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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.

On the most general level, one can say that for the Yup'ik people of the turn of the century, society was viewed as primary. The life of the individual only acquired meaning in a complex web of relationships between humans and animals, both the living and the dead. Moreover, while a distinction existed between human and non-human persons, the latter were considered of equal worth. The Yup'ik people considered animals to have originally been capable of transformation into creatures like humans.

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 “each mind perceives a different beauty”.
4. Evaluate the claim that art is a way to go beyond human limits.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Evaluate the claim that “knowledge does not rest on truth alone, but upon error also”.
6. Evaluate the claim that “knowledge is of no value unless it is put into practice”.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. Evaluate the claim that “ethics are more important than laws”.
8. Evaluate the claim that “one should die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly”.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy of religion

9. Evaluate the claim that philosophy cannot answer the question of whether God exists.
10. Evaluate the claim that even when humans turn away from religion, they remain subject to it.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of science

11. Evaluate the claim that “brains are not magical; they are causal machines”.
12. Evaluate the claim that “every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination”.

Optional theme 6: Political philosophy

13. Evaluate the claim that “as government expands, liberty contracts”.
14. Evaluate the claim that “an imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal illness of all societies”.

Optional theme 7: Social philosophy

15. Evaluate the view that the way a society is organized may lead to social inequality.
 16. Evaluate the claim that power dynamics shape social norms and values.
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References:

1. Fienup-Riordan, Ann. "The Real People: The Concept of Personhood Among the Yup'ik Eskimos of Western Alaska." *Études Inuit Studies* 10, no. 1/2 (1986): 261–70. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42869549>. Source adapted.
2. ArtemisDiana, 2022. *Cognitive dissonance and internal conflicts*. [image online] Available at: <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/illustration/cognitive-dissonance-and-internal-conflicts-royalty-free-illustration/1448028946> [Accessed 15 May 2022]. Source adapted.