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Philosophy

Higher level

Paper 1

8 May 2026

Zone A afternoon | **Zone B** afternoon | **Zone C** afternoon

2 hours 30 minutes

Instructions to students

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: answer one question.
- Section B: answer two questions, each chosen from a different optional theme.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[75 marks]**.

Section A

Answer **one** question from this section. Each question in this section is worth [25 marks].

Core theme: Being human

1. Read the following text and develop your response as indicated below.

If we are playing tennis right now and I ask how you are feeling, you might say: “I am suffering from a terrible muscle cramp”. This example briefly illustrates that introspection can inform us of the character of a particular mental state with its corresponding content from a subjective perspective. What a particular experience is like for the individual—in qualitative terms. In addition, introspection can tell us of something specific about ourselves while we mentally process a particular experience.

With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, explore a philosophical issue related to the question of what it is to be human.

2. Look at the following image and develop your response as indicated below.



With explicit reference to the stimulus and your own knowledge, explore a philosophical issue related to the question of what it is to be human.

Section B

Answer **two** questions from this section, each chosen from a different optional theme. Each question in this section is worth [25 marks].

Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

3. Evaluate the claim that the function of art is to generate awe and wonder.
4. Evaluate the claim that “all aesthetic judgment is really cultural evaluation”.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Evaluate the claim that “the true method for acquiring knowledge is experiment”.
6. Evaluate the claim that “whoever can control knowledge can control people”.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. Evaluate the claim that “action is the sole medium of expression of ethics”.
8. Evaluate the claim that “with morals we correct the mistakes of our instincts, and with love we correct the mistakes of our morals”.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy of religion

9. Evaluate the claim that “God should not be merely thought, since when the thought ceases, God would also cease”.
10. Evaluate the claim that “the belief systems of all the world’s traditional religions are factually mistaken”.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of science

11. Evaluate the claim that artificial intelligence can duplicate the experience of consciousness.
12. Evaluate the claim that what is crucial for science is the demarcation between science and pseudoscience.

Optional theme 6: Political philosophy

13. Evaluate the claim that “nothing strengthens authority so much as silence”.
14. Evaluate the claim that “the ground of democratic ideas and practices is faith in the potentialities of individuals”.

Optional theme 7: Social philosophy

15. Evaluate the claim that governments have a moral obligation to intervene in social issues such as poverty and inequality to ensure a fair and just society.
 16. Evaluate the claim that social media influences contemporary understanding of community and personal identity.
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References:

2. Vertigo3d, 2017. *Women testing virtual reality simulator at home*. [image online] Available at: <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/photo/women-testing-virtual-reality-simulator-at-home-royalty-free-image/693064056> [Accessed 4 June 2025]. Source adapted.