for it. Bank runs are never a good thing.’

The following sentences are ambiguous. Briefly explain the ambiguity, and for each one give a pair of short paragraphs which invite the reader to interpret the sentence in one or another of the ways you have noted.

a) Danny Rose just got flattened by the touchline.

b) I felt a lump in my throat as the ball went in.

c) City’s supporters always cheer when their team wins a corner, though no other set of supporters do.

d) To win the league, a team needs to have more points than anyone else or equal the best points tally and have a superior goal difference and not have been declared bankrupt.

4. Could there be a religion without ritual?

X