

GCE



CCEA GCE A2
Exemplifying Examination
Performance
Religious Studies

A2 7: Global Ethics

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCE A2 examinations (Summer 2018) to support the teaching and learning of the Religious Studies specification.



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EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCE Religious Studies

Introduction

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Students' grade A responses are reproduced verbatim and accompanied by commentaries written by senior examiners. The commentaries draw attention to the strengths of the students' responses and indicate, where appropriate, deficiencies and how improvements could be made.

It is intended that the materials should provide a benchmark of candidate performance and help teachers and students to raise standards.

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Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

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GCE: A2 Religious Studies

ARE71: Global Ethics

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Q1a Examine how Free Will is incompatible with Determinism. [20]

Student's response

Free Will is a concept developed by St Paul teachings in the New Testament and the Greek philosopher Aristotle presented these ideas which produced the ethical libertarianism. This is the belief that each individual is an autonomous being who has complete control and responsibility over their actions, as they are not controlled by an internal or external force contrary to this belief, determinism presents a case for how actions and consequences are determined for each individual, who has no control over the outcome of their actions. Hard determinists like Locke and Spinoza believe that individuals cannot control their actions because they are pre-determined/physically determined. This incompatibilist theory shows how individuals lack freedom by choice in decision making, completely contradicting the autonomy viewpoint taken by libertarians. St Paul teaches that God has given humans the freedom of choice, in which they use to either obey or disobey his moral law whereas, theological determinism (predestination) described by Calvin, presents the idea that God "knit you in his womb" and "knows you before he forms you", suggesting that God has already chosen the actions you will make; therefore you have no free will to do anything other than God's will. Calvin argued that God decides who he will save and bring to heaven and also who he will condemn to hell, meaning individuals are not autonomous beings because each person has an inevitable outcome, regardless of their moral or immoral actions in their lifetime. The Catholic Church presents a compatibilist viewpoint in which free will is able to coexist with determinism. However, only few agree with this view, for example Hume, who argues that God has granted humans with freedom and also the moral law written on their hearts so they can choose to obey or ignore God's law of God. Sartre indicates that existence precedes essence in his theory of existentialism which shows how free will and determinism are not compatible. As a libertarian, Sartre believed that humans exist with free will to achieve eudaimonia and live enriched lives. He argued that if essence preceded existence men our "nature would determine our lives" and we would be nothing but victims of essence without personal autonomy.

Examiner's comments

One of the merits of this answer is that it demonstrates a very good awareness of the technical language and vocabulary associated with this question area, for example, libertarianism, hard determinism, incompatibilist, theological determinism, predestination, compatibilist. It also is aware of key positions in the debate, for example, compatibilist as against that of the incompatibilist. Not only is the candidate aware of the key positions and the associated vocabulary they do to some extent understand what is meant by free will and determinism (how they can be incompatible), especially the nature of hard determinism (showing awareness of how belief in predestination is a form of theological determinism) and the thinking associated with libertarianism. It can also to some extent connect relevant key figures with key positions, for example, Locke and Spinoza with hard determinism, Calvin with theological determinism, Hume with compatibilism, Sartre with libertarianism. To improve on the mark awarded the response offered could have been stronger on the free will position and how freedom is crucial to moral choice as well as having exercised greater precision in the knowledge and understanding articulated throughout.

Band 4

Q1b With particular reference to the Determinist view, critically assess the claim that the issue of moral responsibility cannot be ignored. [30]

Student's response

The issue of moral responsibility refers to the duty of an individual to promote dignity, equality and tolerance to other members of society. However, many determinist thinkers would argue that the issue of moral responsibility can be ignored, as people are predetermined and not autonomous beings.

For example, Clarence Darrow, a determinist lawyer, represented two young boys, Leopold and Loeb, who murdered a young black American in the United States. The criminals were sentenced to life in prison as Darrow objected to their original sentence of capital punishment. Darrow argued that these boys were determined to commit this crime and had no control over the matters. They were a product of their upbringing, a simple combination of "bad parents, bad genes and poor environment". He argued that although these boys may have felt the moral responsibility to not murder, their lack of free will meant they had to carry out the crime. As a behaviourist, Skinner would agree with the view that life experience and genetics, heavily influence an individuals actions, which they possess little control over. Furthermore, psychological determinist, Harris; would agree and argue that nature e.g genetics and nurture e.g. parenting, control all of an individuals motives, intensions and actions unlike these hard determinist/incompatibilist theorists. Others may argue that moral responsibility cannot be ignored. These scholars may call themselves ubertarians (who follow free will) or compatibilists (who follow soft determinism). Hume would argue that although there are strong influences that may determine your actions e.g. parental values and peer pressure, you still possess one freedom to choose to ignore external factors and act upon your moral responsibility. God wrote on the hearts of all descendants of Adam and Eve, the golden rule, "do to others as you would do onto you" or "treat others as you wish to be treated". This teaching of compassion from Jesus compells humans to act in accordance with their moral responsibility as "brothers" to ensure all individuals are treated equally.

Examiner's comments

The candidate does attempt to respond to the set task and attempts to offer a meaningful critical assessment through looking at both sides of the claim with some awareness of the competing positions held in the debate. From the outset the candidate can connect determinism with the issue of moral responsibility and is able to support the determinist position by considering the arguments of Clarence Darrow in the celebrated case of Leopold and Loeb as well as highlighting the views of relevant hard determinists B.F. Skinner and Sam Harris. It then proceeds to balance the hard determinist case by highlighting the opposing viewpoint, that moral responsibility cannot be ignored with some awareness of the soft determinist position – that while there may be strong influences that may determine actions, the freedom to choose still exists. While the response offered does represent a very good attempt to use evidence and reasoning the overall quality of the critical assessment presented could have been stronger and more effective, especially the counter argument to the hard determinist case. Possible consideration of examples such as Jamie Bolger and/or Mary Bell could also have augmented the debate along with a probing of the implications for moral choice, for example, how if the determinist case is true, moral choice is essentially meaningless. A noteworthy feature of the overall answer to both parts of this question here was the candidate's ability to avoid repetition between both parts of the question.

Band 4

Q2a “Access to birth control is essential for human well-being and progress.”

Present a case for this view. [20]

Student's response

The issue of birth control and contraception is an issue which presents arguments from both religious and secular perspectives.

From a Christian perspective, the Old Testament condemns the use of contraception through two references. In Genesis it states we should “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”. This is viewed by Christians as a divine command and therefore all forms of controlling reproduction are immoral. Secondly, God kills Orian for ‘spilling his seed’ which is seen as divine condemnation for coitus interreptus.” From an Old Testament perspective the statement “access to birth control is essential for human well-being and progress” would be rejected.

However the Christian denominations have varying views. The Catholic Church hold it to be a moral evil because it interrupts God’s plan for humanity. Aquinas’ primary precept states humans are to “live to reproduce” and contraception does not allow this to be fulfilled. For Catholics artificial methods are not morally acceptable, however natural methods such as the rhythm method are permissible in the case of responsible parenting. In November 2010, Pope Benedict stated that ‘in certain cases’ it is permissible to use a condom to reduce the risk of HIV infection and in April 2016, Pope Francis stated women who had been exposed to the Zika virus may also be permitted to use contraception. In these two cases “access to birth control is essential for human well-being and “progress.”

The Presbyterian Church is more liberal in its view. In 1903 it became the first Church to issue a statement in favour of contraception however not in the case of selfish motives. The Methodist Church holds a similar view and “advocates responsible family planning; with the use of contraception.” Vardy highlights the ‘unitive’ aspect of sex in marriage and states contraception may lead to a better marriage.

Secular views are much more liberal and would agree that “access to birth control is essential for human well-being and progress”. Mill a utilitarian argues that is is promoting happiness for the greatest amount of people therefore cannot be immoral. Humanists do not belief in God given rules and simply make decisions based on making the place a better world. They see no moral objection to the use of contraception. As a consequence they argue that it would be “every child being a wanted child and in better, healthier lives for the women.” Singer has a strong belief in the human “obligation to assist.” Those in poverty he uses this to argue that the use of contraception could bring demographic benefits and thus assist the plight of those suffering from poverty. This would therefore promote the view that “access to birth control is essential for human well-being and progress.”

Examiner's comments

This answer offers more than a standard essay on the morality of birth control. It does attempt to some extent to show how the issue of birth control is essential for human flourishing especially in the references to condomisation in light of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the Zika virus and human betterment for those afflicted by poverty. Thus, the candidate sought to respond to the specific question which was interested in the link between birth control and human well-being. In light of this the response is worthy of a Band 4 award. A higher award could have been achieved if the response had been more alert to the entirety of the set task as it required the candidate to *present a case for the view* that birth control is essential for human well-being. The initial section of the answer was articulating the case against before beginning to address the case for. While the response offered demonstrated a high degree of understanding of the topic of birth control, the issue of the link with human flourishing and the entitlement to live in dignity and in freedom could have been much more to the fore throughout the entirety of the answer with perhaps more scope given to, for example, how access to birth control can help to liberate women in developing countries from a purely child bearing role, how birth control could help to alleviate the numbers dying from starvation and disease, how it can serve to bring about gender justice. As this examination paper is one in Global Ethics these aspects are an important part of the study.

Band 4

Q2b How far is it true to say that the current human rights model no longer works in a multi-cultural world? [30]

Student's response

Some would argue that the current human rights model – the universal declaration of human rights – no longer works in a multi-cultural world, based on the concept of ethical relativism.

Nietsche developed one theory of ethical relativism and it is one ideology that individuals or cultures may hold different attitudes to morality or human rights. Yet, this contradicts the current human rights model, as the UDHR has 192 countries as members. All governed by one set of moral standards. In African cultures, female genital mutilation is regarded as morally acceptable as it is seen as a right of passage into womanhood and provides women with dignity. However, this goes against Article 6 which states “no human should be subjected to torture or punishment with extensive suffering”. Additionally, Stott claims that the ‘western critique of human rights’ promotes individual responsibility, while this is not relevant in Africa or Asia who promote communal values of respect, equality and dignity.

Iran initially was with the first 51 countries to join the UDHR but withdrew as its human rights model conflicted with its culturally based Sharia law which differs in relation to rights about education, religion and women.

Others would argue that human rights, as modelled in the UDHR, represent natural rights, which do belong in a multicultural world. Gewirth believed that all individuals deserve natural rights “regardless of whether you are African American or White European”. Natural rights refer to the basic needs and desires of the human race, making them “universal” as stated by Stott. Although this view is somewhat accepted, other philosophers such as Marx, disagreed as he believed that natural rights don’t belong in western cultures. He argued that the bourgeoisie used natural rights such as the right to own property to further oppress the working class proletariat. He stated that natural rights – modelled in our current human rights – encourage this “slave morality” and “do more harm than good”.

Mill provides a utilitarian viewpoint and considers how the current human rights model no longer works in a multi cultural world as it may not promote the greatest amount of happiness as not all individuals can achieve happiness when governed by one universal set of regulations.

Examiner's comments

A significant feature of this answer is that it makes every attempt to connect with the set task. While other candidates gave a response addressing the nature and development of human rights with some focusing on human rights violations this candidate was alert to the “multi-cultural” element in the task, using the actual question as the platform for the answer at the very start. The response indicates early how individuals or cultures may hold different attitudes to morality or human rights and immediately backs this up by looking at the very relevant issue of female genital cutting which is seen in some cultures as acceptable as a rite of passage to womanhood yet would be seen by others as contravening the article in the UDHR on freedom from torture or degrading treatment. The candidate is also well aware of differences in the Western and African/Asian understandings of rights and this insight is highly commended. Further to this, the response looks at issues in relation to the understanding of “natural rights” addressing competing ideas here. Overall, this answer represents a very good attempt at critical analysis with every attempt made to use evidence and reasoning to construct a well informed and balanced answer. To improve, the quality of the critical assessment offered could have been more consistent throughout as consideration of the debate surrounding the “multi-cultural” element could have been probed further along with the merits of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Band 4

Q3a Explain how Utilitarianism could defend the use of capital punishment by the State. [20]

Student's response

The theory of Utilitarianism concerns itself with providing the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number' and some will argue in this sense capital punishment usage may be shown as ethically permissible.

Firstly, many see capital punishment as a suitable deterrent for future criminals in society, a point which is supported by the utilitarian scholar Hitchens who claims that, "nothing is a greater deterrent for man than death itself" implying how utilitarians support capital punishment by the state as a way of deterring criminals.

Furthermore, in terms of retribution utilitarians would also be in favour of capital punishment as it acts as a way to punish those who have done wrong in society. This view may be supported by Christian Utilitarianism who look for the biblical teaching of Lex Talionis, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" in promoting the use of capital punishment and for this reason defend its usage by the state as a fair judicial actions whereby a criminal is suitable punished for their actions.

Similarly, in terms of proportionality (a punishment fitting the crime) utilitarians would also defend the use of capital punishment by stately activities as a criminal who commits murder will be the recipient of having their own life taken as suitable compensatory measures. This view is supported by the utilitarian scholar John Stuart Mill who devised his theory of 'Rule Utilitarianism' in conveying rules in society that would be entered through "Strong Rule Utilitarianism". This allows us to see how a utilitarian would defend capital punishment by the State as it leads to overall happiness for the majority in suitable punishment being reached.

Furthermore, the state committing capital punishment would reduce the need to keep individuals in prison cells which not only will cause over population of prisons, but would also lead to excess financial stress if capital punishment is not used for serious crimes. The scholars Vardy and Grosch stipulate that, "half of criminals re-offend within 6 months of the prison sentence" which highlights that the reform of a criminal's character is not always achievable which leads a Utilitarian to defend the use of capital punishment by the state as a way of greater happiness being created in terms of economic and social benefits of reducing costs and lowering over crowding and prison stress.

Also, in terms of society itself, a Utilitarian would accept capital punishment as a means of protecting society from its most dangerous individuals. Many believe this method to be "the lesser of two evils" as although killing someone may be deemed unethical if the preservation of society is prioritised over the action of capital punishment by the State, a utilitarian would defend this and it will create the greatest happiness for the majority who will be safe with the criminal off the streets.

To conclude, utilitarians may defend the extensive uses of capital punishment as it will enable many people to be protected, relieve retribution and deter future criminals all of which creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Examiner's comments

A key reason why this answer is worthy of a top end Band 4 mark is because it consistently engages with the set question throughout. It avoids a “write all you know” about capital punishment by ensuring that the focus is on the utilitarian justification. The candidate demonstrates awareness that the utilitarian defence is very much associated with arguments pertaining primarily to deterrence and retribution. By highlighting these aspects, the candidate is alert to variance within the utilitarian position. Following a brief clarification of the theory, the candidate highlights the argument from deterrence before briefly drawing attention to the retributivist case and is observant in flagging up how this can be shared by Christian utilitarians, based on the lex talionis principle. A range of other possible justifications are referred to, for example, cost benefits and protecting society. To improve, the response could have been stronger on the respective justifications based on deterrence and retribution and the key utilitarian figures associated with each (deterrence – Bentham, retribution – Mill/Rachels) and as to how the argument from deterrence is the lynch pin of the utilitarian position. Overall, a very good range of relevant evidence, examples and scholarship is employed.

Band 4

Q3b “Supporters of the Just War argument cannot condemn the use of the death penalty by the State.”

Critically assess this claim. [30]

Student's response

Many believe that those who support a case for the just war argument cannot condemn using the death penalty by the state whilst others believe even by supporting the Just War theory, that the death penalty never can be accepted. For this reason, I will critically assess the view that Just War Theory supporters can't condemn using the death penalty.

Firstly, those who advocate for the Just War would argue that through the Jus AD Bellan (pre-war conditions) that the death penalty cannot be ignored. These guidelines were initially set by the scholars Aquinas, Luther, de Vitoria and Suarez who contributed to adding conditions of right intention, Just cause and proportionality to a war. In light of this, many feel that a right intention of war is subjective as illustrated by Vardy and Grosch who state, “the justification of right intention is dependent on each side in war”. Hence, many will believe that if the intentional use of the death penalty warrants ethical use, supporters of the Just War Theory will not condemn it as it will be permissible to perform.

Similarly, advocates for the Just War Theory such as Bernard Hoose would claim that proportionality is recovered. However, levels of extreme force may be a necessary evil to combat as seen through the actions of Saddam Huessin and Adolf Hitler, who terrorised civilizations during their reigns in power resulting in mass quantities of casualties including 6 million Jews in the Holocaust. In regards to Huessin who was given the death penalty, even Just War theory supporters may agree to this level of brutality as he had previously cost the lives of many innocent people and his execution may have a required task to complete. This reflects how Just War theory supporters cannot condone the death penalty as it is sometimes a necessary evil to use in cases that require forceful intervention.

This view is reflected by the Roman Catholic Church who only strictly acknowledge capital punishment, “in cases of extreme gravity.” perhaps akin to that of Huessin. In addition to this, many will see the death penalty as necessary to comply with the individuals who have committed war crimes such as espionage, treason or the carrying out of grave attacks of nuclear devastation unnecessarily. Many feel this is seen by the actions of the terrorist group ISIS where members have carried out several immoral actions such as the Manchester bombing and Barcelona attack, killing 22 and 19 innocents respectively and if these radicalists are punished by death, Just war supporters cannot condemn this as it will protect society from more acts of terror.

However, others are of the opinion that the death penalty cannot be accepted under any circumstances, even by Just War theory supporters. This is implied by the fifth

of the ten commandments. "Thou shalt not kill" reflecting on the need to preserve human life and not cast it off despite what has occurred. This idea is fully expressed by peaceful activist Ghandi who when reflecting on the Lex Talionis teaching on revenge said that "the world will become blind and deathless" which reflects how the death penalty cannot be supported even by those who follow the Just War theory traditions as it only results in further anguish caused through vengeful killing.

In addition, the death penalty can be seen as discriminatory and faultful with many more people of ethnic minorities subject to this procedure and the number of men on death row sufficiently exceeding that of women. Also, many individuals have been wrongly accused with Amnesty International working to release many convicts as a result of intangible evidence. This applies to the Just War theory in the sense that war must only be having casualties of those who fight, not the innocent, hence reflecting on how they will not support the issue of the death penalty by supporting the Just War Theory.

To conclude, I believe that by condoning the death penalty would also mean adhering to Just War legislative procedures as a whole as war should subject no individuals to the death penalty that are not actively involved in conflict.

Examiner's comments

A particular strength of this answer is that the candidate can make some connection between the Just War argument and the case for the death penalty. In the response presented the candidate attempts to pursue this connection and in doing so demonstrates a very good attempt at critical assessment with balanced argument reflected. Initially the candidate attempts to identify the connection in terms of right intention before addressing how both can be seen to be confronting necessary evil and affording protection to society. In terms of counter argument where the element of difference is considered, the candidate highlights how the death penalty violates the prohibition on killing in the Commandments before drawing attention to how capital punishment can be seen as discriminatory and to how there could be a miscarriage of justice. While this line of enquiry represents a very good attempt at using evidence and reasoning, the overall effectiveness of the response could have been stronger. Here the answer could have been more effective on the rationale that underpins the Just War argument and capital punishment, for example, maintaining the principle of self defence and the differences between both, for example, how while the Just War argument appears to have widespread support, the issue of the death penalty is more contentious; the apparent unique nature of each position – one deals with individual cases whereas the other with a state. Overall, while the response offered represents a very good attempt to engage with the set task (which it seeks to do from the start) the answer could have been more alert to some of the complexities connecting both aspects, for example, the issue of innocent suffering.

Band 4

Section B

Synoptic Assessment

Theme: Conscience, Freedom and Tolerance

Q4a With reference to **one** religious or secular view, discuss how conscience is understood.

You must support your answer with reference to at least one other unit of study. [20]

The above question could not be exemplified as the candidate's permission could not be obtained.

Q4b Consider critically the view that conscience should always be obeyed. You must refer to other aspects of human experience in your answer. [30]

The above question could not be exemplified as the candidate's permission could not be obtained.



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