

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2013

GCE Government and Politics
Ideological Traditions

6GP04 4B

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The standard of responses to this unit were broadly in line with January examination sessions in previous years. Although there were some impressive answers, many responses were under-developed or failed to demonstrate consistently appropriate levels of conceptual knowledge. In view of the relative small entry for this examination, the remarks about performance on particular questions may only apply to a small number of centres.

Question 1

There were some weak responses to this question, especially concerning when candidates appeared to have little understanding of the role and significance of toleration. In many cases, time was wasted explaining points of tension between liberalism and multiculturalism, rather than links.

Question 2

Most candidates who attempted this question had at least a basic awareness of patriarchy, but the main weakness was that in discussing the importance of patriarchy, responses often discussed the broader issue of gender inequality. The systematic and institutionalised nature of patriarchy was therefore often missed, as was its particular link to radical feminism.

Question 3

Weaker responses to this question sometimes did little more than provide a largely descriptive account of forms of nationalism, with inadequate attention being given to the concept of the nation-state. Strong responses, however, often demonstrated an insightful grasp of liberal nationalism in particular.

Question 4

There were many informed and some very impressive answers to this question. In the strongest responses, candidates often examined the work and ideas of key eco-feminist theorists. Even weaker responses usually recognised basic links between feminism and ecologism.

Question 5

Having made some attempt to define diversity, a surprising large proportion of responses to this question struggled to highlight relevant multiculturalist arguments. Of particular concern was the fact that the core issue of cultural embeddedness and its benefits was sometimes ignored.

Question 6

This was a very popular question, and there were some very strong responses. Very few candidates were unable to provide an account of basic differences between liberal feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism. Stronger responses were, in addition, able to analyse and evaluate tensions between equality feminism and difference feminism, with some even addressing traditions such as black feminism and postmodern feminism.

Question 7

A large proportion of candidates who answered this question demonstrated an awareness of the forward-looking aspects of liberal nationalism and, often, anti-colonial nationalism and, by contrast, the backward-looking features of conservative nationalism in particular. The main differentiator, however, was whether the responses were essentially descriptive or else analytical and evaluative. Strong responses often acknowledged that forward-looking and backward-looking features commonly co-exist within the same nationalist sub-tradition.

Question 8

Although this was the least popular essay question, responses to it were often highly impressive. When candidates understood ecologism, they seem to understand it very well. Therefore, there were some strong accounts of both anti-capitalist and pro-capitalist tendencies within ecologism and a good evaluation of their respective significance. Some candidates did this by looking at sub-traditions, such as eco-socialism and 'green capitalism', while others did it equally successfully by analysing core ecological themes, such as sustainability, and reflecting on their implications for capitalism.

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