
AS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7061/1 – Philosophy of religion and ethics
Report on the Examination

7061
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Section A: Philosophy of Religion

Question 1

Part 01.1

This was the better answered AO1 philosophy question. Students explained well the nature of the cosmological argument: its basis in observation and induction, the argument from contingency and necessity and a rejection of infinite regress. Stronger answers explained claims by using evidence from the argument to demonstrate points. Students drew their explanations from a range of versions of the cosmological argument.

Some explanations did not go far enough to reference the existence of God and so could not achieve the higher levels of the mark scheme. Less successful answers confused the cosmological argument with the teleological or the ontological argument. Some students evaluated the argument which was not required by the question and should have instead explained the argument more thoroughly.

Part 01.2

This was the least well answered AO2 question. Many responses did not refer to Process theodicy and instead explained the problem of evil. A number of responses did not provide sufficient detail about Process theodicy.

Stronger answers evaluated the merits of Process theodicy, referring to what they perceived to be strengths and weaknesses of the approach and made reference to whether this constituted 'a satisfactory response' or not. Other responses also compared the Process theodicy to other theodicies and gained credit for evaluation by critical comparison.

Some responses confused Process theodicy with the Free Will defence and thus were not focused on the question.

Question 2

Part 02.1

This question was less well answered than Question 01.1. Stronger answers explained the meaning of numinous with examples; some referenced the work of Otto in detail, or used biblical examples such as Isaiah 6. Good answers demonstrated accurate and relevant information which was well understood.

Many less successful responses briefly referenced some relevant information but did not give any explanation or detail. Some students seemed unfamiliar with the numinous specifically and instead recounted other forms of religious experience.

Part 02.2

This question was well answered by many students who knew the scientific and philosophical challenges to the verification of religious experiences and evaluated well their merits and religious

responses. Some answers gave a persuasive account of why they cannot be verified due to their very nature and the challenges posed by science and empiricism.

Many students explained religious experiences and alternative explanations for their 'religious' element which gained some credit. Less successful answers did not assess whether or not experiences could be verified and instead described religious experiences or were one sided. Some students appeared not to understand the term verification with reference to religious experience.

Section B: Ethics

Question 03

Part 03.1

This question was well answered by students demonstrating detailed knowledge of how to apply natural moral law to a range of moral decisions. Some students used good examples such as therapeutic abortion to demonstrate how the doctrine of double effect could be applied. The strongest answers remained focussed on how moral decisions may be made.

Some responses were able to state natural moral law but did not explain how moral decisions may be made. Some students confused natural moral law with virtue ethics and situation ethics.

Part 03.2

Stronger answers focussed on 'clear guidance' to assess how natural moral law can work on the issue of cloning. Students referenced contradictory purposes and aims of cloning and the role of humanity in matters of life and death. Some students made interesting points by making a distinction between animal cloning and human cloning. Some students used the doctrine of double effect to good use in this debate.

Less successful answers juxtaposed the counter arguments but without any evaluation or critical comment and some were confused by cloning and instead answered referring to other issues of life and death.

Question 04

Part 04.1

This question produced some excellent answers which demonstrated a good understanding of situation ethics and how it can be applied with identical intention but differing final decisions. Students gave a range of good scenarios with which to demonstrate differing conclusions using the same principles such as the guiding principle of relativism and consideration of conflicting right to die and right to live.

Less successful responses applied some aspects of situation ethics to voluntary euthanasia or mistakenly applied natural law theory to voluntary euthanasia. Responses which only explained situation ethics could not achieve the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Part 04.2

In response to this question there were many persuasive discussions on the possible acceptance of intensive farming of animals by virtue ethics. Stronger answer separated 'farming' from 'intensive farming' and discussed the different virtues and vices that could apply. Responses also considered the impact upon farmers and societies in the different farming contexts. Many answers used good examples from intensive farming and free range regulation to put forward their case.

Less successful responses did not distinguish between farming and intensive farming. Some confused Virtue ethics and natural moral law. Others juxtaposed some relevant arguments but made no assessment of the arguments.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.