

# GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Are modern politicians merely managers?
2. Do we need a written constitution, European or other?
3. Can the 'freeness' and 'fairness' of elections be measured?
4. What are the virtues and vices of patriotism?
5. What is war good for?
6. Is international migration a problem or an opportunity?
7. Can the developed countries be serious about relieving world poverty?
8. From where does a sense of community come?
9. Are there too many accountants and auditors?
10. Who should run universities?
11. Does fashion serve a useful purpose?
12. Is eugenics ever a good thing?
13. Is there anything to be said for astrology?
14. Should we preserve living creatures harmful to human interests, such as the tick, the locust and the tapeworm?
15. How would you explain the present strength of religious fundamentalism?
16. What do we owe to the Enlightenment?
17. Can the uses of euthanasia be secured against abuses of it?
18. Is exile always a misfortune?
19. Is there any moral justification for the use of evidence gathered by torture?
20. Why should I tolerate?
21. 'The dice of God are always loaded' [EMERSON]. Discuss.
22. Why does music matter?
23. What moral benefits are gained from the contemplation of works of visual art?

[OVER]

24. Was the destruction of large quantities of contemporary art in the Saatchi warehouse fire merely a financial loss?
25. Are technological changes producing a golden age of cinema?
26. Should the Orange Prize for Fiction be open to both men and women?
27. Have computers changed the way we think?
28. Have developments in electronic communications destroyed our personal space?
29. If there are millions of other planets capable of supporting advanced life-forms, why haven't we seen or heard from them?
30. Should genetically modified crops be banned as a matter of principle?
31. Does the non-participation of the United States make the Kyoto accord worthless?
32. 'The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible'  
[EINSTEIN]. Discuss.

## GENERAL II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is the idea of a *Dictionary of National Biography* out of date?
2. 'In any age, one particular art form will dominate'. Discuss.
3. 'Poetry is more philosophical than history' [ARISTOTLE]. Discuss.
4. Do historical novels harm historical study?
5. Was nationalism unknown in pre-industrial societies?
6. Can demographic studies of past societies ever be credible?
7. Did a concept of human rights exist in the ancient world?
8. Is history one discipline or many?
9. Which was the first world war?
10. Has there ever been a period that was not an information age?
11. What is power in international relations?
12. Who should protect civil liberties?
13. In the context of political speech, '[e]ven material which causes a significant degree of revulsion may be justified by the serious purpose of the context in which the material is broadcast': Lord Walker in *R. (ProLife Alliance) v. B.B.C.* [2003] 2 WLR 1403. Do you agree?
14. Should parents be punished for the truancy of their children?
15. Should the Office of Fair Trading be involved in the regulation of the legal profession?
16. Should twenty-first century lawyers study Roman law?
17. Should prisoners have the vote?
18. Is there progress in philosophy?
19. Why does truthfulness matter?
20. Does appeal to intuition have a distinctive and defensible role in the methodology of your subject?
21. Is logocentrism a useful concept for understanding Western philosophy?

22. 'Translation changes the language translated into.' Discuss.
23. 'Relativism makes everything uncertain' [CARDINAL RATZINGER]. Discuss.
24. What difference should it make to feminism whether gender differences are natural or socially constructed?
25. Does political legitimacy require justice?
26. Is democracy a means or an end?
27. Are universal human rights a form of cultural imperialism?
28. Has democratisation in the former USSR been a success?
29. Should saving for old-age pensions be made compulsory?
30. How far is the survival of works of classical literature dependent on their intrinsic quality?
31. What role has London played in English Literature?
32. Should theatre be considered a branch of literature?
33. How appropriate is it to study English literature in isolation?
34. 'As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality' [EINSTEIN]. Is this true of economics?
35. 'If news media are for sale, seats in the legislature should be too.' Do you agree?
36. Is the 'American Dream' a reality? Should it be?
37. '...[U]nder the right circumstances, groups are remarkably intelligent, and are often smarter than the smartest people in them' [JAMES SUROWIECKI]. Are the many smarter than the few?

# **ESSAY**

Style

# GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Where should the boundaries lie between a person's private and public life?
2. In film studies, has auteur theory had its day?
3. Blogs are the new...?
4. What can we learn from a century of sound recording?
5. Should people agree to disagree?
6. 'Love is strong as death.' [Song of Solomon, 8.6] Discuss.
7. Are there limits to satire?
8. What do extremes in dress and personal adornment signify?
9. Is nothing sacred?
10. To what extent should government control university policies?
11. Should we worry about the fate of the British red squirrel?
12. Is China overrated?
13. What has happened to epic poetry?
14. Does sport help overcome racism?
15. Is there such a thing as plagiarism in the Arts?
16. Is Islam more dangerous than any other religion?
17. What are the arguments for nuclear proliferation?
18. When can animal testing be justified?
19. Do the risks to others justify restrictions on smokers?
20. Do anthropic arguments have a place in science?
21. What are the deprivations of affluence?
22. Is corruption inevitable?
23. What will the UK job market be like in twenty years' time?

[OVER]

24. What are museums for?
25. Is Dark Energy more interesting than Dark Matter?
26. Is ideology unfairly maligned?
27. Why are Christian churches in turmoil over sex and gender?
28. 'Even the bravest of us rarely has the courage for what he really knows' [NIETZSCHE].  
Discuss.
29. What can we learn from Las Vegas?
30. Why are some societies more stratified than others?
31. Should we regret the establishment of the green belt?
32. What is the present status of concepts of the soul?
33. Why are great artists more famous for their paintings than for their drawings?
34. Is luck integral to all good sport?

## GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is criminal justice possible in an unjust society?
2. 'Law is the cement of society and an essential medium of change' [G. WILLIAMS]. Discuss.
3. Should the Attorney General, as the Legal Adviser to Her Majesty's Government, be a political appointee?
4. Was Lord Bingham, as senior law lord, right to refuse to discuss control orders with the Home Secretary?
5. Is the right to a jury trial a matter of fundamental importance, and if so, why?
6. If modern politics is 'managerial', should politicians become better managers?
7. Is falling public trust in politicians a crisis for democracy or a sign of a healthily maturing electorate?
8. Is there any way of constraining the decisions of democratically elected politicians so that they are sensitive to the long term?
9. Does politics require a philosophy?
10. What is world literature?
11. Is Amazon.com good for literature?
12. Would you ban a book?
13. What can music add to the meaning of a text?
14. Is 'women's writing' a distinct category?
15. Can the history of artistic style be more than a story of changing preferences?
16. 'A lunatic is easily recognised. Sooner or later he brings up the Knights Templar' [UMBERTO ECO]. Discuss.
17. Is the notion of a canon of great texts unhistorical?
18. Is 'women's history' the last bastion of the Whig interpretation of history?
19. 'Historians pay too much attention to radicals and heretics, and too little to the orthodox majority.' Is this criticism fair?

[OVER]

20. 'National history is always skewed by the fact that it takes the nation as its unit or its goal.' Discuss.
21. Is it useful for economists to know what is happening inside people's brains?
22. Does the apparent tendency of economists to disagree with one another merely reflect a shared understanding that it is a poor use of time to discuss that which is agreed?
23. Should public authorities sell, rather than grant, planning permission?
24. 'The social sciences have sought to explain all customs and social arrangements as a product of the socialization of children by the surrounding culture: a system of words, images, stereotypes, role models, and contingencies of reward and punishment' [STEVEN PINKER]. Discuss.
25. Have any philosophical problems been finally solved?
26. Is 'continental philosophy' a different thing from 'Anglo-Saxon philosophy'?
27. Is clarity essential to philosophy?
28. Is there any place for system-building in philosophy?
29. What is new in lexicography?
30. Does archaeology allow us to assess standards of living?
31. Did ancient readers appreciate the same things in poetry as we do?
32. Does the modern reception of classical art and literature have any place in a Classics degree?

# ESSAY

Water

# GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is it worse to be cruel to a fox than to a flea?
2. When should humanitarian considerations override national sovereignty?
3. Should we worry about a language dying out?
4. Does business entertaining differ from bribery?
5. Should wealth be inheritable?
6. Does the frequency of remakes tell us anything about the nature of cinema?
7. What is it about fashion that is worthy of serious study?
8. Is it appropriate to call God a delusion?
9. Are there limits to the ways in which works of fiction or feature films should make use of real contemporary lives?
10. Is national identity a dangerous idea?
11. Does it matter who wrote Shakespeare's plays?
12. Is your belief in the theory of evolution based on faith or reason?
13. Should tigers be saved at the expense of Indian villagers?
14. How many civilisations are there in today's world?
15. In what ways, if any, have scientists been inspired by art?
16. What should happen to the House of Lords?
17. Has the internet made society less cohesive?
18. Do we work too hard?
19. Can happiness be measured?
20. Is world government a bad idea?
21. Do men care more about sport than women do?
22. Why is it unnecessary to translate Russian music into English?
23. Is feminism still needed?

[OVER]

24. What is the difference between painting and decorating?
25. Would you want your friends and colleagues to take pills to make them more intelligent?
26. Should there be a market in human organs?
27. Is classical music in decline? Does it matter?

## GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Why do classicists keep re-editing the same narrow range of texts?
2. What lost work from antiquity would you most like to recover?
3. What are the limitations of the Athenian model of democracy?
4. Could the EU learn anything from the Roman Empire?
5. ‘Historians of science need to study alchemy and astrology – but only insofar as they contributed to what later became accepted as proper science.’ Discuss.
6. Is there something wrong with the idea of ‘the history of ideas’?
7. What is to be learned from making comparisons between **EITHER** revolutions **OR** empires in different eras?
8. From which other disciplines can your discipline learn most?
9. Which was the first modern NGO?
10. Would you welcome the decline of the book?
11. What is literature?
12. Can propaganda be art?
13. Is it true that novels can be translated and poems cannot?
14. What’s the use of literary prizes?
15. Are leading company executives paid too much?
16. Should governments restrict economic migration?
17. ‘If the world were run by economists we would not need a World Trade Organization’ [PASCAL LAMY]. Discuss.
18. Can it be as important for societies to forget as to remember?
19. How much of anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism in disguise?
20. Is ‘English votes for English laws’ a practicable answer to the West Lothian question?
21. Is there an alternative to the welfare state?
22. Is there a Right to Development?

[OVER]

23. What are the essential elements of a legal system?
24. Would the abolition of the law of blasphemy serve any useful purpose?
25. Should judges always, or ordinarily, be drawn from the ranks of practising lawyers?
26. 'The maxims of the law are these: to live honestly, to hurt no-one, to give everyone his due' [ULPIAN]. Discuss.
27. Should children have the right to renounce their parents?
28. Is it better that ten guilty men go free than that one innocent man be convicted?
29. In making decisions, what weight should we give to the interests of future generations?
30. Does philosophy benefit non-philosophers?
31. Is one part of philosophy foundational for the rest?
32. Could scientific advances solve philosophical problems?
33. Could a bad person be a good moral philosopher?

# **ESSAY**

Harmony

## GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Is it immoral to buy a £10,000 handbag?
2. 'I don't care if anyone reads my books; I write for myself,' said the author of a half-dozen published novels. Is there anything wrong with this statement as a theory of art?
3. Are boycotts futile?
4. 'Every act you have ever performed since the day you were born was performed because you wanted something' [ANDREW CARNEGIE]. Do you agree?
5. What, if anything, is wrong with selective schools?
6. Is dislike of politicians a sensible default position?
7. Why is a leather jacket more acceptable than a fur coat?
8. Why do Jane Austen's novels continue to be so popular?
9. Can any public and political institutions be trusted to reform themselves?
10. Is it an extremely unnatural condition for a male and female to live continuously together?
11. Is student mobility in Europe merely a form of subsidised tourism?
12. Do children's games involving blindfolds reveal an essential cruelty in human nature?
13. Why does the UN tolerate so many bad regimes?
14. Is there a breakdown of family values in the West, and if so should the state attempt to redress it?
15. Should governments support scientific research when there may be no technological benefit?
16. Does the moral character of an orgy change when the participants wear Nazi uniforms?
17. Isn't global warming preferable to global cooling?
18. Should the laws of a secular state accommodate religious groups which desire to live by their own customs governing family, property, and marital relations, administered through separate religious courts?
19. What should the West learn from China?
20. Does celebrity entail a loss of dignity?

[OVER]

21. Is the desire for posthumous fame irrational?
22. What, if anything, should be done about the ‘obesity epidemic’?
23. Why has Africa done so badly economically?
24. Can the world afford not to grow genetically modified crops?
25. Can architects and urban planners design out crime and social breakdown?
26. Do very large salaries for sports professionals alter the character of the games played?
27. It has been said that architecture is frozen music. Does this make any sense?
28. ‘Old poems such as *Beowulf*, *The Faerie Queene*, and *Paradise Lost* are now unreadable by modern English speakers (without special training), so the cultural and social value of the “great” poetry of the past lies in the material it provides for modern adaptations, such as the recent film version of *Beowulf* and Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy’ [*The Economist*]. Do you agree?
29. Why hug a hoodie?
30. Is string theory science?
31. Can a painting change the world?
32. Can (and should) Europe maintain its relatively high standard of living as compared with emerging economies?
33. Can you love someone if you don’t respect them?
34. Is the treaty of Lisbon a further step towards the federation of Europe – or is it a step back from it?

## GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. What do you understand by 'theatricality' in public and social life?
2. Why, in Greco-Roman antiquity, were there female poets but apparently no female historians?
3. When and why should cultural objects be returned to their country of origin?
4. Is there anything a historian of literature can learn from soap-operas?
5. Write a convincing pastiche of a leader from a national daily newspaper – unless, that is, you fear you have already done so.
6. Are literatures national?
7. 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know' [KEATS]. Is this meant to be true?
8. Is teamwork over-rated?
9. 'Philosophy is not a contribution to human knowledge, but to human understanding' [HACKER]. Discuss.
10. Is there any more need for philosophers to study the history of philosophy, than for physicists to study the history of physics?
11. What do philosophy and some other academic discipline have to offer one another?
12. 'A lawyer with a briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns' [MARIO PUZO]. Discuss.
13. Is it ever justifiable for governments to encourage civil wars in other states?
14. Has the declaratory theory of adjudication been discredited?
15. 'Law is the totality of the conditions of existence of society that are assured by means of external coercion through the power of the state' [R. VON JHERING]. Discuss.
16. What are the problems in applying modern categories to past worlds in which the key terms either did not exist or had a different meaning?
17. Is 'Orientalism' merely a denunciatory term, or can the notion generate valuable new approaches to non-European cultures?
18. Should we regret the loss of grand narratives in history?
19. Are political revolutions at best necessary evils?

[OVER]

20. 'The cause of the recent rise of food prices is growth in developing countries. But its remedy must be in the developed world.' Do you agree?
21. Who is to blame for the credit crisis?
22. What can we learn from India's economic performance in the last thirty years?
23. When, if at all, should we seek to destroy one species in order to protect another?
24. Should politics be a lifetime career?
25. Do ranking and benchmarking of public services encourage mediocrity and conformity?
26. 'In a democracy, justice is too important to be left to the lawyers' [LADY RAMSAY]. Discuss.
27. Should legislators be subject to freedom of information requirements?
28. Which decisions, if any, should be made by referendum?

# **ESSAY**

Novelty

# GENERAL PAPER I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Does development aid do more harm than good?
2. Could a reduction in income inequality improve the health and wellbeing of a whole nation?
3. Are bankers or politicians more to blame for the present world economic crisis?
4. Should university education be free?
5. How many people should there be?
6. Do developing countries have a greater right to pollute the environment?
7. Does contemporary aesthetics need a concept of beauty?
8. 'The present age is one of overproduction ... never has there been so much music-making and so little musical experience of a vital order' [CONSTANT LAMBERT, 1934]. Discuss.
9. How can an examination of an artist's life help us to appraise his or her artistic achievements?
10. 'The ability to access the Web will be either a great divider or a great equaliser' [TIM BERNERS-LEE, 1997]. Discuss.
11. Does Facebook put the private sphere in jeopardy?
12. What are the functions of fashion?
13. Is there something inherently coarsening about sport?
14. Why doesn't Britain have a café culture?
15. What is the value of 'red top' journalism?
16. 'Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp. Or what's a heaven for?' [ROBERT BROWNING]. Discuss.
17. Has morality made progress?
18. Is it ethical to abort fetuses with Down's syndrome?
19. Is globalization just *Pax Americana*?
20. 'All political careers end in failure' [J. ENOCH POWELL]. Is this true?
21. Could there be a British Barack Obama?

[OVER]

22. Do the innocent have nothing to fear?
23. Why are face transplants more controversial than liver transplants?
24. Is a generation gap inevitable?
25. ‘Thus said Alfred: “If you have a sorrow, do not tell it to your minion. Tell it to your saddlebow, and ride forth singing” [‘Proverbs of Alfred’, thirteenth century]. Is a stiff upper lip a good thing?
26. Can you take the religion out of religious art?
27. Does it matter whether there is life elsewhere in the universe?
28. ‘There was a time when people simply wanted to sense the moon, but now they want to see it’ [GOETHE]. Discuss.
29. Should science be subject to democratic control?
30. What is the significance of binge drinking?
31. Is maternity leave good for women?
32. Should Jade Goody be in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*?
33. ‘Gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power’ [JOAN W. SCOTT, 1986]. Is this still the case?
34. ‘Wild law’: if animals have rights, can nature have rights too?

## GENERAL PAPER II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. What or who are your discipline's false gods?
2. Would anyone in the ancient world have understood 'team spirit'?
3. Do **EITHER** ancient writers **OR** ancient artists **OR** ancient architects **OR** ancient philosophers have anything in common with their modern counterparts?
4. Would it have been better had some surviving works of ancient authors been lost?
5. Is the popularization of classical culture in modern cinema of any value?
6. What is the function of criticism at the present time?
7. Does pleasure always have a cultural function?
8. 'A people that grows accustomed to sloppy writing is a people in process of losing grip on its empire and on itself' [EZRA POUND]. Discuss.
9. Is lexicography a science or an art?
10. While considering the capacity of economics to explain recent economic events, Anatole Kaletsky wrote: 'It is now time for what historians of science call a "paradigm shift"' [The Times, February 2009]. Discuss.
11. Is it useful to talk in terms of the 'bottom billion' of the world's poorest people?
12. Is capitalism inherently unstable?
13. What can economics contribute to legal theory and practice?
14. What understandings of the past may be unlocked by the concept of 'masculinity'?
15. If archaeologists and historians communicated better with each other, which would gain more?
16. 'I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention' [JANE AUSTEN on history]. Discuss.
17. Does style matter in historical writing?
18. Should the law prohibit assisting the suicide of a mentally competent adult?
19. Should people accused of serious criminal offences be entitled to anonymity unless and until convicted?
20. What is the difference between property and wealth?

[OVER]

21. Is there too much law?
22. Why should we be concerned about the welfare of future generations?
23. Is there any place left for system-building in philosophy?
24. Is clarity essential to philosophy?
25. 'Common sense is the metaphysics of the Stone Age' [BERTRAND RUSSELL]. Discuss.
26. If power corrupts, how should institutions be designed?
27. What role should loyalty play in politics?
28. Is politics a job, a profession, or a vocation?
29. What does sovereignty mean today?
30. Do different disciplines have different concepts of causation?
31. Why does truth matter?

# ESSAY

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