



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND PHILOSOPHY
END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION
BDP 4101 READINGS OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHERS

DATE: 29th October 2024

TIME: 10:30 – 12:30

Instructions

1. This examination consists of 7 questions.
2. Answer **ALL** questions in Section A (COMPULSORY) and any other **THREE** questions in Section B. (Total 60 marks)

SECTION A (30 marks)

1. Some people say that it is irrelevant to read the works of philosophers from the past. Some even declare that for Africans, and for women, it is demeaning to know and learn the ideas of a "dead white male". What arguments would you use to refute such claims? (10 marks)
2. As we have seen from the readings covered throughout the course, contemporary philosophy is characteristically ideological. Explain four major characteristics of ideologies and justify each explanation with an example from the philosophers we have studied. (20 marks)

SECTION B (10 marks each. Do any three)

3. "...aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful consists, to a large extent, in the fact that, when we enter the state of pure contemplation, we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves." (Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*)
 - a. What problem does Schopenhauer have with the concept of Will, and how exactly does aesthetic pleasure come in as a remedy? (5 marks)
 - b. Apart from aesthetic pleasure, what other remedies does Schopenhauer propose, and how does it compare with aesthetic pleasure? (5 marks)

4. “I suggest that we think of liberalism as a certain way of drawing the map of the social and political world. ... Confronting this world, liberal theorists preached and practiced an art of separation.” (Michael Walzer, *Liberalism: The Art of Separation*)

As Michael Walzer calls Liberalism “The art of separation,” Identify and explain the four kinds of separation that arose, and what kind of liberalism they each created. (10 marks)

5. “The law is this: that each of our leading conceptions -- each branch of our knowledge -- passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical, or abstract; and the scientific, or positive.” (Auguste Comte, *Course on Positive Philosophy*)

Explain what each of these stages entails, supporting each explanation with a relevant example. (10 marks)

6. “Three metamorphoses of the spirit do I designate to you: how the spirit becometh a camel, the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*)

Explain what each of these metamorphoses of the spirit mean and how they unfold in order to create the child. How does the child represent the Superman? (10 marks)

7. “There is unquestionably some kind of advance shown in science, but if we are perfectly honest, a similar kind of advance cannot be discovered in philosophy.” (Moritz Schlick, *The Future of Philosophy*)

a. How would Thomas Kuhn disprove Schlick’s statement that science advances gradually? (6 marks)

b. Is Schlick right to declare that there are no advancements in philosophy? (4 marks)