



Philosophy — Optional

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination | Complete Syllabus

PAPER I History & Problems of Philosophy

SECTION A Western 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.

SECTION B Indian Philosophy

- 1 **Carvaka:** Theory of Knowledge; Rejection of Transcendent Entities.
- 2 **Jainism:** Theory of Reality; Saptabhanginaya; Bondage and Liberation.
- 3 **Schools of Buddhism:** Pratityasamutpada; Ksanikavada; Nairatmyavada.
- 4 **Nyaya-Vaisheshika:** 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.
- 5 **Samkhya:** Prakriti; Purusha; Causation; Liberation.
- 6 **Yoga:** Citta; Cittavritti; Klesas; Samadhi; Kaivalya.
- 7 **Mimamsa:** Theory of Knowledge.
- 8 **Schools of Vedanta:** Brahman; Isvara; Atman; Jiva; Jagat; Maya; Avidya; Adhyasa; Moksha; Aprthaksiddhi; Pancavidhabheda.
- 9 **Aurobindo:** Evolution; Involution; Integral Yoga.

Examiner's note: Paper I rewards conceptual precision over breadth. Anchor every school to its core problem — knowledge, reality, self, liberation — and practise comparative threads (e.g. Kant's categories vs. Nyaya pramanas) for higher-order answers.

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Philosophy — Paper II

Socio-Political Philosophy & Philosophy of Religion

SECTION A 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; Democracy.
- 5 **Political Ideologies:** Anarchism; Marxism; Socialism.
- 6 **Humanism; Secularism; Multiculturalism.**
- 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.

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SECTION B 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 **The 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-cognitivist theories of Religious Language.

Examiner's note: Paper II is application-driven. Tie classical positions to contemporary debates — secularism, gender, caste, capital punishment — and keep crisp Indian–Western comparisons ready for the Philosophy of Religion segment.

PREPARE WHILE WORKING • PASS WHILE EARNING

A structured Philosophy Optional roadmap under the Target 300+ programme

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