

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

Classical Problems in Philosophy
PHL 126/E

DEGREE EXAMINATIONS

NOVEMBER

2019

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Time: 3 hours
Subject: PHL 126/E
Marks: 100

This paper consists of 3 pages including the cover page

Internal Examiners

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External Examiners

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully and write legibly. Please answer each SECTION on a new page.

SECTION A: Short Questions (55 marks)

Methods: (9 marks)

1. What challenges do we face as philosophers studying historical texts? (3 marks)
2. Do you think context is important to understanding historical philosophical ideas? Why or why not? (3 marks)
3. In what way might we understand **translating** Philosophy to be a form of doing Philosophy? Give at least one example. (3 marks)

Ancient Egyptian Thinkers: (17 marks)

4. What values did the Ancient Egyptian Goddess Ma'at personify? (4 marks)
5. In Ancient Egypt, the word "to exist" was represented by an image of a hare (a kind of rabbit). Scholars suggest this supports the claim that Egyptians believed that "existence is always dynamic". Explain this claim in more detail. (4 marks)
6. What can the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant teach us about political authority? (6 marks)
7. *Teachings of Pathhotep*

And he spoke before his son,

'Do not be proud because you are wise!'

Consult with the ignorant as with the wise!

The limits of art are unattainable;

no artist is fully equipped with his mastery.

Perfect speech is more hidden than malachite,

yet it is found with the maidservants at the millstones. (Parkinson 1997, 251)

- a) What line in the above support the argument that we cannot fully know, there is always more to learn? (1 marks)
- b) Which lines support the argument that we can find knowledge in many different places? (2 marks)

Ancient Greek Thinkers: (20 marks)

8. Identify and describe at least one similarity between ancient Egyptian thought and Ancient Greek thought. (3 marks)
9. What, on Socrates' view, is the relationship between ethics and knowledge? (3 marks)
10. Neither Plato nor Socrates supported Democracy as a way to govern society. What philosophical reasons did they give to support this view? (5 marks)
11. What three things does Plato argue are **not** a description of real knowledge? (3 marks)
12. Explain, with examples, the four causes that Aristotle identifies. (6 marks)

Ancient Islamic Thinkers: (9 marks)

13. Explain the similarities between Plato and Al-Farabi's views (3 marks).
14. What was significant about Al-Farabi's work? (3 marks)
15. What role did the Islamic scholars play in the preservation and interpretation of Greek scholarship? (3 marks)

SECTION B: Long Questions (30 marks)

These are paragraph length questions: each answer should be between half a page and three-quarters of a page long.

16. Ma'at is often translated as 'truth' or 'justice'. To what extent do you think it provides us with a valuable political philosophy for contemporary society? (10 marks)
17. Why did Socrates believe that the 'the unexamined life is not worth living'? (10 marks)
18. Explain, in detail, the key philosophical ideas Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" illustrates. (10 marks)

SECTION C: Mini-Essay (15 marks)

This question should be answered in essay format and should be at least one page long.

19. Explain the difference between Plato and Aristotle's ideas about the essence of things (ie. Ideas and Forms). Which do you find more convincing? (15 marks)