A-LEVEL
PHILOSOPHY

PHIL3 Key Themes in Philosophy
Mark scheme

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A-level Philosophy Unit 3 **Generic mark scheme**

AO1: Knowledge and understanding
Level 5 **13–15 marks** Answers in this level provide a comprehensive, detailed and precise account of philosophical arguments, positions and concepts relevant to the question, demonstrating a full understanding of the issues raised.
Level 4 **10–12 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** provide a clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range of positions and arguments relevant to the question so that, while the response is clearly focused, detailed and precise, it is not comprehensive and some avenues remain unexplored. **Or** the range of points selected and applied may be quite full but descriptions of philosophical positions, arguments and concepts may lack some detail. Understanding, while good, may not always be precise.
Level 3 **7–9 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** present a range of knowledge generally so that relevant positions are identified and explained but specific arguments will be rare and those given will lack detail and precision (this type of response may be quite lengthy but lacking philosophical impact). **Or** relevant positions, concepts and arguments are introduced and accurately stated but exposition fails to develop beyond a bare outline.
Level 2 **4–6 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** demonstrate a basic grasp of relevant arguments and positions through offering a sketchy and vague account lacking depth, detail and precision. Positions may not be clearly described and, at the bottom of this band, descriptions may also be inaccurate and confused in places. **Or** answers may be relevant but very brief and undeveloped.
Level 1 **1–3 marks** Answers in this level demonstrate a very limited grasp of relevant positions and arguments. Knowledge and understanding of at least one aspect of relevant positions, arguments or concepts will be present.
0 marks No relevant philosophical knowledge.

AO2: Interpretation, analysis and application
Level 5 **13–15 marks** A range of points are selected to advance discussion. Points are made and examples used are pertinent and judiciously selected; the nuances of the question will be specifically addressed. Answers in this level critically analyse the range of points and examples selected for discussion to advance a clear, directed and analytical treatment of the issue. The implications of positions discussed are considered and explored.
Level 4 **10–12 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** critically analyse a relatively narrow range of relevant points and examples to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments and positions. **Or** consider a wide range of material without fully exploiting it, so that some points are not analysed in detail or with precision and some implications are not explored. Critical discussion is focused and generally sustained although some points may not be clearly directed.
Level 3 **7–9 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** select a range of relevant points and examples to provide a focused discussion of relevant philosophical positions, arguments and concepts in which analysis is brief, lacking in detail and precision. **Or** interpretation is very narrowly focused, and analysis centres on a partial appreciation of the issue.
Level 2 **4–6 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** select some relevant points but analysis may be basic, sketchy and vague so that critical points are not developed. **Or** apply and analyse a range of philosophical concepts and arguments without sustaining a focus on the question. Answers lower in the level may exhibit both of these tendencies in discussions of a limited range of points where the focus on the question may be largely implicit.
Level 1 **1–3 marks** Answers in this level provide a limited analysis of philosophical arguments and positions: **Either** through offering a brief, fragmentary, interpretation and analysis of the issues. **Or** through offering a tangential account in which some points coincide with the concerns of the question but relevance is limited.
0 marks No relevant philosophical points.

AO3: Assessment and evaluation
Level 5 **17–20 marks** Reasoning and argumentation are effective, penetrating and expressed with some insight and sophistication. The construction of argumentation is relevant and sustained and reads as a coherent and integrated whole. Answers in this level advance a clear evaluative judgement: at the lower end of this level this may consist of a balanced summary of the strengths and weaknesses of positions or points evaluated throughout. The response is legible, employing technical language accurately and appropriately, with few, if any, errors of spelling punctuation and grammar. The response reads as a coherent and integrated whole.
Level 4 **13–16 marks** The critical appreciation of points raised is employed to advance a reasoned judgement although this may require further support. Some material will be explicitly evaluated although the construction of argumentation may lack some insight or sophistication and positions reached may not convince completely. At the bottom of this level evaluative conclusions might acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses of relevant positions. The response is legible, and technical language is employed with partial success. There may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response reads as a coherent whole.
Level 3 **9–12 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** evaluate some relevant points and argumentation but may not advance a position or reach a judgement in relation to the issue as a whole. **Or** positions are listed and juxtaposed so that evaluation is implicit in the order or number of points made and judgements may be made on the basis of limited argumentation. At the bottom of this level juxtapositions lack depth, detail, subtlety and precision. The response is legible, employing some technical language accurately, with possibly some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
Level 2 **5–8 marks** Answers in this level: **Either** exhibit a limited attempt to develop argumentation, rather they describe a view. **Or** argumentation is confused in places. Judgements may be reached which do not seem to be justified by the reasoning provided. The response may be legible, with a basic attempt to employ technical language, which may not be appropriate. There may be frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
Level 1 **1–4 marks** Argumentation is likely to be brief, judgements may be asserted without justification and reasoning is confused, misdirected or poorly expressed. Technical language may not be employed, or it may be used inappropriately. The response may not be legible and errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive.
0 marks No relevant philosophical insights are presented.

A-level Philosophy Unit 3 **Question-specific mark scheme**

Examiners should note that the content suggested in the question-specific mark scheme is intended as an indication of the range of issues candidates are likely to draw from but is not exhaustive, and other relevant material and approaches should be credited. Note also that the range of potentially relevant material mentioned is not intended as a prescription as to what candidates' responses ought to cover and examiners should refer to the Generic mark scheme when awarding marks.

Section A: Philosophy of mind

0 1 Assess the functionalist account of mental states.

[50 marks]

AO1 **0-15 marks**

There are different versions of functionalism and candidates can access the full range of marks by basing their answer on knowledge of any one or more versions.

The functionalist account identifies mental states with the causal (or functional) role they bear to (1) environmental effects on the body, (2) other mental states, and (3) bodily behaviour. So a particular type of mental state is what it is not in virtue of its internal constitution, but rather because of the unique functional role it typically plays in a complex network of internal states mediating between sensory inputs and behavioural outputs.

The idea of a functional definition is likely to be explained, most likely through examples of entities that are defined functionally (eg bodily organs, artefacts). The material from which the thing is composed is not relevant to how it is defined.

Illustrative examples of how mental states, such as particular beliefs, desires or sensations (pain), can be defined functionally should figure (eg a belief is produced by certain sense perceptions, interacts with certain desires and produces certain behaviours).

Functionalism is compatible with token identity: on each occasion of a mental event, there is some brain event. But it can be contrasted with type identity since it allows for the multiple realisabability of mental states; and behaviourism, in that it recognises that mental states are causally efficacious.

'Teleological functionalism' may be employed to refer quite broadly to the idea that mental states should be defined in terms of their use, by what they do, or by their causal role. But it may also refer to the view that mental states have the function they do because they have evolved for that purpose. On such an account evolutionary processes may be necessary for genuine mental states.

'Machine functionalism' refers more narrowly to the view that mental states can be defined in terms of what they do in response to inputs and outputs and so can be given a formal description in a machine table. The mind/brain relationship is thus the same as the hardware/software distinction in a digital computer. The mind as a Turing machine. Machine functionalism is likely to be illustrated through examples (eg a vending machine).
Homeostatic models of functionalism may figure – eg desire analysed in terms of quiescence restoral.

AO2 **0-15 marks**

The following arguments are likely to be explored

Advantages of the functionalist account:

- Functionalism doesn't postulate the existence of a mysterious non-physical mind since functional properties are realisable in the physical constitution of the brain; and so it avoids the problems associated with dualism (eg the problem of interaction).
- Since functionalism is defended by physicalists, general arguments for physicalism are relevant, eg the apparent neural dependence of mental states, the material origins of the species, causal closure of the physical, etc.
- Functionalism represents an improvement on behaviourism in that it recognises that there is something going on 'within' which causes our behaviour and is caused by sensory stimuli, ie the mind. In this respect functionalism is in tune with our common sense intuitions/folk psychology.
- It allows for multiple realisability: different parts of the brain can do the work of the same mental state. This represents an improvement on type identity theory, eg because people can recover the same mental states they lose after brain damage; different individuals must have different types of brain state realising the same mental state. Functionalism is liberal in that it allows for aliens, animals and/or computers with different types of 'brain' to enjoy the same mental states as humans.

Arguments against functionalism

The impossibility of reducing the intrinsic qualities of subjective feels or *qualia* to functional states is likely to figure prominently and there is a range of thought experiments candidates are likely to draw on.

- **Leibniz's mill**:
  Sensations couldn't be found inside a conscious machine, so they can only exist in an immaterial mind.
- **Absent qualia**:
  If inside my head I had billions of homunculi discharging the same functions as my brain, none of them would experience qualia as I do. Yet if functionalism were true we would expect them to. The Chinese Mind: suppose the Chinese nation were to replicate the functional economy of a brain, it wouldn't become conscious/experience qualia (Ned Block).
- **Inverted Qualia**:
  In the inverted spectrum scenario two people can be in precisely the same functional state with respect to colour vision, but be in a different mental state, ie experiencing different subjective qualia. So functionalism cannot account for qualia.
- **Knowledge argument**:
  Jackson's Mary the Super-scientist. Mary is brought up in a black and white room, but knows everything there is to know about what goes on in someone's brain when they see red. When she finally comes to see red she learns something new. Therefore there is more to know about the experience of red than what can be reduced to the brain.
- **Nagel's bat**:
  There is something it is like to be a bat and to enjoy the qualitative sensations of echolocation. But we can never know what it is like no matter how well we understand the functioning of bats' sensory apparatus. So qualia cannot be accounted for in purely functional terms.
- **The zombie argument**:
  Since philosophical zombies are conceivable, there could have been an exact functional duplicate of me which lacked qualia. Such an hypothesis is consistent with the laws of nature. Therefore qualia are not reducible to functional states (Chalmers).

- **The hard problem**
  How does any reduction to physical processes explain why these processes are accompanied by qualia?

Responses to these, eg:

- Chalmer's absent qualia, fading qualia, dancing qualia examples to show that any system functionally isomorphic to a human would enjoy qualia.
- Response to Blockhead scenarios that the physical substructure which realises a functional state must have evolved for the purpose, so only biological systems have mental states.
- Dennett's 'Quining qualia' 'intuition pumps': if you awoke to have your qualia inverted you wouldn't be able to tell it was a change in qualia rather than a change in memory; if Mary really knew everything physical about colour vision she would be able to predict what it would be like when she first sees red and so wouldn't learn anything new. [Response that Mary would learn what it was like for her prediction to come true, cf. a deaf person and the sound of music.]
- The type of knowledge gained by Mary is non-propositional (practical knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance) and so she doesn't learn anything new but simply becomes acquainted with the same physical fact (eg Churchland). On release Mary acquires a new phenomenal concept derived from the new experience and this may give her new know-how, but this is merely a new way of conceiving the same physical facts about brains that she knew before only under a purely physical description (eg Papineau).
- Arguments against the existence of qualia: Tye, Churchland.

The impossibility of reducing intentionality to functional states. How can a physical state have intentional content? Being caused by X is not the same as being about X.

- Wittgenstein's point that the intentional content of a desire cannot be characterised purely in terms of what would terminate it since a punch in the stomach would terminate it, but is not what was desired.
- Searle's Chinese Room Argument. The (machine) functionalist account of mentality, as expressed by the Turing Test: if a computer can perfectly mimic human conversation, then it is functionally equivalent to a human being and so ipso facto is minded. But we can imagine an English speaker shut in a room who is able to respond in an apparently intelligent manner to questions posed in Chinese, by using a manual of instructions. Inputs and outputs would be the same as for a Chinese speaker and so he would have passed the Turing Test. But it is evident that this person would have no understanding of the meanings of the answers given. So, passing the Turing Test does not show genuine semantic understanding, but mere rule following. Computational operations are not sufficient for understanding; a computer does not deal with *meanings* (semantics) but simply follows *rules* of syntax. Genuine intentionality is possessed only by creatures with organic brains (biological naturalism). [Searle's later argument that not only is semantics not intrinsic to syntax, but neither is syntax intrinsic to physical properties of a system.]

Responses to the Chinese Room:

- eg the systems reply. The Robot reply.
- The Chinese Room doesn't possess intrinsic intentionality and neither does anything else. The only kind of intentionality is of the 'as-if' kind/ there is no difference in kind between intrinsic and as-if intentionality, but rather of degree of complexity. Apparent intentionality as the product of a complex set of subsystems (Dennett). The rings of a tree as having representational content. Smoke as 'about' fire.

Machine functionalism may be accused of being too liberal and candidates may discuss whether teleological functionalism, by restricting mentality to biological systems, represents an improvement.

Externalist individuation of mental states inspired by twin earth examples. The representational content of some mental states can only be specified with reference to the environment, eg the content of my belief that this is water depends on its chemical composition and would be different on a twin earth where what is called water has a different composition. Since the mental state is functionally isomorphic on twin earth, functionalism cannot account for its representational content (Putnam).

AO3 **0-20 marks**

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and should be used to assess the success or otherwise of functionalism.

Candidates may argue that functionalism provides a successful account of the nature of mental states.

Or they may recommend a particular version, such as teleological functionalism as more successful than another, such as machine functionalism.

Those arguing that qualia and intentionality are irreducible may recommend an alternative account of mental states, most likely dualism, biological naturalism or anomalous monism.

Eliminativism: the difficulties functionalism faces with respect to qualia show that qualia don't exist.

0 2 Assess the view that the mind is dependent on the brain.

[50 marks]

AO1

The view that the mind depends on the brain is likely to be identified as a central tenet of one or more of the physicalist theories studied for this unit, of physicalism generally, and/or of property dualism. So critical discussions of these theories will produce relevant material.

Physicalism (or materialism) is the view that human beings are composed of just one type of substance. This implies that the mind is produced in some way by our physical constitution, and modern physicalism recognises the brain as the best candidate for its basis. Candidates are likely to see the view in the question as denying any possibility of ontological reduction and so focus on non-reductive accounts: the mind depends on the brain, but is a distinct kind of phenomenon or level of description (biological naturalism, property dualism, anomalous monism).
Some candidates will not distinguish dependence and identity (reasoning that if a mental state is identical to a brain state, then it is dependent on it) and so discuss the identity theory (type and token versions) and/or functionalism. This is approach can access the full range of marks, although stronger versions are likely to show awareness of the distinction.

The supervenience relation may draw some attention. Mental states depend on brain states in the sense that no changes in mental states can occur without a change in the underlying brain states.

Responses which uncritically equate the view with one particular theory and give a critical account of it risk losing sight of the question and are likely to be narrow. Better responses should focus on the question of dependence and explore the arguments.

AO2

Reasons for supposing the mind is dependent on the brain:

- The evidence of neuroscience: MRI scans showing correlation between types of brain and types of mental activity; brain damage and trauma affecting the mind; the effects of drugs, hormones etc; brain bisection leading to division within consciousness. These facts are best explained if the relationship is one of dependence.
- The impossibility of disembodied consciousness: persons could not be individuated if they had no physical characteristics; memories could not be formed without a brain; near death experiences make reference to embodiment (eg looking down at one's body) and can be explained neurologically (eg hypoxia).
- The implications of evolutionary theory that human origins are purely physical; that mental capacities depend upon brain development.
- Causal closure of the physical: all events have complete physical causes. Mental events cause physical events and so must be supervenient on physical events.
- If consciousness, subjectivity, qualia, intentionality, etc are irreducible this need not imply that they are not dependent on the brain. Frege's distinction between sense and reference may be used to show that our vocabulary of mental states and of brain states may be different without this implying their referents are ontologically distinct. Anomalous monism: mental events 'depend' on brain events in the sense that they are the same events but under different descriptions. Under their neurological descriptions brain states enter into causal relations with behaviour etc but not under their mental descriptions since psychological language uses intentional predicates. So there are no bridge laws connecting mental and physical predicates. Biological naturalism and the claim that consciousness is both a natural phenomenon and irreducible. Property dualism: physical substances have both mental and physical properties and these are fundamentally distinct and

irreducible.

Difficulties for the view that mind is dependent on the brain:

- Candidates may examine arguments to show that the mind is independent of the brain, most likely Descartes' arguments (the argument from doubt, epistemological argument, argument from indivisibility) and responses (eg the masked man fallacy).
- Zombies: if we can conceive of brains without minds, then mind doesn't require brain and so there must be more to being minded than the physical.
- The hard problem: how does the brain produce the mental? Can emergent properties be truly novel? Does reduction ignore the reality of intentionality, qualia and the subjective point of view? Reductive accounts fail to explain how consciousness depends on the brain.
- How if mind is independent of the brain are we to explain mental causation? Property dualism appears to lead to epiphenomenalism and the counter-intuitive claim that mental states are causally inefficacious. On the other hand how is substance dualism to account for causal interaction between such radically distinct kinds of substance?
- If qualia and/or intentionality are irreducible, this might be taken to imply they are non-physical and independent of the brain. So general arguments against reductivism would be relevant (most likely Jackson's Mary, Block's Chinese mind, etc).
- Neuroscience can only demonstrate covariation of mental and neural states, but not dependence. The nature of such a dependence remains mysterious, so we should prefer an alternative account, such as one of substantial interaction, parallelism, or the view that the brain's function is to communicate between mind and body, or that the mind is a 'receiver' of consciousness.

AO3

On the one hand candidates may defend the claim on the basis of arguments given above.

Those doing so may go on to recommend a particular position which suggests a dependence relationship, eg epiphenomenalism, property dualism, identity theory, biological naturalism, anomalous monism.

They may recommend functionalism: the mind depends on the brain, but it could also be realised in a different substrate, eg in a computer.

Or they may oppose the claim. Some doing so may go on to recommend a form of substance dualism.

Section B: Political Philosophy

0 3 Assess the view that natural rights should never be violated.

[50 marks]

AO1

Natural rights are likely to be defined: fundamental moral rights held equally by all human beings. To say they are 'natural' means they are intrinsic, innate or God given and so exist prior to any institutionalised rule or law (in contrast to social rights).

Natural rights might be said to be accorded to human beings in virtue of certain natural properties they possess, such as rationality, autonomy and the capacity to live a self-governed life, free will, being subjects of experience, having past and future interests, or in virtue of our 'moral worth' because humans are ends in themselves.

References might be made to the state of nature in Locke or Hobbes in which we possess natural rights to self-preservation (Hobbes) or life, liberty and property (Locke). The principles of justice chosen from behind the veil of ignorance. We all have 'equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others', and the difference principle. Rawls' definition of human rights as minimal standards of a well ordered society; the point where toleration of other countries' internal affairs should end.

References may also be made to the American Declaration of Independence (rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) the French Revolutionary Assembly's Rights of Man (to liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression) or to the UN Charter or European Convention on human rights which include certain social and economic rights (eg to education, health and welfare provision).

Hohfeld's classification of rights may figure: claim rights, liberty rights, powers and immunities.

The question concerns whether such rights are absolute or whether there are circumstances when they may be justifiably infringed.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

Arguments for the view:

- Rights trump considerations of utility; they are more fundamental and cannot be explained in terms of it. Rights violations can lead to the victimisation of minorities (Dworkins). Examples of how utilitarian reasoning can lead to conclusions which conflict with our moral intuitions (killing a patient to save five others, knowingly arresting an innocent person to avert a riot, etc) might be used to argue that rights are inviolable. *Fiat justitia ruat caelum*,
- Locke's self-ownership thesis, that each of us has a right to his or her own body and products of his or her labour, may be used to defend an absolute right not to be enslaved, a right to personal integrity, and/or to ownership of property. Nozick may figure defending the right to property and arguing against redistributive taxation as forced labour.
- The infringement of certain rights (eg a mother's right not to be tortured to death by her son) would be superlatively evil so that no morally decent person would consider them no matter what the consequences might be. (Gewirth). The principle of intervening action: we are only morally responsible for our own actions, so that rights should not be violated even if doing so would prevent further rights being violated by another agent, eg that not to torture would lead to a terrorist group annihilating a city (Gewirth).
- The doctrine of double effect may be discussed as a way of defending absolute rights. If the consequences are not directly intended, it may be permissible to allow them to occur as foreseen

result of one's actions. The distinction between killing and letting die or commission and omission.

- If natural rights are thought to originate in divine decree, then they may be considered inviolable.
- If natural rights are considered inviolable, this has the practical moral benefit of protecting people from abuse from governments.
- Rights need to be enforceable. Possession of a right implies an obligation to meet it.
- If it is argued that rights are grounded in human nature (status based rights), then they may be considered inviolable. In support of this view Kantian consideration about autonomous agents possessing intrinsic human worth as ends in themselves may be explored, the possession of free will, rationality, or the ability to reflect on how to live, suggest human persons deserve certain absolute rights. Or Locke's claim that we can recognise our natural rights by reason.
- Rule utilitarian arguments for rights may be explored: social recognition of certain rights will maximise utility and so should be respected even when immediate considerations of utility appear to advocate violating the right.

Arguments against the view:

- The principal consequentialist argument against absolute rights, that if upholding a right leads to catastrophic consequences that it would be wrong to uphold it, so the right cannot be absolute. How plausible candidates for inviolable rights, such as the right to life, can be overridden. Examples from the literature (eg in self-defence in the case of an unjust war; if strapped to a tank [Nozick]; the trolley problem; the explorer who must choose whether to kill a native to save more lives [Williams]; explorers stuck in a cave with a fat man blocking the entrance and the tide rising, etc).
- Since rights are equally distributed, there is no basis for resolving a conflict of rights. So supposing rights to be inviolable is impractical. Or when rights conflict one may override the other and so it is permissible for one to be violated.
- The problem that any statement of a right involves some exceptions, (eg 'all innocent persons have a right to life' involves excluding non-persons and non-innocent. Any rights claim is conditional in this sense.

General arguments against the existence of natural rights would be relevant. Most likely to feature are:

- Bentham's argument that it can make no sense to say people have a right, if there is no objective basis - such as a convention or legal statute which is written down - which can be appealed to in order to demonstrate that they have it. People in uncivilised 'savage' societies without laws have no protection from others so to claim rights is empty talk. Because we cannot reduce rights to utility they are 'nonsense on stilts'.
- The argument that the natural rights we supposedly possess are not self-evident nor universally agreed upon (Bentham).
- Natural rights require natural law and so a divine law giver, so if there is no God, then we have no natural rights.
- Burke's critique of abstract rights. Rights are the products of inheritance and convention; they emerge out of society rather than preceding it. The wisdom of past generations trumps supposed 'natural' rights.
- The socialist or Marx's critique of the liberal idea of natural rights as grounded in social atomism. The individual rights bearer as isolated from the community as an expression of bourgeois ideology and the capitalist mode of production.
- Nietzsche's distinction between slave and master moralities. The principle of the morality of rulers that 'one has duties only towards one's equals'(BGE 260), the language or rights as grounded in egalitarian or slavish values.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be employed to support a range of positions.

At one end they may claim that natural rights cannot be justly violated, that they trump utility and/or other moral considerations.

Or they may argue that some fundamental rights cannot be justifiably infringed, (eg the right to life, or not to be tortured) but others may, (eg the right to property, in order to achieve a greater good, or to resolve a conflict of rights).

Certain rights should be respected because they serve social utility.

Natural rights don't exist and so the question doesn't arise.

0 4 'From each according to his ability, and to each according to his need.' Assess whether goods should be distributed according to need alone.

[50 marks]

AO1

This question concerns distributive justice and the principle of need.

Candidates are likely to identify the quotation as socialist in inspiration. Marx's use of the phrase involves the claim that in a communist state there will be an abundance of wealth; work will be engaged in willingly; and the means of production will be owned in common. A just distribution of economic benefits and burdens focuses on recipients' needs and thus reflects the value of social solidarity.

Alternatively, the quote may be interpreted as recommending redistributive taxation to fund basic welfare programmes and so as an expression of democratic socialism or welfare liberalism.

Need may be defined as more than mere whim and wants. Need is not a subjective psychological state but objective and to be defined in terms of certain minimal standards necessary for human flourishing, or those without which life would be blighted. They are physical (eg food, warmth, shelter) and psychological (eg self-respect). Such standards might be considered to be absolute, or alternatively they may be relative to the society in which an individual lives (eg access to health care and/or education).

Goods would include income and wealth, social and political opportunities, status, health, freedoms, and general wellbeing.

The need principle may be contrasted with principles of desert, equity, social utility, the difference principle as alternative bases for distributing goods.

AO2

Arguments for

- Appeal to basic human rights - to life or to have the chance to live a minimally decent life - may be invoked to argue that all persons should have their basic needs met. People may be needy through no fault of their own. Since not everyone is able to meet their own needs, society or the state has a duty to do so, eg through taxation. By meeting basic needs opportunities are opened up and positive liberties are increased.
- Meeting basic needs is the most urgent principle of distributive justice. It may be argued that if needs are not met, then social disorder will ensue.
- Candidates might point to the failure of capitalism to deliver the minimal needs of great swathes of the world's population. The moral case for some redistribution is therefore compelling.
- The importance of according people equal respect may be invoked in defence of the principle. If all humans are of equal moral worth, or have equal rights, then they should be given equal resources. But a strictly equal distribution of goods would not be just since some have greater needs than others, eg a mother with five children and a woman with none. So true egalitarianism must accommodate differences of need.
- Rawls could be used to defend the principle. From behind the veil of ignorance we would want minimal standards of material well-being (primary goods) for all.
- Acquisitive behaviour is the product of the capitalist mode of production, rather than something 'natural' to human beings. Once there is abundance, there will be no desire to acquire more than one's neighbours. So, the people will willingly live according to the principle in a communist state.

- Health care resources should be distributed according to need, since they are only of benefit to those who need them.
- Utilitarianism. Distributing according to need has the best results in terms of the net wellbeing.

Arguments against

- A communist state need not achieve abundance of goods, so that competition will remain. Such competition will lead to acquisitive behaviour. People will resist having the fruits of their labour taken from them to help the undeserving poor.
- Utopian socialism/communism is unrealistic about human nature in that individuals will feel they deserve the fruits of their own work even if these are held at the expense of others' needs. Human acquisitiveness means that once immediate needs are met people will seek to accumulate more wealth.
- Not all needs are the business of the state to ensure are satisfied, eg the needs for companionship or for a fulfilling sexual relationship.
- The problem of defining needs if we have no agreed understanding of human nature or of what counts as a flourishing life for a human being.
- The problem of needs inflation. If needs are not absolute, but relative to society, then the list of needs is likely to grow as a society becomes richer.
- Focusing on need alone could lead to a very unequal society, for as long as basic needs are met, great disparities of income or other social goods would be permissible. A more equal distribution may be an important expression of social solidarity. If such inequality is considered unjust, then need alone is not a sufficient basis for a just distributions of goods.
- The need principle fails to recognise that goods are rewards for our freely chosen actions. So, for example, some workers deserve more than others because of the nature of the work they do, eg because they work harder, more skilfully or have more responsibilities; the work they do requires greater training; or because they contribute more to society, or are more virtuous (Aristotle).
- From behind the veil of ignorance we would choose the difference principle and so seek to maximise the minimum rather than accept minimal standards.
- Individuals own their natural talents and so it is just that they should be permitted to profit from them.
- The free market as the most efficient mechanism for distributing goods. The failure of communist states to achieve a just distribution or to uphold basic liberties may be invoked as evidence that the principle is unworkable or necessarily leads to totalitarianism.
- Classical liberalism/Libertarianism: people have a right to the fruits of their labour so that redistribution of wealth as infringing a person's property rights, forced labour.
- The focus should not be on the pattern of distribution, but on justice in acquisition and transfer. The needy as undeserving, reaping what they have sown. Any attempt at redistribution leads to totalitarianism. If the principle outlaws private property, then it outlaws 'capitalist acts between consenting adults' which is an infringement of basic liberties. Nozick is likely to figure in discussion of the last four points.
- Scarcity of resources may mean not all needs can be met.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments which can be employed to support a range of positions.

At one end candidates may argue that need is indeed the sole or, more likely, the most urgent or overriding principle of distribution.

Alternatively they may argue that need is one principle among many which must be appealed to for a just distribution.

The best distribution will establish a basic minimum, but also maximise the average.

Or they may defend some other principle, such as Utilitarianism, desert, strict equality, the difference principle.

Section C: Epistemology and metaphysics

0 5 Assess whether knowledge can be defined.

[50 marks]

AO1

It is expected that candidates will examine various attempts to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for propositional knowledge. The quest to define knowledge proceeds by asking what conditions must be satisfied in order for S to know that p. These conditions should be individually necessary and jointly sufficient.

They may distinguish between propositional knowledge, practical knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance, and explorations of definitions of the latter two would be relevant (expect examples of knowing that a proposition is true, knowing how to do something and knowing a person or place).

The question also invites candidates to consider whether there are principled reasons why any attempted definition must fail.

AO2

The traditional tripartite definition of knowledge: if S knows that p, then S has a belief that p, p is true, and p is justified.

1 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is or is not possible without *belief*:

- It is contradictory for S to know that p but not to believe that p. The point is likely to be illustrated through examples, eg I cannot both know it is raining but not believe that it is raining.
- Apparent counter examples might also be discussed, eg the diffident student who has studied hard for an exam, but doubts the answers he gives although they are correct.
- Incompatibilism. Knowledge and belief are distinct ways of apprehending reality. They are distinct faculties characterised by infallibility and fallibility respectively (Plato's *Republic*).
- Instrumentalist accounts of belief might be used to suggest that a belief is not a representation of a state of affairs in the world, but a disposition to behave in certain ways.

2 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is or is not possible without *truth*:

- It is contradictory for S to know that p but for p to be false, even if the belief is well justified. Expect examples, eg people used to believe the earth was flat and had good evidence for this belief; however, because their belief was false it doesn't count as knowledge.
- Apparent counter-examples of having very good justification for p and being convinced of p, but p being false might be examined, eg 'Ordinary people in the ancient world "knew" the earth was flat'. However, while we may sometimes use the word 'know' to mean 'convinced', this is not the standard usage. Such examples fail to distinguish subjective certainty from objective certainty. Truth is an external criterion.

3 Arguments and examples purporting to show that knowledge is possible without *justification*:

- The way in which one acquires a belief is important to whether it counts as knowledge. It is possible to have true belief which is not properly justified, or which is acquired by luck, and therefore doesn't count as knowledge. Expect examples, eg the gambler who is convinced her horse will win and it does.
- Possession of true belief without an understanding of the reason why it is true, makes such beliefs less steadfast in the mind. Plato's discussion of knowing the way to Larissa (*Meno*). Examples from mathematics might be used, eg being told the answer to a sum would give one true belief, but to

have knowledge you have to work out the answer for yourself.

- Certain propositions can be known without justification because they are epistemically basic, eg knowledge of my own existence, propositions concerning one's immediate experience, simple mathematical propositions, principles of reason, knowledge of God (faith).
- It is possible to have knowledge without being able to give a justification for how you know, eg knowing that the Battle of Hastings took place in 1066, without being able to recall how you acquired the knowledge. Externalism might be used to suggest that an internal justification is not necessary for knowledge so long as it is reached by a reliable process. Whether animals and children can possess knowledge.
- Justification as context relative.

Arguments and examples concerning whether the conditions are jointly sufficient:

- Whether a level of conviction or subjective certainty going beyond mere belief is also necessary for knowledge. Examples purporting to show that someone can be justified in believing that p, but not be sure and so not truly know.
- Whether S needs to know that they know in order to know. Whether S needs not just to have a justification, but be able to recognise that justification.
- Gettier-type objections to show that it is possible to have justified true belief which isn't knowledge are likely to figure prominently. Expect examples from the literature, eg Jones' ford, the job interview, etc.
- Reactions to Gettier:
    - The Smith-Jones example changes Smith's name to a definite description 'he who will get the job' and wouldn't work otherwise.
    - Strengthening the justification condition, eg infallibilism, and difficulties for this approach, viz. (i) however we strengthen the condition, Gettier scenarios can still be generated, and (ii) strengthening the condition makes the conditions for knowledge too stringent opening the way to scepticism about everyday cases of knowledge.
    - Knowledge is true belief in which the justification involves no (relevant) false belief (problems for this approach, (eg we hold many false beliefs and so again it opens the way to scepticism).
    - A fourth condition is needed for knowledge. Knowledge is *indefeasibly* justified true belief. There are no further facts that would undermine the belief were they to come to light. (The problem that this may make the truth condition redundant since a genuinely indefeasible belief must be true).
    - Externalist theories of knowledge: causal theories, reliabilism, truth tracking. (Difficulties for this approach, eg Goldman's Barn County).

Candidates may explore reasons for supposing that knowledge is indefinable, eg because it is conceptually basic (Williamson), meaning is use, contextualism, etc.

AO3

Candidates may recommend one of the definitions explored and so argue that knowledge can be successfully defined.

Or they may argue that no definition so far is successful, but that this doesn't preclude the possibility of a successful definition.

Or they may argue that Gettier type problems are inescapable and therefore that knowledge cannot be defined.

A different approach would be to argue that the attempt to discover necessary and sufficient conditions for the concept is misguided. We should attend to the use of the word not search for the essential meaning.

Knowledge as a cluster or family resemblance concept (Wittgenstein).

0 6 Assess whether absolute judgements about reality can be justified.

[50 marks]

AO1

Centres are likely to have approached the 'Objective Knowledge' section in a variety of ways so that there is a broad range of material that may be brought to bear in responses to this question.

The thrust of the question concerns the nature of knowledge claims and justification and whether these can attain to an objective, unconditioned or framework-free status. Absolute judgements about reality are judgements which would be independent of any framework. So the question concerns whether beliefs about reality are necessarily mediated so that we cannot make absolute judgements about the world as it is in itself; and whether there is any neutral way to arbitrate between different standards for the evaluation of knowledge claims. Thus focus will be on arguments for and against relativism.

Relativism is the view that judgements are necessarily conditioned by some framework and different versions of relativism focus on different frameworks which candidates may explore, such as our perceptual and/or cognitive apparatus, language, culture, forms of life, belief system, paradigm, etc.

Some candidates may interpret the view in terms of the philosophy of perception: that human understanding is confined to appearances (sense data, phenomena), so judgements about reality or the world as it is in itself (the noumenal) are not possible.

AO2

Arguments for the view that absolute judgements can be justified

Platonism: Absolute judgements about a super-sensible reality are justifiable. The dialectic/ a priori reasoning can lead us to knowledge of the forms/universals. By contrast absolute judgements about the physical world or contingent truths are not possible.

Fundamental standards of rationality, such as the laws of logic, are universal and so can be used to adjudicate between different belief systems. Different belief systems are not incommensurable since to be comprehensible they must adhere to such objective standards. Without agreement about eg the law of non-contradiction no cross-cultural communication would be possible.

Realist arguments in philosophy of science. The successes of the physical sciences suggests that its judgements correspond to reality and so are justified. Induction or the hypothetico-deductive method as the means to justify judgements about reality.

Relativism is self-defeating since it makes an absolute judgement about the status of our judgements.

A priori reasoning can be deployed to justify judgements in mathematics. The questions of whether such judgements tell us anything about physical reality and/or whether mathematical objects are real might be explored.

The tabula rasa view that the organs of sense are passive receivers of resemblances of reality. Whether the judgements of common sense or basic beliefs require justification, eg Moore's two hands argument.

Judgements about immediate sense certainty are justified. Some may defend phenomenalism and the identification of reality with appearances. The cogito: I can make an absolute judgement about the reality of my own existence.

Although we cannot have knowledge of the noumenal world or things as they are in themselves, judgements about the phenomenal world are justified. Berkeleyan arguments may figure to make the claim that judgements about the world of appearances are objective. Kantian arguments for empirical or transcendental idealism may be employed to argue that the possibility of objective judgements is necessary

for us to have coherent experience.

Arguments against the view that absolute judgements can be justified

The issue of how to interpret of the practices and belief systems of other (primitive) cultures may be explored. Whether it is a mistake to judge witchcraft as bad science (Wittgenstein on Frazer).

Neo-Wittgensteinian arguments on cultural relativism might be explored to show that judgements about reality are necessarily interpreted in terms of one's enculturation. So there is no culture independent reality. Western science as culture bound; western perspectives on other cultures as betraying ethnocentrism. Different belief systems may have different criteria of rationality so that justification is necessarily internal or relative to a system. We cannot adjudicate between them in order to make claims about which does justice to the facts. Winch on Evans-Pritchard.
DZ Phillips.

Perception is theory laden, so that there is no possibility of a framework-neutral description of experience. Examples of how expectations may influence one's perceptions may figure (eg duck-rabbit). So empirical justification for judgements about reality are question begging.

Anti-realist arguments from the philosophy of science. Observations are necessarily theory-laden. Kuhnian paradigms and meaning holism. If the meanings of theoretical terms are determined by their role within a web of interrelated terms then different paradigms are incommensurable. We cannot make judgements except from within a set of theoretical assumptions.

Duhem-Quine thesis that judgements about reality or observations statements cannot be tested in isolation from other theoretical assumptions. A network of beliefs or world view may be immune from refutation by reference to reality since apparent clashes with reality can be reinterpreted in ways that preserve the belief system. So no judgements about reality are absolute.

Instrumentalism: scientific claims (judgements) are to be evaluated in terms of how effective they are predicting phenomena, not in terms of how well they reflect reality.

Language structures our experience so that any judgement about reality is relative to the conceptual categories of the language it is expressed in. Universal grammar as a genetic inheritance. Even the law of non-contradiction may not be a candidate for objectivity.

Social constructivism. The social factors involved in the construction of scientific knowledge might be examined.

Nietzschean perspectivism: different systems of values determine different ways of interpreting the world and there is no way of representing reality which is value neutral. The desire for absolute knowledge as a product of the will to truth.

Candidates might employ arguments for nominalism about universals to show that our conceptual schema/ scientific theories don't carve nature at the joints.

Hume's fork. Absolute judgements are only possible about truths of reason, relations of ideas, but not about reality or matters of fact.

The veil of perception means we cannot make absolute judgements about a mind independent reality. Knowledge is confined to appearances. The impossibility of adopting a God's eye view of reality.

Judgements about raw or preconceptualised sense data necessarily involve imposing categories on experience. So sense certainty is mediated rather than absolute. 'Intuitions without concepts are blind' (Kant).

Wittgenstein's private language argument might be used against the claim that we can make absolute judgements about sense-data. The language we use to talk about sensations is covered by rules which must be publicly accessible. So we cannot make judgements concerning unmediated experience.

AO3

Candidates should try to reach a judgement based on these or other relevant arguments about whether absolute judgements about reality can be justified. At one end they may defend the view that at least some absolute judgements can be justified, such as judgements about mathematics, truths of reason, sense experience. Or they may defend scientific realism.

At the other end, they may defend the claim that no absolute judgements can be justified and defend some form of relativism or anti-realism.

Section D: Moral Philosophy

0 7 Assess the view that there are objective moral truths.

[50 marks]

AO1

The view that there are objective moral truths should be equated with moral realism: the view that there exist moral facts, and so that moral judgements admit of truth and falsehood. The view is likely to be associated with cognitivism, ie the view that knowledge of these moral facts is possible.

There are several realist theories which candidates will have studied with different accounts of the nature of moral truths (in particular Platonic realism, virtue ethics, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, the view that moral judgements report relational properties), and a sound knowledge base is likely to be situated in these positions. (Other positions not on the specification would also be relevant, eg divine command ethics, natural law ethics, intuitionism).

Candidates should show awareness of the *arguments* deployed to defend realism (some of which are outlined under AO2 below).

It is possible that some candidates will elect to discuss a practical moral issue that they have studied. Such responses should be credited only for material relevant to the meta-ethical question.

AO2

Analysis should go beyond describing different realist positions and should focus on interpreting and explaining the details of the key arguments as they relate to the question. Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion.

Arguments in favour of the view that there are objective moral truths:

- Platonic considerations in favour of objective moral truths. The dialectic uncovers convergent understanding of the nature of moral concepts, such as justice or good. We must have an implicit grasp of such concepts in order to recognise that actions or people are more or less just, good, noble, etc. They can only be more or less by comparison with an objective standard or maximum. So there must be something which is maximally just, good, noble, etc and this maximum must also be the source of goodness.
- Virtue ethics: we can discover moral truths about how we ought to live by reasoned reflection on the facts of human nature. Human flourishing is to be achieved by the cultivation of virtuous character traits or dispositions.
- Utilitarianism: We are exclusively motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain (Bentham's 'two sovereign masters'), therefore maximising aggregate pleasure is the good. Human beings desire happiness therefore it is desirable (Mill).
- The existence of moral disputes doesn't show that there is no objective basis for moral judgements. Indeed, the possibility of rational disagreement over moral issues presupposes a fact of the matter.
- Our feelings of conscience, sense of the moral law and the feeling that morals are binding, are best explained if there is an objective moral ground for them.
- Cultural divergences are overplayed by the relativist. Candidates might appeal to the near universal assent to certain moral judgements found across different cultures and eras. This is best explained if moral judgements reflect an objective moral reality.
- Kantian arguments that we can discover our moral duty through the dispassionate use of practical reason. The categorical imperative and the universal moral law.

- Partners in crime defence against argument from queerness: e.g. aesthetics, emergence of novelty (Popper).
- Moral facts as relational: they are objective insofar as they are facts about how rational beings would desire to act under certain conditions.
- The analogy with secondary qualities may be used to defend realism. It is a truth about human beings that they are naturally constituted to value certain aspects of the world.
- Anti-realism leads to nihilism which will have dire social consequences, so it is prudent to believe in moral truths.
- Candidates may argue that morality is a product of social convention and so objectively discoverable. This view would be consistent with cultural relativism.
- The existence of moral experts or moral progress presupposes the existence of moral knowledge and truth.
- Some candidates may approach the question by exploring problems with anti-realism. Such arguments would be relevant.

Arguments against the view that there are objective moral truths:

- Humean naturalism: Empirical investigation cannot discover any fact of the matter corresponding to our moral judgements. A complete scientific/naturalistic account of reality would not include terms of moral approval or disapproval. Hume's law: no factual description of an action can entail a value judgement concerning it; the is-ought gap: no moral conclusions may be drawn from non-moral premises. So there can be no objective moral truths.
- Logical positivism: Moral judgements do not to admit of empirical test or *verification***.** Moral values cannot be detected by the senses and so cannot be known. Ayer and the verification principle. Meaningful utterances must be factually significant and so must admit of truth and falsehood. But we cannot analyse moral terms into natural facts, and so moral judgements are meaningless. These points may be linked to emotivism and the claim that moral judgements are expressive rather than descriptive. [Problems for the verification principle, eg that fails is own test for meaningfulness.]
- Moore's open question argument against moral naturalism might be used. 'Good' cannot be defined in terms of any natural property since any definition leaves the question open (ie it will always make sense to ask) whether those natural properties really are good. [Note however, Moore's argument is not used to support anti-realism but rather to show that moral judgements must refer to non-natural facts, so to be relevant candidates need also to show that a necessary condition of objectivity is naturalism].
- Beliefs represent the way the world is and so admit of truth and falsehood. Desires do neither. Rather they represent the way we want the world to be. So facts about the world can have no rational impact on our desires. Since morality does impact on our desires, it cannot be to do with the way the world is.
- Mackie's argument from disagreement. If different cultures disagree about what is right and wrong, and there appears to be no basis for resolving the disagreements, then this suggests there is no objective basis for moral judgements.
- Some people may not experience morality as objective and binding (eg sociopaths). Or some people may have radically different ideas about what is good (eg the Commandant at Belsen) in which case morality is unlikely to be objective. [Response that there remains a fact of the matter what the normal functioning human response is. The analogy with colour blindness eg Russell].
- Mackie's argument from queerness: if there were objective values then they would be entities utterly different from anything else in the universe and they would be apprehended by a faculty utterly different from any other faculty.
- There is nothing in the nature of the world and no essential human nature which could determine

our moral values and make them objective, so we are free to forge them for ourselves. Appeal to an objective moral reality abdicates responsibility for making moral choices (Sartre, existentialism).

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion of the above or equivalent arguments and candidates should reach a judgement about whether there are objective moral truths.

Those arguing for realism may defend a particular realist position (Plato, naturalism [virtue ethics, utilitarianism], Kant, that they are relational properties, [possibly cultural relativism], etc). Or they may defend the view in the question *tout court*.

At the other end they may argue that there are no moral truths. This may lead them to go on to defend an anti-realist position such as emotivism, prescriptivism, subjectivism or error theory.

0 8 'The morality of an action does not depend on its consequences.' Discuss.

[50 marks]

AO1

The quotation rejects consequentialist ethics and this may lead candidates to discuss the alternatives studied, namely deontology (we are duty bound to perform or avoid certain actions because of their intrinsic nature, because they conform to principles), or virtue ethics (a moral life is not focused on consequences of actions but with developing a virtuous character), or both, and offer evaluative discussions of these. This approach is appropriate, but care needs to be taken to maintain focus on the question of whether the morality of an action can be determined independently of its consequences.

Alternatively, since utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory, some candidates will read the question as hostile to utilitarianism specifically and this may lead them to examine the strengths and weaknesses of utilitarianism and the claim that moral decisions are concerned with maximising aggregate happiness or preferences. This is also appropriate, but again, candidates are to be credited for the material which addressees the precise question.

Many candidates are likely to examine all three normative positions in turn and offer a comparative evaluation. Again, such approaches, can access the full range of marks, but examiners should take care only to credit the arguments which are pertinent to the question.

AO2

Arguments to show that morality is not concerned with the consequences of actions:

- Focusing on the consequences of particular actions opens the way to offending against certain moral principles, such as those which defend individual rights (eg to life), deserts, the interests of minorities or animals, fairness, etc. Means-ends reasoning can be used to justify committing immoral acts. Some actions are always wrong regardless of the good that may come of them (eg torture). Difficulty of representing a wrong against the individual per se; certain acts as intrinsically wrong. Expect examples from the literature, such as the patient who is killed to harvest organs to save five others.
- Practical difficulties: it may be argued consequences are inherently difficult to predict or calculate, eg because different individuals' pleasures are incommensurable, including the problem of comparing higher and lower pleasures; it is not possible to determine how far into the future our calculations should be extended, or to determine whether long or short term pleasures should weigh more heavily; the crudeness of the hedonic calculus; no units of measurement. Moral decisions are not a matter of calculation, or either-or, but of developing the practical wisdom to make the wise choice in concrete situations. Practical wisdom must be more important than any decision making procedure, since the application of such a procedure still requires practical wisdom.
- The importance of proper motivation may be stressed. Consequentialist reasoning involves conditional demands on our actions rather than moral duty; hypothetical rather than categorical imperatives. Examples of inappropre motivations involving a desire to achieve some goal, or of action can't be made moral by an unintended good consequence.
- Consequentialism ignores the important role individual responsibility and moral integrity play in ethical choice, eg Jim and the Indians.
- Not everything can be good in virtue of its consequences; there must be at least one thing which is good in its own right, namely *eudaimonia* (Aristotle).

Arguments in favour of considering the consequences of actions:

- Focus on consequences makes moral decision making sensitive to the demands of particular situations. Consequences are objective and measurable. Candidates might contrast the practicality of utilitarianism with the abstract nature of deontological principles and/or the vagueness of virtue ethics (eg how do we determine the mean?).
- It is nonsensical to suppose that actions can have *intrinsic* worth. The worth of an action just is what it can effect. An act that had no effects at all could not be either bad or good and so it must be the effects exclusively which determine its worth.
- Moral decision making cannot ignore consequences, since to do so may mean ignoring a greater evil. Circumstances can be imagined when an action ought to be performed even though, for example, it violates a supposed right, treats individuals as means to an end, complies with a law that can be universalised, because the consequences of not doing so are more morally intolerable.
- The principle of double effect, the acts-omissions distinction, killing and letting die, may be explored in order to show how it can be acceptable to allow bad consequences to ensue if they are foreseen but not directly intended, or if they occur because of an omission rather than an act.
- Rule utilitarianism may be explored in order to defend against some of the criticisms considered above. Standard objections to act utilitarianism which involve sacrificing individual rights to calculations of general utility, free riders, or the impracticality of individuals calculating each situation anew, may be met by arguing that general rules should be adopted just if their adoption leads to greater aggregate happiness or preference satisfaction.

AO3

Assessment will figure in the discussion and candidates should reach a judgement about whether or not morality is concerned with consequences.

Those arguing that moral judgements concern consequences may go on to defend a version of utilitarianism.

Candidates may argue that it is indeed the consequences that matter, but explore what consequences we should be concerned with, eg hedonistic versus preference utilitarianism; or higher pleasures rather than lower pleasures.

Rules should be adopted since they produce the best consequences. Two level utilitarianism might be considered a compromise between pure consequentialism and deontological considerations.

Or they may reject consequentialist thinking altogether.

Section D: Philosophy of Religion

0 9 'Belief in God is irrational.' Discuss.

[50 marks]

AO1

The range of relevant material that may be brought to bear in response to this question is broad and may be drawn from across all four headings from this unit (ie *Arguments for the existence of God*, *Reason and faith*, *Miracles*, and *Making sense of religion*).

Candidates may also draw on synoptic material from the AS units *The idea of God* and *God and the world* and while this mark scheme is confined to material candidates are likely to have studied for this Unit, as always, any relevant material should be fully credited.

Different approaches may be taken, but, given the specified content, the following avenues are expected:

1 The quotation may be interpreted as grounded in evidentialism - the view that it is irrational to accept a belief that is not proportioned to the evidence. Hume and Clifford may figure. Since the existence of God cannot be established by any cogent argument it is irrational to believe.

2 Candidates may begin by contrasting the idea of believing 'in' God with belief that God exists as a way into exploring whether belief on the basis of faith is irrational.

3 Pragmatic arguments: if the evidence is insufficient, might it nonetheless be rational to believe in God because of the benefits it may afford?

4 Alternatively, candidates may interpret the quotation as grounded in social-scientific accounts of religious belief which purport to show that it has a sociological or psychological function and so is irrational.

AO2

1 Evidentialism

Those taking the first approach may elect to examine the cogency of the arguments for God's existence, most likely drawn from this unit, viz:

- the argument from religious experience,
- the cosmological argument,
- and (perhaps) the argument from miracles.

Some candidates taking this approach are likely to work through each argument in turn, and such a response risks losing sight of the core of the question and/or lacking depth. Better responses will select material which is particularly appropriate and will endeavour to maintain focus on the rationality or otherwise of belief in God.

Critical attention is likely to focus on issues of verification: if experiences of God or of miracles cannot be verified (because not repeatable, or because their supposed cause is supernatural) then they are not credible. Or if claims concerning the existence of God have no empirical content, then they are not meaningful and so cannot be rationally accepted.

It is rational to believe what accords with past experience, so it is irrational to believe in transgressions of established laws of nature. Naturalistic explanations can always be found of any supposed miracles or of religious experiences. The (irrational) tendency of people to believe stories of 'surprise and wonder' (Hume).

If the theist's belief in God is not falsifiable, eg by the evidence of suffering in the world, then it is not sensitive to the empirical evidence and not meaningful and so irrational.

Since the evidence for different religions is on a par, it is not rational to choose one over the others. So belief in any particular god is not rational.

Those discussing the cosmological argument may focus on the issue of the rationality of belief in a real infinite regress; on the rational requirement of an ultimate explanation or first cause as opposed to the acceptance of the universe as a brute fact; whether God is the best explanation given the failure of science to provide an ultimate explanation; whether the argument is fallacious or contradictory.

Candidates may discuss whether it is rational to believe on the balance of probabilities, or as the best explanation. Swinburne's principles of testimony and credulity may be invoked to suggest it is rational to believe the evidence of religious experiences or miracles. The cumulative argument: that together the arguments for God's existence make a good case (Swinburne).

Arguments against evidentialism may figure, such as Plantinga's complaint that evidentialism is self-referentially inconsistent since there is no evidence for it.

Whether the requirement that each belief be directly verified by evidence is a mistake. It may be rational to accept inferences to the best explanation. Theories must face experience as a whole not piecemeal (Quine).

Anti-realist approaches to the question of God's existence are also likely to figure. Belief in God is rational when viewed as part of the religious form of life, as a *blik* or basic belief. Belief in God is equivalent to experiencing the world and living life in a religious way (Plantinga, Hick). Religious belief must be justified by criteria internal to a form of life, not by those appropriate within science. Wisdom's and Flew's parables of the invisible gardener are likely to figure.

2 Fideism

If there is a God, then he would not leave us to come to believe in him by means of rational argument, since this would make it too difficult for many. So there must be another route to knowledge of God, ie faith, and it is rational to believe in God even though there are no compelling arguments (Plantinga). Revealed theology as surpassing human reason (Aquinas). Aquinas on the virtue of faith because giving oneself. Doxatic venture.

3 Pragmatic arguments

Evidentialism sets too high a standard for knowledge and it is rational to believe even if the evidence is not sufficient.

Pascal: reason cannot determine the issue either way. Faith in God is prudential and so rational. The wager. It may be rational to live a religious life as this provides other pragmatic benefits in terms of personal fulfilment, positive commitment to an ethical life. Without a belief in God moral nihilism may follow.
James and the will to believe. The avoidance of error is not necessarily the most rational strategy when faced with forced, living and momentous choices; if it could mean not coming to know a truth. Whether it is possible or rational to choose to believe. Whether it is rational to take a leap of faith.

4 Social science

Candidates might explore different naturalistic explanations of belief in God, eg

- Neurological: eg temporal lobe epilepsy, the God spot (Ramachandran, Pursinger);
- Evolutionary: eg that it benefits the survival of the species, memes (Darwin, Dawkins);
- Psychological: eg wish fulfilment, projection (Feuerbach, Freud);
- Sociological: eg the opium of the masses, preserving social order (Marx, Durkheim).

If such accounts are right, then it may be argued that God is the product of the human mind, and belief in God an irrational superstition.

People tend to believe the religion of their parents/society, suggesting it is not a rational decision. Dawkins' 'virus of religion'.

On the other hand, explaining the causal origins of a belief doesn't show that it is unjustified – the genetic fallacy. If we have a psychological need to believe in God, this might suggest such belief is indeed rational, since, if there is a God, no doubt he would give us such a need.

Scientific explanations might give us more reason to believe in religion by showing that it is an essential or natural reaction to the human condition, or that belief is important to a healthy psyche or society.

AO3

AO3 marks should be awarded for the level of critical engagement with the arguments which should be deployed to advance a clear judgement about whether or not it is irrational to believe in God.

- Candidates agreeing with the quotation may do so on evidentialist grounds and argue that the evidence for God's existence is insufficient to justify belief.
- They may argue that scientific explanations of religion 'explain it away' by showing that belief is irrational.
- Or they may agree with the quotation, but still recommend belief in God in the face of the absurd (Kierkegaard, Tertullian).
- On the other side they may disagree with the quotation and argue that the arguments for the existence of God either individually or cumulatively present sufficient evidence for it to be rational to believe.
- Alternatively, they may argue that despite lack of sufficient evidence, it is still rational to believe on pragmatic grounds, on the basis of faith, because it is a basic belief, because belief is part of a form of life, etc.

1 0 Assess whether the cosmological argument is successful in proving the existence of God.

[50 marks]

AO1

A good knowledge base might draw on any number of different versions of the argument, such as Aristotle's argument for the prime mover, the Kalam argument, Aquinas' three ways, or Swinburne's argument to the best explanation.

Details of different versions vary, but the argument begins by drawing attention to some feature of the universe, eg that its existence and that of all things in it is contingent, that all things in the universe are in a state of motion or that all events have causes. Appeal is made to the principle that nothing can come from nothing, that nothing can move itself or be the cause of itself, or the principle of sufficient reason. Some versions then reduce the idea of an infinite chain of causes, movers or contingent beings to absurdity (an infinite series would never have started) in order to conclude that there must be a prime mover, first cause, necessary being, God. Only God can serve to explain the existence of the universe since he is a self-causing, necessary being.

Candidates are likely to demonstrate their knowledge of different versions, but a detailed exploration of just one way can access the full range of marks.

AO2

Candidates may draw on some of the following points for discussion:

- Paradoxes of infinity to show the absurdity of an actual infinite series: That an infinite series has no beginning and so could not have started; or that if the present is at the end of an infinite series it wouldn't have been reached yet; an infinite universe couldn't get any older.
- Arguments against the absurdity of an infinite series: the idea of an infinite regress of causes involves no contradiction and what is not contradictory is possible, so the universe may have no cause.
- The claim that all events are caused is not knowable a priori and so it is not contradictory to suppose the universe was uncaused. It is not even a true empirical generalisation as it doesn't hold in quantum physics. The Big Bang as an uncaused event.
- Scientific explanations are limited to explaining how things come to be within the universe. But the existence of the universe cries out for an explanation. So an explanation in terms of the intentions of a personal agent is needed – God (Swinburne).
- Once an explanation is given of the parts, there is no further explanation needed of the whole. Conceiving the universe as a whole is 'an arbitrary act of the mind' (Hume).
- The fallacy of composition. What is true of individuals within a set need not be true of the set as a whole, so while all events within the universe may have a cause it doesn't follow that there must be one cause of all events. The argument cannot establish the existence of a single cause for all causal series in the universe. Similarly, just because the existence of all things within the universe is contingent, it doesn't follow that the existence of the universe is contingent (Russell).
- Causal concepts have application only within the universe and cannot be employed to explain the appearance of the universe as a whole (Hume, Kant).
- The argument may be accused of being contradictory since it claims all events have causes (or are contingent), but concludes that God is cause of himself (is necessary). [Defence that God is not an event]. And if God is an exception to the rule that all beings must be created, then why shouldn't the universe itself be self-causing (necessary)? Logical difficulties with the idea of *causa sui*.

- The argument at best establishes a cause of the universe, but not the existence of the God of classical theism, or a personal God.
- Failure of Aquinas' secondary proof. Second movers cause motion if caused by an earlier mover, not necessarily by a primary mover.
- Newton 1st law of motion: motion as a natural state so doesn't require an external cause.
- Aquinas misunderstands concept of cause in the 2nd way (hand-stick-stone) example. Something caused can still be a cause.

AO3

The above arguments or equivalents should be deployed to advance a clear reasoned position. Possible judgements include that:

- The God hypothesis is necessary to explain the existence of the universe, since, eg a necessary being is needed to explain the existence of contingent beings, an infinite regress is impossible, etc.
- God is the best explanation for the existence of the universe because, eg it is simpler than the alternatives, gives a complete explanation by reference to a person's intentions.
- Or the argument fails to prove the existence of God, since eg it leaves God's existence unaccounted for; it is contradictory, etc.
- The universe is a brute fact and no explanation is required, since eg causal explanations are immanent, explanations must stop somewhere.
- The argument fails since the existence of the universe is actually inconsistent with the existence of God, eg because the act of creation would detract from God's perfection, the existence of evil conflicts with the divine attributes.
- In between these positions candidates may argue that the argument provides some evidence for the existence of God, but that the issue hasn't been proven either way. Perhaps when considered in the light of other arguments for the existence of God the case is strong.