Candidate Exemplar Work

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

H173
For first teaching in 2016

H173/01 Philosophy of Religion
Summer 2017 examination series
Version 1
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Introduction

These exemplar answers have been chosen from the summer 2017 examination series.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches and all answers are considered on their merits. These exemplars, therefore, should not be seen as the only way to answer questions but do illustrate how the mark scheme has been applied.

Please always refer to the specification (http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242913-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h573.pdf) for full details of the assessment for this qualification. These exemplar answers should also be read in conjunction with the sample assessment materials and the June 2017 Examiners’ Report to Centres available on the OCR website http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/.

The question paper, mark scheme and any resource booklet(s) will be available on the OCR website from summer 2018. Until then, they are available on OCR Interchange (school exams officers will have a login for this).

It is important to note that approaches to question setting and marking will remain consistent. At the same time OCR reviews all its qualifications annually and may make small adjustments to improve the performance of its assessments. We will let you know of any substantive changes.
‘There is no such thing as a soul.’ Discuss.

Candidate A: AO1 – 15 marks; AO2 – 15 marks

This is a very good example of a first paragraph. Demonstrates a good understanding of the issues raised in the questions and some key scholarship.

Perhaps too long, could have been broken up a bit but very good material, for example a clearly demonstrated understanding of Dawkins with a comparison with Plato’s dualism. Succinct passage on Plato’s views within the context of his views an examination of its merits. Then an explanation of why he did not need to take this route and a suitable use of Ockham’s razor. Could have started a new paragraph to examine Swinburne’s views. Good behaviourist analysis follows with critique woven in.
A reasonable jump to the question of if there is a spiritual side to humanity, is it possible to assert a separate soul. Good use of Descartes here. The candidate gives a good account of the scholarship around the strengths and weaknesses of Descartes, and also seems to have grasped what Ryle is trying to say. Also an interesting if difficult use example of abuse causing mental problems. Raises issues of the way mind body questions can be explored from either position.
This position is holds that mind and body are one and the same, supported by scholars such as Flew who argue that physical emotions are expressible through physically exhibited movement. This position fits seems reasonable when we consider anger and violence. However, not all our actions and thoughts are clear observable through our actions and our.

Anscombe, which Anscombe indentifies with her example of painting, the good and the bad. A thought process is required to understand the meaning of this action and its effect on others, and so it seems to demonstrate that the existence of a separate soul is required to explain how our actions do not always correspond exactly without our feelings or thoughts.

However, Anscombe goes on to point out that ‘a disembodied soul could not point to an insight which seems to negate the theory of a separate soul.’

In conclusion, it seems that the statement ‘there is no such thing as a soul’ is reasonable as the body, in the way in which the idea of a separate soul is inconsistent with our understanding of the world. However, it can be maintained that humans do have a spiritual element to them and so it seems to reduce to suggest we are purely material.

Some interesting philosophy in this paragraph though not entirely accurate or the best route. Flew may have been better assessed through his replica theory but the arguments are on point to the question and should not deter examiners from giving higher marks. Some good analysis around Anscombe’s views.

A good conclusion saying that there is evidence and argument on both sides of this issue and candidates are not required to come to a definitive conclusion.
‘There is no such thing as a soul.’ Discuss.

Candidate B: A01 – 8 marks; A02 – 8 marks

The introduction is a little confused: asserting one definition of soul as definitive, confusing it with our conscience or a ‘vessel’. Point to science saying there is no scientific evidence but religious people need the concept of soul to explain heaven and hell. So some sifting to find creditable points required.

Seems, to begin with, to be suggesting a group of people who might believe in the soul from Plato through to ‘countless’ Abrahamic religions. Then the candidate focuses on a reasonable account of Plato’s idea about Forms and what the soul might be in that context. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable understanding of what Plato proposes though not as sharp as it could be.
The confusion grows in this paragraph as the candidate tries to give an account of the chariot and the two horses but does not really understand the issues and ends up introducing the categorical imperative.

Here the candidate uses the idea of a body being lighter after death as a scientific assessment but in a confused way again. It was a modern research and not a medieval view. The candidate also seems to miss the point that this experiment could not be repeated and scientists need evidence of repetition before they can come to a conclusion.

The Aristotle paragraph is again not very sharp. It is possible to read into the information some sense of Aristotle disagreeing with Plato on Forms but no sense of his own version of what a soul might be. There is an implication that the candidate is seeing soul only in a dualist sense.
A very short paragraph introducing Dawkins’s views but again, very shallow and confused.

It is not clear exactly what the candidate is saying in this conclusion but one could conclude the question remains open as there is no scientific evidence although the candidate thinks Plato’s views should count in some way.
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