**PH145: PLATO AND DESCARTES**

**Essay Questions**

**Module Tutors: Dr. David Woods (Plato) and Prof. Stephen Butterfill (Descartes)**

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**Assessment:** 2 x max 2,000 word essays - one focusing on Plato, the other focusing on

Descartes (each worth 50% of the module marks).

**Plato Essay Questions**

Q1. What is Socrates’ best argument against Thrasymachus in Republic Book I? Is it

convincing?

Q2. How does Glaucon argue for his proposed classification of the good of justice? Is his

argument successful?

Q3. Was Plato a feminist?

Q4. What is Plato’s attitude towards poetry? Is it defensible?

Q5. Is there a fallacy in Plato’s argument that being just is good for one?

Q6. Why does Plato think that philosophers should rule? Is he right?

**Descartes Essay Questions**

Q7. Does Descartes provide reasons which give us possible grounds for doubt about all things?

[*Harder variant on Q7 which you may answer instead*] What, according to Descartes, is the relation between a sensory perception and the thing perceived?

Q8. How does Descartes justify the claim that I can know that I exist? Does he succeed?

Q9. What is the purported problem of the Cartesian Circle? How, if at all, can it be avoided while staying close to Descartes’ arguments?

Q10. How does Descartes explain the possibility of error? Is his explanation correct?

Q11. What does Descartes’ argument from dreaming aim to show? What is the argument? Does it succeed?

Q12. How does Descartes explain the possibility of knowledge of the external world? Is his explanation correct?