**PH145: PLATO AND DESCARTES**

**Essay Questions**

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

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**Assessment:** 2 x 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. What does Descartes hope to achieve in Meditation I? Is he successful?

Q8. How does Descartes justify the claim that I can know that I exist? Is he right?

Q9. What is the purported problem of the Cartesian Circle? How, if at all, can

Descartes solve it?

Q10. What is Descartes’ argument for the real distinction between mind and body? Is it

convincing?

Q11. What is Descartes’ best argument for the claim that God exists? Is it successful?

Q12. Critically assess Descartes’ explanation of the possibility of knowledge of the

external world.