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Salient Features

- Timely and comprehensive coverage of the syllabus through a structured test schedule.
- Diverse and relevant question bank (theory based, application based and direct questions) to align with important topics and frequently asked questions/Previous Year Questions.
- Use of suitable examples, illustrations, flow charts and analogies for value addition.
- Use of standard books, authentic sources and scholarly articles in creating model answers.
- Observance of the Commission standards during evaluation process of answer sheets.

Test Code	Date	Syllabus
Test-1 OPT-PHL-2401	17 December, 2023 (Sunday)	Plato and Aristotle, Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz), Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume), Kant, Hegel
Test-2 OPT-PHL-2402	24 December, 2023 (Sunday)	Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein, Logical Positivism, Later Wittgenstein, Phenomenology (Husserl), Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger), Quine and Strawson
Test-3 OPT-PHL-2403	7 January, 2024 (Sunday)	Carvaka, Jainism, Schools of Buddhism, Samkhya, Yoga
Test-4 OPT-PHL-2404	21 January, 2024 (Sunday)	Nyaya—Vaiesesika, Mimamsa, Schools of Vedanta, Aurobindo
Test-5 OPT-PHL-2405	4 February, 2024 (Sunday)	Socio-Political Philosophy
Test-6 OPT-PHL-2406	18 February, 2024 (Sunday)	Philosophy of Religion
Test-7 OPT-PHL-2407	30 June, 2024 (Sunday)	Plato and Aristotle, Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz), Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume), Kant, Hegel
Test-8 OPT-PHL-2408	07 July, 2024 (Sunday)	Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein, Logical Positivism, Later Wittgenstein, Phenomenology (Husserl), Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger), Quine and Strawson

Test Code	Date	Syllabus
Test-9 OPT-PHL-2409	14 July, 2024 (Sunday)	Carvaka, Jainism, Schools of Buddhism, Samkhya, Yoga
Test-10 OPT-PHL-2410	21 July, 2024 (Sunday)	Nyaya—Vaiesesika, Mimamsa, Schools of Vedanta, Aurobindo
Test-11 OPT-PHL-2411	28 July, 2024 (Sunday)	Socio-Political Philosophy
Test-12 OPT-PHL-2412	04 August, 2024 (Sunday)	Philosophy of Religion
Test-13 OPT-PHL-2413	18 August, 2024 (Sunday)	Full Length Paper-I
Test-14 OPT-PHL-2414		Full Length Paper-II
Test-15 OPT-PHL-2415	01 September, 2024 (Sunday)	Full Length Paper-I
Test-16 OPT-PHL-2416		Full Length Paper-II

*For detailed breakup of syllabus, kindly refer to the subsequent pages.



Test Schedule

Test Code	Test Date	Subject
Test-1 OPT-PHL-2401	17 December, 2023 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Plato and Aristotle: Ideas, Substance, Form and Matter, Causation, Actuality and Potentiality.● Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz): Cartesian Method and Certain Knowledge, Substance, God, Mind-Body Dualism, Determinism and Freedom.● Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume): Theory of Knowledge, Substance and Qualities, Self and God, Skepticism● Kant: Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments, Space and Time, Categories, Ideas of Reason, Antinomies, Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God.● Hegel: Dialectical Method, Absolute Idealism
Test-2 OPT-PHL-2402	24 December, 2023 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein: Defence of Common Sense, Refutation of Idealism, Logical Atomism, Logical Constructions, Incomplete Symbols, Picture Theory of Meaning, Saying and Showing.● Logical Positivism: Verification Theory of Meaning, Rejection of Metaphysics, Linguistic Theory of Necessary Propositions.● Later Wittgenstein: Meaning and Use, Language-games, Critique of Private Language.● Phenomenology (Husserl): Method, Theory of Essences, Avoidance of Psychologism.● Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger): Existence and Essence, Choice, Responsibility and Authentic Existence, Being-in-the-world and Temporality.● Quine and Strawson: Critique of Empiricism, Theory of Basic Particulars and Persons
Test-3 OPT-PHL-2403	7 January, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Carvaka: Theory of Knowledge, Rejection of Transcendent Entities.● Jainism: Theory of Reality, Saptabhanginaya, Bondage and Liberation● Schools of Buddhism: Pratityasamutpada, Ksanikavada, Nairatmyavada● Samkhya: Prakriti, Purusa, Causation, Liberation● Yoga: Citta, Cittavrtti, Klesas, Samadhi, Kaivalya
Test-4 OPT-PHL-2404	21 January, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Nyaya—Vaiesesika: 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● Mimamsa: Theory of Knowledge● Schools of Vedanta: Brahman, Isvara, Atman, Jiva, Jagat, Maya, Avidya, Adhyasa, Moksa, Aprthaksiddhi, Pancavidhabheda● Aurobindo: Evolution, Involution, Integral Yoga



<p>Test-5 OPT-PHL-2405</p>	<p>4 February, 2024 (Sunday)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social and Political Ideals: Equality, Justice, Liberty ● Sovereignty: Austin, Bodin, Laski, Kautilya ● Individual and State: Rights, Duties, Accountability ● Forms of Government: Monarchy, Theocracy and Democracy. ● Political Ideologies: Anarchism, Marxism and Socialism ● Humanism; Secularism; Multiculturalism ● Crime and Punishment: Corruption, Mass Violence, Genocide, Capital Punishment. ● Development and Social Progress ● Gender Discrimination: Female Foeticide, Land and Property Rights, Empowerment ● Caste Discrimination: Gandhi and Ambedkar
<p>Test-6 OPT-PHL-2406</p>	<p>18 February, 2024 (Sunday)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notions of God: Attributes; Relation to Man and the World. (Indian and Western). ● Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique (Indian and Western). ● Problem of Evil. ● Soul: Immortality; Rebirth and Liberation. ● Reason, Revelation and Faith. ● Religious Experience: Nature and Object (Indian and Western). ● Religion without God. ● Religion and Morality. ● Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Absolute Truth. ● Nature of Religious Language: Analogical and Symbolic; Cognitivist and Non-cognitive.
<p>Test-7 OPT-PHL-2407</p>	<p>30 June, 2024 (Sunday)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plato and Aristotle: Ideas, Substance, Form and Matter, Causation, Actuality, Potentiality. ● Rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz): Cartesian Method and Certain Knowledge, Substance, God, Mind-Body Dualism, Determinism, Freedom. ● Empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume): Theory of Knowledge, Substance and Qualities, Self and God, Skepticism ● Kant: Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments, Space and Time, Categories, Ideas of Reason, Antinomies, Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God. ● Hegel: Dialectical Method, Absolute Idealism



Test-8 OPT-PHL-2408	07 July, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Moore, Russell and Early Wittgenstein: Defence of Common Sense, Refutation of Idealism, Logical Atomism, Logical Constructions, Incomplete Symbols, Picture Theory of Meaning, Saying and Showing.● Logical Positivism: Verification Theory of Meaning, Rejection of Metaphysics, Linguistic Theory of Necessary Propositions.● Later Wittgenstein: Meaning and Use, Language-games, Critique of Private Language.● Phenomenology (Husserl): Method, Theory of Essences, Avoidance of Psychologism.● Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sarte, Heidegger): Existence and Essence, Choice, Responsibility, Authentic Existence, Being-in-the-world and Temporality.● Quine and Strawson: Critique of Empiricism, Theory of Basic Particulars and Persons
Test-9 OPT-PHL-2409	14 July, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Carvaka: Theory of Knowledge, Rejection of Transcendent Entities.● Jainism: Theory of Reality, Saptabhanginaya, Bondage, Liberation● Schools of Buddhism: Pratityasamutpada, Ksanikavada, Nairatmyavada● Samkhya: Prakrit, Purusa, Causation, Liberation● Yoga: Citta, Cittavrtti, Klesas, Samadhi, Kaivalya
Test-10 OPT-PHL-2410	21 July, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Nyaya—Vaiesesika: 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● Mimamsa: Theory of Knowledge● Schools of Vedanta: Brahman, Isvara, Atman, Jiva, Jagat, Maya, Avida, Adhyasa, Moksa, Aprthaksiddhi, Pancavidhabheda● Aurobindo: Evolution, Involution, Integral Yoga
Test-11 OPT-PHL-2411	28 July, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social and Political Ideals: Equality, Justice, Liberty● Sovereignty: Austin, Bodin, Laski, Kautilya● Individual and State: Rights, Duties, Accountability● Forms of Government: Monarchy, Theocracy, Democracy.● Political Ideologies: Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism● Humanism; Secularism; Multiculturalism● Crime and Punishment: Corruption, Mass Violence, Genocide, Capital Punishment.● Development and Social Progress● Gender Discrimination: Female Foeticide, Land and Property Rights, Empowerment● Caste Discrimination: Gandhi and Ambedkar



Test-12 OPT-PHL-2412	04 August, 2024 (Sunday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Notions of God: Attributes; Relation to Man and the World. (Indian and Western).● Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique (Indian and Western).● Problem of Evil.● Soul: Immortality; Rebirth and Liberation.● Reason, Revelation and Faith.● Religious Experience: Nature and Object (Indian and Western).● Religion without God.● Religion and Morality.● Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Absolute Truth.● Nature of Religious Language: Analogical and Symbolic; Cognitivist and Non-cognitive.
Test-13 OPT-PHL-2413	18 August, 2024 (Sunday)	Full Length Paper-I
Test-14 OPT-PHL-2414		Full Length Paper-II
Test-15 OPT-PHL-2415	01 September, 2024 (Sunday)	Full Length Paper-I
Test-16 OPT-PHL-2416		Full Length Paper-II

UPSC (2023) & Drishti IAS Mains Test Series (Philosophy Optional) Comparative Analysis

Paper 1

Test Series (Code)	Question Code	Drishti IAS Test Series Question	UPSC Question Number	UPSC Question	Marks
2315	4(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Knowledge requires both concepts and precepts.' Discuss 	1. (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Precepts without concepts are blind and concepts without precepts are empty." In the light of this statement discuss how Kant reconciles rationalism with empiricism. 	10
2307	8(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss the dialectical method in the philosophy of Hegel. How does this method help in realising the Absolute? 	1. (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "History is a process of dialectical change." In the light of this statement discuss Hegel's approach in understanding history. 	10
2307	1(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give a critical evaluation on Spinoza's conception of freedom of the individual. 	1. (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "That thing is said to be free which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature, and is determined to action by itself alone". Discuss Spinoza's views on freedom and determinism in the light of the above statement. 	10
2301 2307	6(c) 6(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is synthetic a priori judgment possible in Kant's concept of knowledge? Discuss with examples. ● Discuss with examples the possibility of synthetic a priori judgment in Kant's philosophy. 	1 (e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the main arguments offered by Kant to prove that apriori synthetic judgements are possible? Discuss with examples. 	10
2301	2(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain how Locke refute innate ideas. 	2 (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss Descartes' theory of innate ideas and the grounds on which Locke refutes it. 	15
2302	3(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enumerate the reasons given by Logical Positivists to show that metaphysical sentences are meaningless. Discuss whether verification theory of meaning can account for the meaningfulness of all scientific sentences. 	3 (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the rejection of metaphysics as proposed by Logical Positivists relate to problem of meaning or problem of knowledge or nature of things or all of them together ? Discuss with suitable examples. 	20
2308	5(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring out the significance of 'bracketing' in Husserl phenomenology. 	3 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elucidate the significance of bracketing and reduction in Husserl's phenomenological method. 	15

2302	8(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give reasons as to why Strawson claimed the concept of a person as primitive concept. Discuss whether Strawson accepted Cartesianism and No-ownership theory in formulation of concept of persons? 	4 (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why does Strawson consider person to be a primitive concept ? What implication does it have for the mind-body dualism? Discuss. 	20
2315	3(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why did Wittgenstein abandon his Picture theory of meaning? Did 'Use theory of meaning' fix problems of language? Explain in detail. 	4 (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What were the main reasons that led Wittgenstein to shift from picture-theory of meaning to use-theory of meaning. Critically discuss. 	15
2310	4(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the Vaiśeṣika conception of Abhāva and its different forms. 	5 (d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present an account of Vaisesika's view of negation in the light of their statement "Negation always has a counterpositive and absolute negation is an impossibility." 	10
2310	8(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the position of Supermind in the metaphysical scheme of Aurobindo's philosophy. 	5 (e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the nature and role of Supermind in evolution as per Aurobindo's philosophy. 	10
2315	7(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is Anuplabdhi? How do Prabhākara and Kumārila differ from one another regarding Anuplabdhi? Clearly illustrate the difference. 	6 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present Bhatta's view of anupalabdhi (non-cognition) as a valid means of knowledge. 	15
2304	6(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does liberation differ in Advaita and Vishishtadvaita-Vedanta? 	7 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liberation is defined by Advaita Vedantins as 'attainment of that which is already attained'. How does Sankara illustrate this statement. Discuss with your own comments. 	15
2309	7(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain cittavṛtti and its effects according to Yoga philosophy. 	7 (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain Chitta and its modifications in the philosophy of Yoga. Why does Yoga philosophy prescribe cessation of modifications of Chitta? Give reasons in support of your answer. 	15
2309	7(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is Sāmkhya theory of causation different from that of Nyāya theory of causation? Explain. 	8 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write a note on Nyaya notion of Prgabdhāva (prior non-existence). How does this notion help Naiyyikas in defending their position on causation against the Sāmkhya view of causation? Critically discuss. 	15

Paper 2

Test Series (Code)	Question Code	Drishti IAS Test Series Question	UPSC Question Number	UPSC Question	Marks
2311	8(b)	● “Coparcenary rights to daughters in Hindu Undivided Family is a corrective step to end gender based discrimination in India.” Discuss.	1 (c)	● Do you agree that the rights concerning land and property have empowered women? Discuss.	10
2314	3(b)	● Explain Laski’s critique of sovereignty.	2 (a)	● Elucidate why the absolute nature of sovereignty was rejected by Laski.	20
2305	6(b)	● How do you evaluate gender discrimination in the context of female foeticide?	3 (c)	● How does gender discrimination lead to female foeticide and social imbalance? Discuss.	15
2311	8(a)	● “Secularism in the Indian context is not rejection of religion but a fellowship of religions.” Discuss.	4 (c)	● Secularism is not a rejection of religion but acceptance of all religions. Discuss.	15
2314	5(d)	● Comment on Personalistic notion of God.	5 (a)	● Elucidate the personalistic and impersonalistic aspects of God	10
2312	4(b) 1(e)	● Religion is the basic premise for the ethical and moral system of human beings. Comment. ● Morality as ground for belief in God. Critically Examine.	5 (c)	● Does religion influence the moral behaviour? Explain the interactive relation between religion and morality.	10
2312	2(b)	● Evaluate the arguments of the immortality of soul.	6 (a)	● Critically examine Plato's a priori proofs for the immortality of the soul.	20
2314	7(c)	● What do immanence and transcendence mean in talking about God?	6 (b)	● In what sense is God both immanent and transcendent in theism? Discuss.	15
2316	6(b)	● Can faith be independent of reason? Discuss various models to clearly bring out their relationship.	6 (c)	● Explain the rational and irrational aspects of faith in the discourse of religion.	15