

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

Classical Problems in Philosophy  
PHL 126/E

DEGREE EXAMINATIONS

NOVEMBER

2018

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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: (7 marks)

1. What kinds of epistemic injustice create a particular challenge to the study of historical texts? (4 marks)
2. 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: (20 marks)

3. In your own words describe the Ancient Egyptian concept of Ma'at. (3 marks)
4. Explain the Ancient Egyptian idea that "existence is always dynamic". (4 marks)
5. *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)*

Identify and explain the arguments about knowledge evident in the text above. (5 marks)

6. Compare and contrast the ethical principles of Ma'at and Ubuntu. (8 marks)

### Ancient Greek Thinkers: (20 marks)

7. Identify and describe at least one similarity between ancient Egyptian thought and Ancient Greek thought. (4 marks)
8. What, on Socrates' view, is the relationship between ethics and knowledge? (3 marks)
9. Plato's philosophy is characterised by rationalism (the central role of reason); how is this reflected in his theory of the state? (4 marks)
10. What three things does Plato argue are **not** a description of real knowledge? (3 marks)

11. Explain, with examples, the four causes that Aristotle identifies. (6 marks)

*Ancient Islamic Thinkers: (8 marks)*

12. Explain, in your own words, the main ideas of Al-Farabi's Political Philosophy.  
(5 marks)

13. 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.*

14. **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)

15. Explain and assess Plato's "Allegory of the Cave". (10 marks)

16. Why did **Socrates** believe that the 'the unexamined life is not worth living'?  
(10 marks)

**SECTION C: Mini-Essay (15 marks)**

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

17. Explain the difference between Plato and Aristotle's ideas about the essence of things (ie. Ideas and Forms). (15 marks)