



OXFORD UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY TEST

November 2020

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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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 passage, and answer the questions which follow.

Religion and art have been intimately inked through the history of mankind. By far the greater number of all works of art produced to date all over the globe have a religious purpose and subject matter; and while, of course, many of them are mediocre, they include some of the greatest paintings and sculptures we know. Looking at the matter from a world-wide point of view, we are bound to say that the rise of a predominantly secular art is an exceptional event, possible only under special circumstances such as those which have prevailed in Europe during the last few hundred years.

What is the function of religious art? This question is perhaps best answered by considering what it portrays: God and the gods, heaven and hell – things no mortal eyes have ever seen, and which we accept on faith. The task of religious art is to bring these remote objects of thought and reverence closer to our direct experience by giving them tangible shape. Religious art is thus meant to replace vague imaginings by concrete visual evidence. In order to do this successfully, it must depict the sacred themes, unknown as they are to our sight, in familiar terms, taking their elements from our daily environment, yet at the same time stressing the different and superior qualities of the 'supernatural' world by departing from the appearance of ordinary reality.

Richard Bernheimer

- a. Outline in your own words the author's conception of religious art.
- b. EITHER Is the function Bernheimer identifies in the production of religious art a religious function?
OR Is it a mistake to think of art as having a function?

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PART B

2. In a global health crisis, should politicians give over control of health policy to scientists?

3. In the following question the letters A and B stand for two English sentences. Both A and B are true; but beyond this you are not told anything about them. Can you, from this information alone, determine whether the following longer sentences containing A and B are true or false? Justify your answer in each case, noting any difficulties which may arise. Note that each part of the question is a separate task; there is no assumption that A and B need be the same pair of sentences in each task from (a)-(g), just that in each separate case A and B are true sentences.

- a) 'A' contains more words than 'B'.
- b) A; but B.
- c) Suppose A; then B.
- d) A or B.
- e) The Prime Minister knows that A and B.
- f) A is a necessary and sufficient condition for B.
- g) A only if B.

4. 'There are many reasons why one might be committed to a particular religion; its truth need not be among those reasons.' Is this claim correct?

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