



# Guiseley School Revision Support

## Subject: A-Level Philosophy AQA

Useful links:

<https://philosophylevel.com/aqa-philosophy-revision-notes/>

Michael Lacewing's webinar on epistemology (starts at 1:49):




<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0NfN1qDkQBucqEHPWcXfEQ/featured>

Revision video




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msr65QKEMQk>

Philosophy vibe YouTube channel




<https://www.youtube.com/c/philosophyvibe>

Topic	Exercise book/notes			
<b>PAPER 1 EPISTEMOLOGY</b>				
<p><b>1. WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distinction between acquaintance knowledge, ability knowledge and propositional knowledge.</li> <li>The nature of definition (including Linda Zagzebski) and how propositional knowledge may be analysed/defined.</li> </ul> <p><b>The tripartite view</b> Propositional knowledge is defined as justified true belief: S knows that p if and only if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S is justified in believing that p,</li> <li>p is true and</li> <li>S believes that p (individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions)</li> </ol> <p>Issues with the tripartite view including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the conditions are not individually necessary</li> <li>the conditions are not sufficient – cases of lucky true beliefs (including Edmund Gettier's original two counter examples):</li> </ul> <p>Responses: alternative post-Gettier analyses/definitions of knowledge including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthen the justification condition (ie infallibilism)</li> <li>add a 'no false lemmas' condition (J+T+B+N)</li> <li>replace 'justified' with 'reliably formed' (R+T+B) (ie reliabilism)</li> <li>replace 'justified' with an account of epistemic virtue (V+T+B)</li> </ul>				



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<b>PAPER 1 EPISTEMOLOGY</b>				
<p><b><u>2. PERCEPTION AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE</u></b></p> <p><b>Direct realism</b> The immediate objects of perception are mind-independent objects and their properties</p> <p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the argument from illusion</li><li>• the argument from perceptual variation</li><li>• the argument from hallucination</li><li>• the time-lag argument</li></ul> <p>and responses to these issues.</p> <p><b>Indirect realism</b> The immediate objects of perception are mind-dependent objects (sense-data) that are caused by and represent mind-independent objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Locke's primary/secondary quality distinction.</li></ul> <p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the argument that it leads to scepticism about the existence of mind-independent objects. Responses including:</li><li>• Locke's argument from the involuntary nature of our experience</li><li>• the argument from the coherence of various kinds of experience, as developed by Locke and Catharine Trotter Cockburn (attrib)</li><li>• Bertrand Russell's response that the external world is the 'best hypothesis'</li><li>• the argument from George Berkeley that we cannot know the nature of mind-independent objects because mind-dependent ideas cannot be like mind-independent objects.</li></ul>				



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<b>PAPER 1 EPISTEMOLOGY</b>				
<p><b>Berkeley's Idealism</b></p> <p>The immediate objects of perception (ie ordinary objects such as tables, chairs, etc) are mind-dependent objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arguments for idealism including Berkeley's attack on the primary/secondary quality distinction and his 'Master' argument.</li> </ul> <p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arguments from illusion and hallucination</li> <li>idealism leads to solipsism</li> <li>problems with the role played by God in Berkeley's Idealism (including how can Berkeley claim that our ideas exist within God's mind given that he believes that God cannot feel pain or have sensations?)</li> </ul> <p>and responses to these issues.</p> <p><b><u>3. REASON AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE</u></b></p> <p><b>Innatism</b></p> <p>Arguments from Plato (ie the 'slave boy' argument) and Gottfried Leibniz (ie his argument based on necessary truths).</p> <p>Empiricist responses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locke's arguments against innatism</li> <li>the mind as a 'tabula rasa' (the nature of impressions and ideas, simple and complex concepts) and issues with these responses.</li> </ul> <p><b>The intuition and deduction thesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meaning of 'intuition' and 'deduction' and the distinction between them.</li> <li>René Descartes' notion of 'clear and distinct ideas'.</li> <li>His cogito as an example of an a priori intuition.</li> <li>His arguments for the existence of God and his proof of the external world as examples of a priori deductions.</li> </ul>				



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<b>PAPER 1 EPISTEMOLOGY</b>				
<p><b>The limits of knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particular nature of philosophical scepticism and the distinction between philosophical scepticism and normal incredulity.</li> <li>• The role/function of philosophical scepticism within epistemology</li> <li>• The distinction between local and global scepticism and the (possible) global application of philosophical scepticism</li> <li>• Descartes' sceptical arguments (the three 'waves of doubt')</li> </ul> <p>Responses to scepticism: the application of the following as responses to the challenge of scepticism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Descartes' own response</li> <li>○ empiricist responses (Locke, Berkeley and Russell)</li> <li>○ reliabilism.</li> </ul>				
<b>PAPER 1 MORAL PHILOSOPHY</b>				
<p><b>1. NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meaning of good, bad, right, wrong within each of the three approaches specified below</li> <li>• Similarities and differences across the three approaches specified below</li> </ul> <p><b>Utilitarianism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The question of what is meant by 'utility' and 'maximising utility', including:</li> <li>• Jeremy Bentham's quantitative hedonistic utilitarianism (his utility calculus)</li> <li>• John Stuart Mill's qualitative hedonistic utilitarianism (higher and lower pleasures) and his 'proof' of the greatest happiness principle</li> <li>• non-hedonistic utilitarianism (including preference utilitarianism)</li> <li>• act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.</li> <li>• Issues, including:</li> <li>• whether pleasure is the only good (Nozick's experience machine)</li> <li>• fairness and individual liberty/rights (including the risk of the 'tyranny of the majority')</li> <li>• problems with calculation (including which beings to include)</li> <li>• issues around partiality</li> <li>• whether utilitarianism ignores both the moral integrity and the intentions of the individual.</li> </ul>				






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<b>PAPER 1 MORAL PHILOSOPHY</b>				
<p><b>Kantian deontological ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immanuel Kant’s account of what is meant by a ‘good will’.</li> <li>• The distinction between acting in accordance with duty and acting out of duty.</li> <li>• The distinction between hypothetical imperatives and categorical imperatives.</li> <li>• The first formulation of the categorical imperative (including the distinction between a contradiction in conception and a contradiction in will).</li> <li>• The second formulation of the categorical imperative.</li> </ul> <p>Issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clashing/competing duties</li> <li>• not all universalisable maxims are distinctly moral; not all non-universalisable maxims are immoral</li> <li>• the view that consequences of actions determine their moral value</li> <li>• Kant ignores the value of certain motives, eg love, friendship, kindness</li> <li>• morality is a system of hypothetical, rather than categorical, imperatives (Philippa Foot).</li> </ul> <p><b>Aristotelian virtue ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘The good’ for human beings: the meaning of Eudaimonia as the ‘final end’ and the relationship between Eudaimonia and pleasure.</li> <li>• The function argument and the relationship between virtues and function.</li> <li>• Aristotle’s account of virtues and vices: virtues as character traits/dispositions; the role of education/habituation in the development of a moral character; the skill analogy; the importance of feelings; the</li> </ul>				



<p>doctrine of the mean and its application to particular virtues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral responsibility: voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary actions.</li> <li>• The relationship between virtues, actions and reasons and the role of practical reasoning/practical wisdom.</li> </ul> <p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether Aristotelian virtue ethics can give sufficiently clear guidance about how to act</li> <li>• clashing/competing virtues</li> <li>• the possibility of circularity involved in defining virtuous acts and virtuous persons in terms of each other</li> <li>• whether a trait must contribute to Eudaimonia in order to be a virtue; the relationship between the good for the individual and moral good.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>2. APPLIED ETHICS</b></p> <p>Students must be able to apply the content of Normative ethical theories and meta-ethics to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stealing</li> <li>• simulated killing (within computer games, plays, films etc)</li> <li>• eating animals</li> <li>• telling lies.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. META-ETHICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The origins of moral principles: reason, emotion/attitudes, or society.</li> <li>• The distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism about ethical language.</li> </ul> <p><b>Moral realism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are mind-independent moral properties/facts.</li> <li>• Moral naturalism (cognitivist) – including naturalist forms of utilitarianism (including Bentham) and of virtue ethics.</li> <li>• Moral non-naturalism (cognitivist) – including intuitionism and Moore’s ‘open question argument’ against all reductive metaethical theories and the Naturalistic Fallacy.</li> </ul>				
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<b>PAPER 1 MORAL PHILOSOPHY</b>				
<p>Issues that may arise for the theories above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hume's Fork and A J Ayer's verification principle</li><li>• Hume's argument that moral judgements are not beliefs since beliefs alone could not motivate us</li><li>• Hume's is-ought gap</li><li>• John Mackie's argument from relativity and his arguments from queerness.</li></ul> <p><b>3. MORAL ANTI-REALISM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are no mind-independent moral properties/facts.</li><li>• Error Theory (cognitivist) - Mackie</li><li>• Emotivism (non-cognitivist) – Ayer</li><li>• Prescriptivism (non-cognitivist) – Richard Hare</li><li>• Issues that may arise for the theories above, including:</li><li>• whether anti-realism can account for how we use moral language, including moral reasoning, persuading, disagreeing etc.</li><li>• the problem of accounting for moral progress</li><li>• whether anti-realism becomes moral nihilism.</li></ul>				



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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF GOD</b>				
<p><b><u>1. THE CONCEPT AND NATURE OF 'GOD'</u></b></p> <p>God's attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God as omniscient, omnipotent, supremely good (omnibenevolent), and the meaning(s) of these divine attributes</li> <li>• competing views on such a being's relationship to time, including God being timeless (eternal) and God being within time (everlasting).</li> <li>• arguments for the incoherence of the concept of God including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the paradox of the stone</li> <li>• the Euthyphro dilemma</li> <li>• the compatibility, or otherwise, of the existence of an omniscient God and free human beings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>2. ARGUMENTS RELATING TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD</u></b></p> <p>For the arguments below, students should pay particular attention to nuances in the logical form of the arguments (deductive, inductive etc), the strengths of the conclusions (God does exist, God must exist etc) and the nature of God assumed or defended by the argument.</p> <p><b>Ontological arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Anselm's ontological argument.</li> <li>• Descartes' ontological argument.</li> <li>• Norman Malcolm's ontological argument.</li> <li>• Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaunilo's 'perfect island' objection</li> <li>• Empiricist objections to <i>a priori</i> arguments for existence</li> <li>• Kant's objection based on existence not being a predicate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Teleological/design arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design argument from analogy (as presented by Hume).</li> <li>• William Paley's design argument: argument from spatial order/purpose.</li> <li>• Richard Swinburne's design argument: argument from temporal order/regularity.</li> </ul>				








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<p>Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hume's objections to the design argument from analogy</li> <li>• the problem of spatial disorder (as posed by Hume and Paley)</li> <li>• the design argument fails as it is an argument from a unique case (Hume)</li> <li>• whether God is the best or only explanation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cosmological arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kalām argument (an argument from temporal causation).</li> <li>• Aquinas' 1st Way (argument from motion), 2nd Way (argument from atemporal causation) and 3rd way (an argument from contingency).</li> <li>• Descartes' argument based on his continuing existence (an argument from causation).</li> <li>• Leibniz's argument from the principle of sufficient reason (an argument from contingency).</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the possibility of an infinite series</li> <li>• Hume's objection to the 'causal principle'</li> <li>• the argument commits the fallacy of composition (Russell)</li> <li>• the impossibility of a necessary being (Hume and Russell).</li> </ul> <p><b>The Problem of Evil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether God's attributes can be reconciled with the existence of evil.</li> <li>• The nature of moral evil and natural evil.</li> <li>• The logical and evidential forms of the problem of evil.</li> </ul>				



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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF GOD</b>				
<p>Responses to these issues and issues arising from these responses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Free Will Defence (including Alvin Plantinga)</li> <li>soul-making (including John Hick).</li> </ul> <p><b>3. RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism about religious language.</li> <li>The empiricist/logical positivist challenges to the status of metaphysical (here, religious) language: the verification principle and verification/falsification (Ayer).</li> <li>Hick's response to Ayer (eschatological verification) and issues arising from that response.</li> <li>Further responses: the 'University Debate'</li> <li>Anthony Flew on falsification (Wisdom's 'Gardener')</li> <li>Basil Mitchell's response to Flew (the Partisan)</li> <li>Hare's response to Flew (bliks and the lunatic) and issues arising from those responses.</li> </ul>				
<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF THE MIND</b>				
<p><b>1. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'MIND'?</b></p> <p>Features of mental states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All or at least some mental states have phenomenal properties</li> <li>Some, but not all, philosophers use the term 'qualia' to refer to these properties, where 'qualia' are defined as 'intrinsic and non-intentional phenomenal properties that are introspectively accessible'</li> <li>All or at least some mental states have intentional properties (ie intentionality).</li> </ul> <p><b>2. DUALIST THEORIES</b></p> <p>Substance dualism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minds exist and are not identical to bodies or to parts of bodies.</li> <li>The indivisibility argument for substance dualism (Descartes).</li> </ul>				






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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF THE MIND</b>				
<p>Responses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the mental is divisible in some sense</li> <li>not everything thought of as physical is divisible.</li> <li>The conceivability argument for substance dualism (expressed without reference to God) (Descartes).</li> <li>Responses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mind without body is not conceivable</li> <li>what is conceivable may not be metaphysically possible</li> <li>what is metaphysically possible tells us nothing about the actual world.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Property dualism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are at least some mental properties that are neither reducible to nor supervenient upon physical properties.</li> <li>The ‘philosophical zombies’ argument for property dualism (David Chalmers).</li> <li>Responses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a 'philosophical zombie'/a 'zombie' world is not conceivable</li> <li>what is conceivable may not be metaphysically possible</li> <li>what is metaphysically possible tells us nothing about the actual world.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The ‘knowledge/Mary’ argument for property dualism (Frank Jackson).</li> </ul> <p>Responses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain ability knowledge (the 'ability knowledge' response).</li> <li>Mary does not gain new propositional knowledge but does gain acquaintance knowledge (the ‘acquaintance knowledge’ response).</li> <li>Mary gains new propositional knowledge, but this is knowledge of physical facts that she already knew in a different way (the ‘New Knowledge / Old Fact’ response).</li> </ul>				






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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF THE MIND</b>				
<p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues facing dualism, including:</li> <li>• The problem of other minds</li> <li>• Responses including:</li> <li>• the argument from analogy</li> <li>• the existence of other minds is the best hypothesis.</li> <li>• Dualism makes a "category mistake" (Gilbert Ryle)</li> </ul> <p>Issues facing interactionist dualism, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the conceptual interaction problem (as articulated by Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia)</li> <li>• the empirical interaction problem.</li> <li>• Issues facing epiphenomenalist dualism, including:</li> <li>• the challenge posed by introspective self-knowledge</li> <li>• the challenge posed by the phenomenology of our mental life (ie as involving causal connections, both psychological and psycho-physical)</li> <li>• the challenge posed by natural selection/evolution.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>3. PHYSICALIST THEORIES</u></b></p> <p>Physicalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything is physical or supervenes upon the physical (this includes properties, events, objects and any substance(s) that exist).</li> <li>• Philosophical behaviourism:</li> <li>• 'Hard' behaviourism: all propositions about mental states can be reduced without loss of meaning to propositions that exclusively use the language of physics to talk about bodily states/movements (including Carl Hempel).</li> <li>• 'Soft' behaviourism: propositions about mental states are propositions about behavioural dispositions (ie propositions that use ordinary language) (including Gilbert Ryle).</li> </ul>				



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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF THE MIND</b>				
<p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dualist arguments applied to philosophical behaviourism</li> <li>the distinctness of mental states from behaviour (including Hilary Putnam's 'Super-Spartans' and perfect actors)</li> <li>issues defining mental states satisfactorily due to (a) circularity and (b) the multiple realisability of mental states in behaviour</li> <li>the asymmetry between self-knowledge and knowledge of other people's mental states.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mind-brain type identity theory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All mental states are identical to brain states ('ontological' reduction) although 'mental state' and 'brain state' are not synonymous (so not an 'analytic' reduction).</li> </ul> <p>Issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dualist arguments applied to mind-brain type identity theory</li> <li>issues with providing the type identities (the multiple realisability of mental states).</li> </ul> <p><b>Eliminative materialism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some or all common-sense ("folk-psychological") mental states/properties do not exist and our common-sense understanding is radically mistaken (as defended by Patricia Churchland and Paul Churchland).</li> <li>Issues including:</li> <li>our certainty about the existence of our mental states takes priority over other considerations</li> <li>folk-psychology has good predictive and explanatory power (and so is the best hypothesis)</li> <li>the articulation of eliminative materialism as a theory is self-refuting.</li> </ul>				



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<b>PAPER 2 METAPHYSICS OF THE MIND</b>				
<b>4. FUNCTIONALISM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Functionalism: all mental states can be characterised in terms of functional roles which can be multiply realised.</li><li>• Issues, including:</li><li>• the possibility of a functional duplicate with different qualia (inverted qualia)</li><li>• the possibility of a functional duplicate with no mentality/qualia (Ned Block's China thought experiment)</li><li>• the 'knowledge'/Mary argument can be applied to functional facts (no amount of facts about function suffices to explain qualia).</li></ul>				