

A Level Possible Exam Questions
Philosophical Language and Thought

Ancient philosophy: Plato

- 'The Analogy of the Cave tells us nothing about reality. Discuss.
- How convincing is Plato's idea of the Form of the Good?
- Assess the effectiveness of Plato's theory of the forms in explaining the world.

Aristotle and causation

- 'Aristotle's theory of the four causes explains nothing.' Discuss.
- 'Aristotle's understanding of the world is more convincing than that of Plato. Discuss.
- Assess the effectiveness of Aristotle's four causes in explaining the world.

Soul, Mind and Body

- Assess whether substance dualism is a convincing approach to questions of body and soul.
- To what extent is Plato's belief in a separate body and soul convincing?
- 'Religious faith demands belief in a separate body and soul.' Discuss.

The existence of God: arguments based on observation.

- 'There is no design in the universe.' Discuss.
- To what extent is Aquinas' cosmological argument successful in proving that God exists?
- 'The universe is just there: it neither has nor needs an explanation.'

The existence of God: arguments based on reason

- To what extent does St. Anselm's ontological argument prove the necessary existence of God?
- 'We cannot derive the existence of God from his definition.' Discuss.
- 'A posteriori' arguments are far more successful than 'a priori' in proving the existence of God. Discuss

Religious Experience

- 'Conversion experiences are the most convincing form of religious experience'. Discuss.
- How satisfactory are religious experiences as proof of the existence of God?
- 'Religious experiences are weak evidence for God because they happen to individuals not groups' Discuss

The Problem of evil

- 'There is no satisfactory answer to the problem of evil.' Discuss.
- To what extent is St. Augustine more successful than the Irenaean theodicy in explaining evil in the world?
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of John Hick's theodicy.

The Nature of God: Divine Eternity and Divine Action in Time

- 'Boethius gives a fully satisfactory account of God's timelessness and free will.' Discuss
- To what extent is it true to say that God is outside time?
- Richard Swinburne's account of God and time is unconvincing.' Discuss

Nature of God: Omni-characteristics

- Assess the belief that God is omnipotent.
- To what extent is it true to say that God knows everything?
- 'It is possible to resolve the conflicts between the divine attributes.' Discuss

Religious Language

- Assess the claim that Aquinas' theory of analogy enables people to speak meaningfully about God.
- Tillich's claim that religious language is symbolic is more satisfactory than the via negativa
- To what extent is it true to argue that we are too remote from God to say anything about him?

Religious Language: 20th Century Perspectives

- Assess the belief that talk about God is meaningless.
- 'The verification principle is too flawed to be useful'. Discuss
- Assess the claim that religious language/belief is unfalsifiable.
- 'Wittgenstein's theory of Language Games is very helpful in the study of religious language'. Discuss
- 'Wittgenstein's non-cognitive approach religious language is more successful than Aquinas' cognitive approach.' Discuss

A Level Possible Exam Questions **Religion and Ethics**

Aquinas and Natural Law

- To what extent is natural law the best way to resolve moral problems?
- 'Natural law theory succeeds because it takes human nature seriously.' Discuss.
- The strengths of natural law outweigh its weaknesses' Discuss

Situation Ethics

- Assess the significance of love in situation ethics.
- Situation ethics provides a helpful method for making moral decisions. Discuss
- 'Situation ethics is neither Christian nor believable.' Discuss.

Kantian Ethics

- To what extent is it true to say that the only requirement of morality is to do our duty?
- 'Kant does not properly establish his ethical postulates of God, Immortality and Freedom.' Discuss.
- To what extent is Kant' ethical teaching helpful in resolving all ethical problems?

Utilitarianism

- Assess how valuable act utilitarianism is in resolving moral dilemmas.
- To what extent is utilitarianism helpful in living a truly moral life?
- 'Rule utilitarianism works as a moral theory, but act utilitarianism does not.' Discuss.

Euthanasia

- 'Situationism is the best method of assessing whether euthanasia is morally acceptable.' Discuss.
- Assess the view that the sanctity of life no longer has any place in twenty first century medical ethics.
- 'Voluntary euthanasia is morally acceptable; non voluntary euthanasia is always wrong.' Discuss.

Business Ethics

- To what extent is utilitarianism helpful in deciding whether whistle-blowing is a correct action to take?
- The only concern of business should be to make a profit. Debate.
- Consider whether Kantian Ethics are useful in dealing with the issues of business in a global context.

Meta Ethics

- 'The good is not a natural quality.' Discuss
- To what extent is it possible to argue that we just know what the good is?
- 'Emotivism is the most successful approach to justifying ethical judgements.' Discuss

Conscience

- Freud's account of conscience is mistaken.' Discuss
- To what extent is Aquinas successful in arguing that we must always follow our conscience?
- "'Conscience" is just a fancy name for our guilty feelings.' Discuss

Sexual Ethics

- 'All forms of sexual behaviour should be tolerated providing no one is harmed'. Discuss
- Assess the view that homosexuality is always wrong.
- Critically assess traditional religious ethical teaching about sexual ethics.

Possible Exam Questions **Development of Christian Thought**

Augustine on human nature

- Assess the view that Augustine's teaching on human nature is pessimistic.
- Critically Assess Augustine's teaching on original sin.
- Assess the effectiveness of Augustine's claim that humans have a distinctive nature.
- 'Original sin means that humans can never be morally good' Discuss

Death and the after life

- 'Without the reward of heaven Christians would not behave well. Discuss.
- Assess the view that there is no last judgement, each person is judged by God at the moment of their death.
- 'Purgatory is the most important Christian teaching about the afterlife.' Discuss.

Knowledge of God's existence

- 'God can be known because the world is so well designed. Discuss.
- Critically assess the view that the Bible is the only way of knowing God.
- 'Everyone has an innate knowledge of God's existence.' Discuss.

Person of Jesus

- 'Jesus' role was just to liberate the poor and weak against oppression. Discuss
- Assess the view that the miracles prove Jesus was the Son of God.
- 'Jesus Christ is not unique' Discuss

Christian moral principles

- 'The Church should decide what is morally good.' Discuss.
- Assess the view that the Bible is a comprehensive moral guide for Christians.
- 'Christian moral principles are not self-evident.' Discuss.

Christian moral action: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- 'Bonhoeffer's most important teaching is on leadership.' Discuss.
- Assess the view that Bonhoeffer's teaching on ethics still has relevance today.
- 'Christian ethics means by being obedient to God's will.' Discuss.
- To what extent was Bonhoeffer's religious community at Finkenwalde successful?

Religious Pluralism and Theology

- Critically assess the view that the most honest view is that only one religion can be true.
- 'A loving God will save all people'. Discuss
- 'Theological pluralism undermines Christian beliefs.' Discuss

Religious Pluralism and Society

- Analyse the view that Christians should not seek to convert people from other faiths to Christianity.
- 'Inter-faith dialogue has contributed practically to social cohesion.' Discuss
- 'Christians have a mission to those of no faith.' Discuss

Gender and Theology

- 'Men and women are equal but different.' Discuss
- Assess the view that man is 'the head of the wife' (Ephesians 5:22)
- 'There is no such thing as an ideal Christian family.' Discuss

Gender and Society

- To what extent does it matter whether God is presented in male or female terms?
- 'Christianity is sexist.' Discuss
- 'Ruether presents a more successful teaching on God than Daly.' Discuss
- Assess the view that a male saviour cannot save women.

The Challenge of Secularism

- 'Secularism does more harm than good.' Discuss
- 'Christianity should play no part in public life.' Discuss
- 'God is simply an illusion based on wish fulfilment.' Discuss

Liberation Theology and Marx

- 'Christianity tackles social issues more effectively than Marx.' Discuss
- 'The sole concern of Christianity should be the liberation of the poor.' Discuss
- To what extent should theology/liberation theology engage with Marxism?