Government of Western Australia
Curriculum Council

WACE
Western Australian Certificate of Education

Western Australian Certificate of Education Examination, 2011

Question/Answer Booklet

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Stage 3

Please place your student identification label in this box

Student Number: In figures

In words _____

_____

Time allowed for this paper

Reading/planning time before commencing work: ten minutes
Working time for paper: three hours

Materials required/recommended for this paper

To be provided by the supervisor

This Question/Answer Booklet

To be provided by the candidate

Standard materials: pens, pencils, eraser, correction fluid/tape, ruler, highlighters

Special materials: nil

Important note to candidates

No other materials may be taken into the examination room. It is **your** responsibility to ensure that you do not have any unauthorised notes or other material of a non-personal nature in the examination room. If you have any unauthorised material with you, hand it to the supervisor **before** reading any further.

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Ref: 11-105

Structure of this paper

Section	Number of questions available	Number of questions to be answered	Suggested working time (minutes)	Marks available	Percentage of exam
Section One: Reasoning and inquiry skills	8	8	50	30	30
Section Two: Philosophical analysis	2	2	80	40	40
Section Three: Extended argument	5	1	50	30	30
				Total	100

Instructions to candidates

1. The rules for the conduct of Western Australian external examinations are detailed in the *Year 12 Information Handbook 2011*. Sitting this examination implies that you agree to abide by these rules.

2. Answer the questions according to the following instructions.

   Write answers in this Question/Answer Booklet.

3. You must be careful to confine your responses to the specific questions asked and to follow any instructions that are specific to a particular question.

4. Spare pages are included at the end of this booklet. They can be used for planning your responses and/or as additional space if required to continue an answer.
   - Planning: If you use the spare pages for planning, indicate this clearly at the top of the page.
   - Continuing an answer: If you need to use the space to continue an answer, indicate in the original answer space where the answer is continued, i.e. give the page number. Fill in the number of the question(s) that you are continuing to answer at the top of the page.

Section One: Reasoning and inquiry skills **30% (30 Marks)**

This section contains **eight (8)** questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
Answer **all** questions.

Suggested working time: 50 minutes.

Question 1 **(4 marks)**

(a) Name the fallacy committed in the following argument. (1 mark)

A black cat crossed my path this morning, so there is no way I am going to do well in my exam.

(b) Name the fallacy committed in the following argument. (1 mark)

The best way to live is to follow the example of Jesus, so all people should use Jesus' teachings in the New Testament as their guide to how to live.

(c) The number of long-term unemployed people has increased by several per cent since the current government came into office. Obviously, the increase in unemployment is a result of poor governance.

For the argument above:

(i) name the fallacy committed. (1 mark)

(ii) explain why it is fallacious. (1 mark)

Question 2 **(3 marks)**

I know that God exists, because I have experienced an incredible feeling of the divine unity of all things and if I have a personal experience of the divine, then I know that God really exists.

For the argument above:

(a) underline the conclusion. (1 mark)

(b) evaluate the strength of the inference. (1 mark)

(c) justify your evaluation. (1 mark)

Question 3 **(3 marks)**

Are the following statements analytic or synthetic?

(a) All ripe bananas are yellow. (1 mark)

(b) Biology is the study of living things. (1 mark)

(c) All monkeys have tails. (1 mark)

Question 4 **(4 marks)**

Children whose parents divorce are more likely to become involved in anti-social behaviour, like drug use and petty crime. It is also true that children from stable homes perform better academically. Furthermore, when people get married they always promise to stay together until death. So, married couples with children should not get divorced.

For the argument above:

(a) bracket and number all the propositions. (1 mark)

(b) circle the inference indicator. (1 mark)

(c) circle the word that best describes the strength of the inference. (1 mark)

WEAK MODERATE STRONG

(d) give a diagram of the argument. (1 mark)

Question 5 **(3 marks)**

Explain concisely why each of the following are 'weasel' sentences.

(a) The health department has significantly increased the number of emergency beds and effectively shortened the waiting lists for elective surgery. (1 mark)

(b) All stock on sale at only a fraction of the original price! (1 mark)

(c) Because of the recession, five employees will be given the opportunity to explore new employment prospects. (1 mark)

Question 6 **(5 marks)**

Robots will never be able to imitate human beings perfectly, because to do so requires the ability to understand the meaning of words and actions. That ability requires more than the manipulation of symbols and all robots can do is manipulate symbols.

For the argument above:

(a) write down and number the premises. (3 marks)

(b) write down and number the conclusion. (1 mark)

(c) diagram the argument. (1 mark)

Question 7 **(3 marks)**

Construct the strongest possible argument that uses all (and only) the following statements. Use a diagram to represent the argument you construct.

(1) My thoughts are not located in space.
(2) It is possible for me to doubt the existence of my brain processes.
(3) My thoughts are not brain processes.
(4) It is not possible for me to doubt the existence of my own thoughts.
(5) My brain processes are located in space.

Question 8 **(5 marks)**

Women must either breastfeed their babies or feed them formula. No sensible woman would feed her baby formula, because it is a terrible food, not only because it's artificial, but also because it's well known to have caused so many health problems in the developing world. So, obviously, women should breastfeed their babies.

For the argument above:

(a) bracket and number all the propositions. (1 mark)

(b) write down the conclusion. (1 mark)

(c) evaluate the cogency of the argument. (1 mark)

(d) give **two** reasons for your evaluation. (2 marks)

Section Two: Philosophical analysis **40% (40 Marks)**

This section contains **two (2)** questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Answer **both** questions.

Spare pages are included at the end of this booklet. They can be used for planning your responses and/or as additional space if required to continue an answer.

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Suggested working time: 80 minutes.

Part A

Question 9 **(20 marks)**

You are required to

- summarise, (2 marks)
- clarify (6 marks)
- and critically evaluate (12 marks)

the contributions of each participant in the dialogue below.

Gwyneth: Can you believe I'm 38 today? That means I'm probably halfway through my life—pretty soon I'm going to be dead. Dead! Finito! Kaput! And you will be too. And everyone we know. What's the point of living if soon we'll all be gone and nothing we've done will mean anything to anyone?

Gong Li: That's a little melodramatic, don't you think? There's plenty to enjoy in life. And what does it matter if we're all going to die? It's not like being immortal is necessary for a meaningful life. We could spend all eternity bouncing a ball against a wall and that wouldn't make our lives meaningful. Either our lives are meaningful or they're not. It doesn't matter whether we die now, in 38 years, or never.

Gwyneth: Yes it does. Look at it this way. If I write the sentence 'My pony is sick', that won't mean anything if there's no-one around to read it. For something to have meaning it has to mean something to someone.

Gong Li: But you're forgetting that God has a purpose for us all and if we live according to His will then our lives have meaning and, what's more, they have eternal meaning. That's why it doesn't matter whether we die one second from now or never. God is eternal and our lives will always mean something to Him.

Gwyneth: Oh, come on! You only believe in God because you don't want to face up to the fact that our lives are meaningless. And anyway, even if there was a God, what does it matter that He has a purpose for me? Suppose there is a God and He created us because He liked to watch people suffer. That wouldn't make our lives meaningful—it would make them a sick joke.

Gong Li: Sure, that's true I guess. But actually I think God wants us to be happy. And now that I think about it, it's really the happiness that matters. A meaningful life is a happy life. After all, it's what everyone is really striving for. And if you're happy then it doesn't matter whether you live forever or not. It's like if someone is brave

their whole life. It will always be true that they were brave. Death can't take that away from them and it can't take away the meaning from our lives either.

Gwyneth: Great! I was unhappy because I thought my life had no meaning, and now you tell me that my life has no meaning because I'm unhappy! But don't worry, I don't think you're right anyway. Take your example about bouncing the ball against a wall for my whole life. Suppose I derived great pleasure from that and never grew tired of it. Happiness is just feeling pleasure, so I would be happy, but my life wouldn't be meaningful. That shows that what we do can't just make us happy, it also has to be worthwhile.

Gong Li: Well, suppose you're right. That just means that we need to do worthwhile things that make us happy. But, like I said, if we spend our lives doing those things then death can't change the fact that we did and so it doesn't strip our lives of meaning.

Gwyneth: That's just it, though. Nothing can be worthwhile if we aren't around to recognise that it is. That's why our lives won't have any meaning once we've been forgotten.

Gong Li: So we *do* need God to give our lives meaning after all.

Part B

Question 10 **(20 marks)**

Choose **one (1)** of the following passages and

- summarise, (2 marks)
- clarify (8 marks)
- and critically evaluate it. (10 marks)

(i) It is troubling that ethical disagreement seems to be so widespread and persistent. If ethics were a matter of objective truth, shouldn't there be greater agreement about it? Yet in matters of ethics people disagree about everything. They clash over abortion, capital punishment, gun control, mercy killing, the environment and the moral status of animals. They disagree about sex, drug use, and whether we have a duty to help needy children in foreign countries. The list could go on and on. Contrast this to the widespread agreement to be found in science. On all the essential points of physics, chemistry and biology scientists have reached agreement. That is, where there are objective answers to be found, one finds agreement among people who have searched for them. Unlike science, then, ethics is merely a matter of opinion.
[James Rachels, 'Problems from Philosophy', p. 159.]

(ii) We threaten punishments in order to deter crime. We impose them not only to make the threats credible but also as retribution (that is, justice) for the crimes that were not deterred. Whether or not deterrence is a sufficient practical justification for capital punishment, retribution is an independent moral justification. And as long as retribution is not unjust, then it is a sufficient justification to punish. Now although penalties can be unwise, repulsive, or inappropriate, and those punished can be pitiable, in a sense the infliction of legal punishment on a guilty person cannot be unjust. In particular, the death penalty cannot be unjust to the guilty criminal. By committing the crime, the criminal volunteered to assume the risk of receiving a legal punishment that he could have avoided by not committing the crime. The punishment he suffers is the punishment he voluntarily risked suffering and, therefore, it is no more unjust to him than any other event for which one knowingly volunteers to assume the risk.
[Ernest van den Haag, 'In Defense of the Death Penalty', p. 235.]

(iii) Skepticism is an ability to set out oppositions among arguments about the things we can think about, an ability by which, because the opposing accounts are equally convincing, we come first to suspension of belief and afterwards to tranquillity. That is, by opposing every account of things with an equally convincing but contradictory account, we can come to hold no beliefs. For example, consider our beliefs about external things. The appearances of things differ depending on age. The same air seems cold to old men but mild to the young, the same colour appears faint to the elderly but intense to the young. Since there are these anomalies in how things appear to different people, it is easy to say how objects appear to different people, but not to say what objects are in fact alike, since we cannot decide between these different appearances. Once we recognise this, we should suspend our beliefs about the nature of external objects and so become tranquil.
[Sextus Empiricus, 'Outlines of Skepticism', pp. 135–139.]

End of Section Two

Section Three begins on page 22

Section Three: Extended argument **30% (30 Marks)**

This section contains **five (5)** questions. Answer **one (1)** question. Write your answer in the space provided.

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Suggested working time: 50 minutes.

Argue for or against the statement in the question, providing clear definitions and reasons.

Question 11 **(30 marks)**

The existence of numerous forms of theism demonstrates that religious belief is irrational.

Question 12 **(30 marks)**

Membership of any society means forfeiting the right to be oneself and conforming to a socially defined identity.

Question 13 **(30 marks)**

Darwin's theory of evolution and religious creation stories are equally good ways of understanding the origins of humanity.

Question 14 **(30 marks)**

Justice demands that we ensure everyone has equal access to public goods.

Question 15 **(30 marks)**

The ideal social contract would include an agreement to live as a democracy.

End of questions

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Question Number: _____

Spare answer page:

✓	
	Planning
	Continuing an answer

Question Number: _____

Spare answer page:

✓	
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	Continuing an answer

Question Number: _____

Spare answer page:

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	Planning
	Continuing an answer

Question Number: _____

Spare answer page:

✓	
	Planning
	Continuing an answer

Question Number: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Section Two:

Question 10(I) Excerpt adapted from: Rachels, J. (2009). *Problems from philosophy.* Boston: McGraw-Hill, p. 159.

Question 10(ii) Excerpt adapted from: Van den Haag, E. (2007). In defense of the death penalty. In J. Rachels & S. Rachels (Eds.). *The right thing to do: Basic readings in moral philosophy* (4th. ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill, p. 235.

Question 10(iii) Excerpt adapted from: Sextus Empiricus (2005). Outlines of skepticism. In J. Feinberg & R. Schafer-Landau (Eds.). *Reason and responsibility: Readings in some basic problems of philosophy* (12th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, pp. 135–139.

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