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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

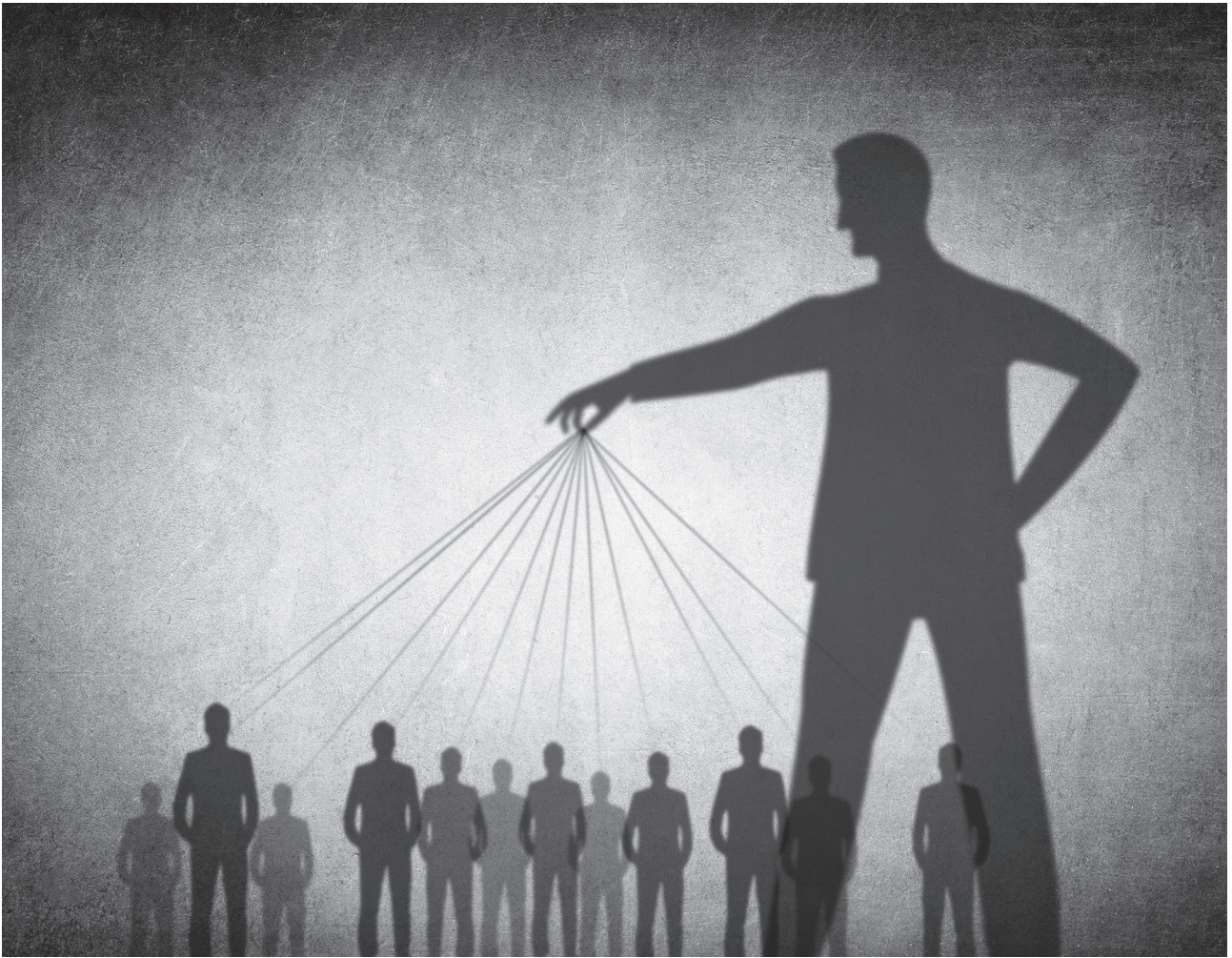
1. Read the following text and develop your response as indicated below.

Before I became pregnant with my first child in 2016, I did not know that my body, my brain, my self would undergo any lasting and significant changes. I thought that the hormonal impact of pregnancy was a one-time, temporary event, to enable the baby to grow. Then, once out, I would recover. Not a big deal, basically.

What I saw portrayed about early motherhood did not relate to what I experienced, which was that I myself changed. I was altered, rewired, metamorphosed. I was also—and this was a shock—vulnerable, just like our baby.

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 freedom is essential for great art to be created.
4. To what extent should the interpretation of works of art include the understanding of their creators?

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

5. Evaluate the claim that “the true sign of intelligence is imagination rather than knowledge”.
6. Evaluate the claim that “the limits of language are the limits of knowledge”.

Optional theme 3: Ethics

7. Evaluate the claim that ethics is an objective science.
8. Evaluate the claim that it is impossible to do good business out of bad ethics.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy of religion

9. Evaluate the claim that religious experience tells us about the reality of God.
10. Evaluate the claim that the presence of evil in the world makes it impossible for God to exist.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of science

11. Evaluate the claim that scientific knowledge has no limits.
12. Evaluate the claim that scientists are responsible for the consequences of the knowledge they produce.

Optional theme 6: Political philosophy

13. Evaluate the view that social-contract theory provides an adequate framework for the relationship between a state and its citizens.
14. Evaluate the view that defining universal human rights is becoming increasingly difficult in a world of competing interests, values and cultures.

Optional theme 7: Social philosophy

15. Evaluate the claim that globalization impacts on cultural identity and social cohesion.
 16. Evaluate the claim that gender is socially constructed.
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References:

1. Jones, L., 2023. The new science of motherhood shows it's far more transformative than western culture allows. Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2026. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jul/30/science-of-motherhood-transformative-western-culture-pregnant> [Accessed 13 May 2025]. Source adapted.
2. ArtemisDiana, 2022. *Manipulation concept*. [image online] Available at: <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/illustration/manipulation-concept-manipulative-person-royalty-free-illustration/1367730443> [Accessed 13 May 2025]. Source adapted.