OXFORD UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY TEST

Wednesday 31 October 2018

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

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

7122947942

Surname	
Other names	
School/College name*	

*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					

UCAS Number (if known)				–				–				

	d	d		m	m		y	y
Date of Birth			–			–		

Oxford College of Preference	

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 the following passage, and answer the questions which follow it.

Something which is not-white can also be said to *lack* the property of whiteness. To be white and to be not-white are thus cases of having a property and lacking it, respectively.

A thing which, as the case may be, either has or lacks a given property will be said to be in the *range* of the property concerned. Logs and pieces of cloth are in the range of the property whiteness – and so are all things and stuffs which are or may be coloured.

The range of a property can also be spoken of as its *range of significance*. If a thing neither has nor lacks a given property, then the attribution of this property to this thing "makes no sense" or "is meaningless".

The number 7, to be sure, is not brave. This, however, does not mean that it lacks braveness, is something of a coward. It means that numbers just do not belong in the range of significance of attributions of traits of character to something.

G H von Wright

a. Explain concisely in your own words the thought of the passage.

b. Someone puts forward the following argument: 'These claims are both false: '7 is brave' and '7 is something of a coward'. But it's a precondition for a sentence to be false that it be meaningful. So the attribution of traits of character to numbers is in fact meaningful.' Should we accept this argument, or should we accept the thought of the passage?

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PART B

2. How does opinion relate to belief?

3. Is it always wrong to make public (for example in news media) the names of those merely suspected of crimes? Is it always all right to make public the names of those actually convicted of crimes?

4. “They all seem to have a motive, sir”, said Lewis, surveying the mangled remains of Jobsworth the Porter, “so the problem is whether the Bursar is telling the truth. I’m assuming of course that everyone is either lying, or telling the truth, but not both.” “Well done, Lewis!”, cried Morse. “In logic there are no surprises. And if the Bursar is telling the truth, so is the Chaplain.” “What’s more, sir”, said Lewis, “the Chaplain and the Dean have given conflicting statements, so they can’t both be telling the truth.” “Excellent, Lewis!”, exclaimed the great detective. “We’ll make a copper of you yet. But nor are the Dean and the Warden both lying. And if the Warden is telling the truth, the Chaplain isn’t.” “I think I follow that, sir. But we still don’t know if the bursar is lying.” [Bob Hargrave]

Giving the clearest reasoning for your conclusion possible, assess whether Lewis’s final claim, ‘But we still don’t know if the bursar is lying’, is true, if we accept the truth of the other claims made by Lewis and Morse.

X

Cambridge Assessment
Admissions Testing