AM SYLLABUS (2023)

PHILOSOPHY   **AM 25**

SYLLABUS

Philosophy AM 25	(Available in September)
Syllabus	Paper 1 (3 hrs) + Paper II (3 hrs)

1. Introduction

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, philosophy has developed into a discipline which asks fundamental questions about all areas of human activity, while seeking to offer plausible answers to such questions. Past philosophers lived in particular historical and cultural circumstances, but their questions and answers have inspired many views of how human beings understand, interpret and change themselves and the reality around them.

At Advanced Level, Philosophy introduces students to some of its core areas, including, the study of being and reality (metaphysics) and various theories of knowledge (epistemology), among others. It invites them to explore how philosophy relates to and complements other subjects such as the Sciences, Languages, Psychology, Sociology, History, Art and Literature, Law and Politics, Religion, Computing, Marketing and Communications. Through the presentation of historical, theoretical and practical considerations, this syllabus is designed to illustrate how the contribution of philosophy liesprecisely in giving meaning to how people, as individual persons and societies, live these different realities. Studying Philosophy strengthens the development of a deeper, critical reflection on practical issues in everyday life.

2. Aims

The Advanced Level course in Philosophy will enable students to:
  a. gain knowledge and understanding of Philosophy through consideration of some important philosophical issues and approaches to problems;
  b. develop a rigorous approach, both critical and constructive, to the study of Philosophy and the nature of argument;
  c. practise and enhance their abilities to construct, develop and maintain clear and coherent arguments;
  d. acquire skills in comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation that facilitate the development of independent thinking, based on a critical examination of the evidence and rational argumentation. These skills are applicable in the study of other academic subjects and in reflection on other important aspects of human experience.

3. Objectives

Based on the above aims, students should be able to:
  a. define/describe the main problems raised by the philosophers presented and their tentative answers.
  b. deal confidently with structured questions concerning logic.
  c. identify the philosophical, existential and ethical concerns of the topics presented and their continued relevance.
  d. present well-structured and logically sound arguments in essay form.
  e. show a thorough knowledge of the selected extracts and take a critical stance where necessary.

4. Method of Assessment

The Assessment consists of two (2) written papers of three (3) hours each. Each paper carries 50% of the total mark.

Paper 1: This paper is divided into two (2) sections. Section A covers Module 1 (Logic and Reasoning) of the syllabus and carries 30% of the marks for this paper. Candidates will answer three (3) out of four (4) questions carrying equal marks. Section B covers Module 2 (Ethics and Society). Candidates will have to answer a compulsory question and another question from a choice of three (3). Each answer will be in essay form and carries 35% of the mark of this paper.

Paper 2: This paper is divided into two (2) sections and covers all of Module 3 (Key Questions in European Thought). Section A will consist of one question and carries 30% of the marks for this paper. A gobbit taken from the selected extracts of this module will be given and candidates will answer one or more questions (short or long essay form) on it. Section B has five (5) essay questions of which candidates will answer any two (2). Each question carries 35% of the marks for this paper.

5. Content

Module 1: Logic and Reasoning

Part1: Introduction to Logic

1. Deduction and Induction
2. Truth and Validity
3. Fallacies:
    i. Argument from Ignorance
    ii. Appeal to Inappropriate Authority
    iii. Argument Ad Hominem
    iv. Begging the Question
    v. Appeal to Emotion
    vi. Appeal to Pity
    vii. Appeal to Force
    viii. Irrelevant Conclusion

Part 2: Propositional Logic

1. Elementary Propositions
    i. Assertions
    ii. Bi-Location
    iii. Bi-Temporation
2. Complex propositions
3. Logical Junctors:
    i. Negator   ¬
    ii. Conjunctor   ∧
    iii. Adjunctor   ∨

iv.   Disjunctor   ⊔
v.   Subjunctor   →
vi.   Bi-Subjunctor ↔
4.   Valid Arguments
5.   Logically True Propositions

Part 3: Formal Logic

1.   The Implication   <
2.   The Equivalence   ><
3.   Rules of Inference:
      i.   Modus Ponens
      ii.   Modus Tollens
4.   Valid Forms and Admissible Rules:
      i.   Reflexivity
      ii.   Transitivity
      iii. Symmetry
      iv.   Generalization and Instantiation
      v.   Partial Replacement Rule
5. Properties of Junctors
      i.   Commutativity
      ii.   Associativity
      iii. Distributivity
      iv.   Self-Distributivity

Module 2: Ethics and Society

Part 1: The Classical Model: How Should One Live?

1.   The Sophists: Truth is Relative
      i.   Protagoras – Moral Relativism; Man is the Measure of All Things.
      ii.   Gorgias – Moral Nihilism; Moral Truth is Fiction

2.   Socrates: Moral Optimism
      i.   Socrates' Love for the Truth
      ii.   Socratic Method (Dialectic)
      iii. Knowledge of the Truth and Right Actions.

3.   Aristotle: Practical Ethics to Achieve Self-Fulfilment
      i.   Definition of Man as a Rational Animal
      ii.   The Proper Function of Human Beings
      iii. The Pursuit of Virtue and the Golden Mean

4.   Epicurus: Practical Ethics as Pleasure Seeking
      i.   Material Definitions of Human Nature
      ii.   Fear of Death and Superstitions
      iii. Epicurean Pleasure-Seeking Principle

Part 2: The Modern Model: How Should One Act?

5.   Kantianism: Doing Good for its Own Sake
     i.   Virtue and Happiness – 'Faring Well' and 'Doing Right'
     ii.   Kant and the Good Will
     iii.   Hypothetical and Categorical Imperatives
     iv.   Pure Practical Reason and the Moral Law
     v.   Universalizability Test

6.   Utilitarianism: The Best Outcome
     i.   Utility and the Greatest Happiness Principle
     ii.   Act and Rule Utilitarianism
     iii.   Utilitarianism and Consequences
     iv.   Does the End Justify the Means?

Part 3: The Contemporary Model: How Might One Live?

7.   Nietzsche: Should One Be Moral?
     i.   The Crisis of Morality
     ii.   A New Morality Beyond Good and Evil
     iii.   The Will to Power and the Overman

8.   Sartre and Existentialism: Freedom and Choice
     i.   Sartre and Radical Freedom
     ii.   Anguish and Bad Faith
     iii.   Acting in Good Faith
     iv.   The Creation of Value

Part 4: The Internet and Society: How Might We Act?

9.   The Internet and Ethical Values
     i.   The Role of Morality in Cyberspace
     ii.   Ethical Values for the Digital Age

10.   Privacy and Cyberspace
     i.   Definition and Theory of Privacy
     ii.   Personal Information on the Internet
     iii.   Consumer privacy on the Internet
     iv.   Case Study – Newport Electronics

Part 5: Life and Death Issues: How Might We Regulate?

11.   Reproductive Technology
     i.   IVF - ET
     ii.   Surrogacy
     iii.   Cloning
     iv.   Applying Moral Theories

12. Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide
    i. Deciding Life and Death:
- Voluntary and Nonvoluntary Active Euthanasia
- Voluntary and Nonvoluntary Passive Euthanasia
- Physician-Assisted Suicide

    ii. Autonomy, Mercy and Harm
    iii. Applying Moral Theories

Module 3: Key Questions in European Thought

Part 1: What am I?

- History and Theory:

(a) Plato:
The Allegory of the Cave; The theory of Forms; the Tripartite Soul; Moral Philosophy; The state as man writ large.

(b) Aristotle:
Metaphysics; being and becoming; potentiality and actuality; theory of knowledge; man as a 'rational being'; man as a 'social being'.

(c) Hobbes:
Man and the state of nature; the social contract: from natural evil to civilised society.

(d) Locke
Man and the state of nature; the three natural rights; the social contract: a society of free persons.

(e) Rousseau
Man and the state of nature; human innocence and social inequality; the social contract and the general will.

- Applied Issues

(a) What are the characteristics of personhood?
Embodiment, Network of beliefs, Rationality, Social relationships, Self-awareness, Language, Reflection, Autonomy and Rights.

(b) What is a person?
i. Are all persons human?
ii. Non-human animals, machines and the characteristics of personhood.

(c) What secures our personal identity through time?
i. Psychological theories of personal identity – Locke's Memory Theory.
ii. Physical continuity theories of personhood – Animal Theory and Brain Theory.

- Selected Extracts

(a) Plato, *Republic*, §509d-521b
(b) Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. I
(c) Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, bk. I, ch.1-6.

Part 2. Do we live in the best of all possible worlds?

- History and Theory:

(a) Stoicism: Nature and the Problem of Evil
      - Determinism and the Good in Nature
      - Reason and the Life of Virtue
      - Human Passions and Moral Evil

(b) Augustine: The Order of the Universe and the Problem of Evil
      - The Good and Creation
      - Metaphysical Evil as Disorder in the Universe
      - Moral Evil and the Free Will

(c) Aquinas: Theodicy and Free Will
      - God as the Source of All that is Good
      - Evil as Privation
      - The Free Will and Moral Evil

(d) Leibniz: Optimism and Determinism
      - The principle of sufficient reason
      - The doctrine of pre-established harmony
      - Voltaire's critique of Leibniz

- Applied Issues:

(a) To what extent am I responsible for my actions?
Defining Determinism; Determinism and Human Action; Human Action and the Laws of Nature; Free Will and Compatibilism; The Implications of Determinism.

(b) Is human existence meaningful?
A discussion of Albert Camus' 'Absurd Hero' in the Myth of Sisyphus.

- Selected extracts

(a) Thomas Nagel, *What Does It All Mean?* pp. 47 – 58.
(b) Voltaire, *Candide*, or *Optimism*, ch. 1-5.
(c) Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, pp. 115 – 119.

Part 3: How do I know?

- History and Theory:

(a) Introduction - Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Revolution
A short overview of the rise of modern philosophy within the context of the scientific revolution (Copernicus and Galileo); from the attempt of philosophers to make philosophy more scientific in mathematical terms (rationalism) to empirical science (empiricism)

(b) Rationalism
- General principles of rationalism (knowledge acquired through reason; innate ideas; rationalism and the scientific method).
- Descartes: overview of the Meditations; the method of doubt; anti-skepticism; the cogito argument/the 'I'; substance; *res cogitans* and *res extensa*; the mind-body problem; immaterialism.

(c) Empiricism
- General principles of empiricism (knowledge acquired through experience/perception; Locke's tabula rasa).
- Hume: contrast with Descartes; skepticism; theory of knowledge; the self as a bundle of perceptions; the empirical prejudice; the mind-body problem; materialism.

- Applied Issues:

(a) Do knowledge and science have limits?
(b) Can science prove or disprove the existence of God and of the human mind?
(c) Can we think without language?
The 'linguistic turn' – from epistemology to the philosophy of language
Locke on ideas, mind and language; Chomsky on the innate knowledge of language

- Selected extracts

(a) Descartes, R. *Meditations*, I and II.
(b) Locke, J. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (in Stumpf, pp. 607-611)
(c) Hume, D. *A Treatise on Human Nature*, bk. 1, part 1, sect. 1
(c) Searle, J. *'The Mind-Body Problem: A Contemporary View'* (in Stumpf, pp. 874-883)

Part 4: How can we communicate what we mean?

- History and Theory

(a) Introduction. Naturalism versus Conventionalism
Plato's Cratylus; The Early Wittgenstein's Naturalism; Saussure's Conventionalism.

(b) Frege: i. Theory of Sense and Reference
                ii. Identity Statements.

(c) Wittgenstein:
       i. Meaning as use
       ii. Language games and family resemblances
       iii. 'Private Language Argument'
       iv. 'Beetle in the Box'

(d) Linguistic Innateness and Relativity
       i. Skinner's Behaviourist model of language acquisition
       ii. Chomsky's criticism of Skinner
       iii. Chomsky's universal grammar
       iv. Language and culture
       v. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

(e) Language and Action – Austin/Searle/Grice

Austin: i. Distinction between constatives and performatives
       ii. Definition and composition of a speech-act:
           locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary
       iii. Moral implications arising from speech-acts:
           intended meanings (assertions) and intended outcomes (actions)

Searle: i.   Constitutive and normative rules
         ii. Three dimensions of a speech-act
         iii. Taxonomy of illocutionary acts

Grice: i. The Cooperative Principle
         ii. Maxims and implicatures

- Applied Issues

(a) Could a machine think?
       i. Brains and computers
       ii. The Turing Test
       iii. The Chinese Room Argument

(b) Language and democracy
       i. Communicative theory versus strategic action
       ii. Ideal speech situation
       iii. Dialogue and democracy

- Selected extracts

(a) Searle, J. *'What is a Speech Act?'* (1965)
(b) Grice, H.P. *'Logic and Coversation'* (1975)

6. Recommended Texts:

Graham, G., *Theories of Ethics* (New York; Routledge, 2011)

Friggieri, J., *In-Nisġa tal-Ħsieb*, vols. 1 and 2 (Malta: Media Centre, 2000, 2007)

Riolo, V, *Introduction to Logic* (Malta: Malta University Publishers, 2001)

Stumpf, E.S., *Philosophy, History and Problems* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 2011)

Lacewing, M., *Philosophy for AS* (London: Routledge, 2008)

7. Further Reading

Copi, I.M., Introduction to Logic (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990)

Spinello, R.A., Cyberethics (Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2006)

Vaughin, L., Bioethics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Serracino Inglott, P., Peopled Silence (Malta: Malta University Publishers, 1995)

8. Online Sources

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy   http://plato.stanford.edu/