



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND PHILOSOPHY

BDP 3101: METAPHYSICS II

SPECIAL EXAM

Date: June 2nd 2022

Time: 08:00 – 10:00

INSTRUCTIONS: This exam has Six Questions. Answer **Question 1** (30 marks) and **any other three** (10 marks each) to come to a total of 60 marks.

QUESTION 1 (30 marks)

- a. Explain the three reasons why Aquinas, in his commentary to the prologue of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, proposes three main reasons why *Metaphysics* is the highest science, thus leading to the names First Philosophy, *Metaphysics* and Theology. (10 marks)

- b. Define Nominalism and explain why it is anti-metaphysical with reference to the four causes; matter, form, agent and final. (10 marks)

- c. What is Post-humanism, how is it anti-metaphysical and who are some of its proponents? (5 marks)

- d. What role does trans-humanism play in post-humanism? Illustrate your explanation with an example. (5 marks)

QUESTION 2 (10 marks)

Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

There has arisen in our time a most singular fancy: the fancy that when things go very wrong we need a practical man. It would be far truer to say, that when things go very wrong we need an unpractical man. Certainly, at least, we need a theorist. A practical man means a man accustomed to mere daily practice, to the way things commonly work. When things will not work, you must have the thinker, the man who has some doctrine about why they work at all. It is wrong to fiddle while Rome is burning; but it is quite right to study the theory of hydraulics while Rome is burning.

It is then necessary to drop one's daily agnosticism and attempt *rerum cognoscere causas* (*to know the cause of things*). If your aeroplane has a slight indisposition, a handy man may mend it. But, if it is seriously ill, it is all the more likely that some absent-minded old professor with wild white hair will have to be dragged out of a college or laboratory to analyze the evil. The more complicated the smash, the whiter-haired and more absent-minded will be the theorist who is needed to deal with it; and in some extreme cases, no one but the man (probably insane) who invented your flying-ship could possibly say what was the matter with it.

- a. In view of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book A.1, why does Chesterton consider it an error to call upon a practical man "when things go very wrong?" (5 marks)
- b. Briefly discuss how this passage relates to the debate of whether the experimental sciences are superior to the humanities, and how this conflict can be resolved. (5 marks)

QUESTION 3 (10 marks)

Read the text below by Friedrich Nietzsche and answer the questions that follow.

"Where is God gone?" he called out. "I mean to tell you! *We have killed him*,—you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it now move? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below?"

Explain briefly five consequences of Nietzsche's "death of God" in modern society.

QUESTION 4 (10 marks)

Martin Heidegger famously said that, "Man is a being meant for death." Explain what he meant by this and how his philosophy is anti-metaphysical with respect to final and formal causality.

QUESTION 5 (10 Marks)

Jean Paul Sartre claimed that "existence precedes essence". Explain what he meant by this and discuss whether it is true.

QUESTION 6 (10 Marks)

Explain how Henri Bergson's idea of the Elan Vital is anti-metaphysical, especially with regard to formal and final causality.