

Philosophy — Optional Syllabus

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination

Two thousand years of asking why — Western and Indian philosophy, plus socio-political thought.

Paper I	250 marks	3 hours
Paper II	250 marks	3 hours
Optional total	500 marks	Counts toward the Mains merit

Paper I syllabus 250 marks · 3 hours

History and Problems of Philosophy

- 1. Plato and Aristotle : Ideas; Substance; Form and Matter; Causation; Actuality and Potentiality.
- 2. Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz); Cartesian Method and Certain Knowledge; Substance; God; Mind-Body Dualism; Determinism and Freedom.
- 3. Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) : Theory of Knowledge; Substance and Qualities; Self and God; Scepticism.
- 4. Kant: Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments; Space and Time; Categories; Ideas of Reason; Antinomies; Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God.
- 5. Hegel : Dialectical Method; Absolute Idealism.
- 6. Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein : Defence of Commonsense; Refutation of Idealism; Logical Atomism; Logical Constructions; Incomplete Symbols; Picture Theory of Meaning; Saying and Showing.
- 7. Logical Positivism : Verification Theory of Meaning; Rejection of Metaphysics; Linguistic Theory of Necessary Propositions.
- 8. Later Wittgenstein : Meaning and Use; Language-games; Critique of Private Language.
- 9. Phenomenology (Husserl): Method; Theory of Essences; Avoidance of Psychologism.
- 10. Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger): Existence and Essence; Choice, Responsibility and Authentic Existence; Being-in-the-world and Temporality.
- 11. Quine and Strawson : Critique of Empiricism; Theory of Basic Particulars and Persons.
- 12. Carvaka : Theory of Knowledge; Rejection of Transcendent Entities.
- 13. Jainism : Theory of Reality; Saptabhanginaya; Bondage and Liberation.
- 14. Schools of Buddhism : Prat Ityasamutpada; Ksanikavada, Nairatmyavada.
- 15. Nyaya—Vaishesika : Theory of Categories; Theory of Appearance; Theory of Pramana; Self, Liberation; God; Proofs for the Existence of God; Theory of Causation; Atomistic Theory of Creation.
- 16. Samkhya; Prakrit; Purusa; Causation; Liberation.
- 17. Yoga; Citta; Cittavrtti; Klesas; Samadhi; Kaivalya.

- 18. Mimamsa: Theory of Knowledge.
- 19. Schools of Vedanta : Brahman; Isvara; Atman; Jiva; Jagat; Maya; Avidya; Adhyasa; Moksha; Aprthaksiddhi; Pancavidhabheda.
- 20. Aurobindo: Evolution, Involution; Integral Yoga.

Paper II syllabus 250 marks · 3 hours

Socio-Political Philosophy

- 1. Social and Political Ideals : Equality, Justice, Liberty.
- 2. Sovereignty : Austin, Bodin, Laski, Kautilya.
- 3. Individual and State : Rights; Duties and Accountability.
- 4. Forms of Government : Monarchy; Theocracy and Democracy.
- 5. Political Ideologies: Anarchism; Marxism and Socialism.
- 6. Humanism; Secularism; Multi-culturalism.
- 7. Crime and Punishment : Corruption, Mass Violence, Genocide, Capital Punishment.
- 8. Development and Social Progress.
- 9. Gender Discrimination : Female Foeticide, Land and Property Rights; Empowerment.
- 10. Caste Discrimination : Gandhi and Ambedkar.

Philosophy of Religion

- 1. Notions of God : Attributes; Relation to Man and the World. (Indian and Western).
- 2. Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique (Indian and Western).
- 3. Problem of Evil.
- 4. Soul : Immortality; Rebirth and Liberation.
- 5. Reason, Revelation and Faith.
- 6. Religious Experience : Nature and Object (Indian and Western).
- 7. Religion without God.
- 8. Religion and Morality.
- 9. Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Absolute Truth.
- 10. Nature of Religious Language : Analogical and Symbolic; Cognitivist and Non-cognitive.

Syllabus as per the official UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination notification. Study notes for this optional are being added on RaahUPSC — raahupsc.com.