

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

MES 205: Introduction to European History, Politics and Philosophy

COURSE CODE : MEST0205

UNIT VALUE : 1.00

DATE : 03–MAY–05

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

**MEST0205 INTRODUCTION TO EUROPEAN HISTORY, LAW, POLITICS
AND PHILOSOPHY**

- Answer **THREE** questions.
- Questions must be attempted from **THREE** sections.
- Do **NOT** answer a question from the section to which your *assessed* course essay belongs.
- Do **NOT** draw substantially on the same material for more than one answer.
- Please use different examination books for each question.

SECTION A (Political Philosophy)

1. When, if ever, is coercion exercised by the state legitimate?
2. 'If everyone had enough, it would be of no moral consequence whether some had more than others.' Discuss.
3. *Either* (a) Explain the information we have and are deprived of in the Original Position.
Or (b) Why does Rawls think that the difference principle would be chosen in the Original Position? Is he right?
4. What is Nozick's argument for the minimal state? Is it convincing?

SECTION B (Law)

5. The classification of law is generally based either on legal heritage or on its functions. Discuss the relative merits and shortcomings of these two approaches.
6. 'The Common and the Civil law constitutional traditions have satisfied different public requirements through virtually opposite solutions. However, these differences appear to be narrowing.' Discuss.
7. 'The lack of authority of international law is a direct consequence of an imperfect legal set up.' Discuss in the light of historical developments and of other regional legal orders.
8. 'All legal theories attempt some explanation of the "Law". Their differences stem mainly from the questions they ask and the purpose they serve.' Discuss.

TURN OVER

SECTION C (Philosophy)

9. Which, if any, of Descartes' philosophical conclusions in the *Discourse on Method* does he succeed in justifying?
10. 'The grounds for thinking that we are determined are stronger than those for thinking that we are free.' Do you agree?
11. Is there any reason why an agent should give weight to moral considerations?
12. Can a convincing justification be offered for cultural relativism?

SECTION D (History)

13. Comment on the following passage:
'The main foundation of good states [...] are good laws and good armies.'
(N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1532)
14. Comment on the following passage:
'Each must decide at his own peril what he is to believe, and must see to it that he believes rightly. Other people cannot go to heaven or hell on my behalf [...] and just as little can they believe or not believe on my behalf, or force my faith or unbelief. How he believes is a matter for each individual's conscience, and this does not diminish the authority of secular governments. They ought therefore content themselves with attending to their own business, and allow people to believe what they can, and what they want, and they must use no coercion in this matter against anyone. Faith is free.'
(M. Luther, *On Secular Authority*, 1523)
15. Comment on the following passage:
'For in the act of our Submission, consists both our Obligation, and our Liberty.'
(T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651)
16. Comment on the following passage:
'On the one hand, universal violence and the distress it produces must eventually make a people decide to submit to the coercion which reason itself prescribes (i.e. the coercion of public law), and to enter into a *civil constitution*. And on the other hand, the distress produced by the constant wars in which the states try to subjugate or engulf each other must finally lead them [...] to enter into a *cosmopolitan constitution*.'
(I. Kant, 'On the common saying: that may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice', 1793)

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SECTION E (Politics)

17. *Either* (a) How do opposing ideologies in twentieth century Europe reflect different conceptions of the state?
Or (b) Can the state be viewed as a neutral body in relation to competing social interests?
18. 'The number of parties in any given polity gives a reasonably valuable insight into the ways in which these polities differ from one another.' Discuss.
19. To what extent, if at all, can it be said that in European politics, there is no longer a clear divide between the left and the right? Answer in relation to the main ideologies you have studied in the course.

END OF PAPER