



NST3HP

Natural Sciences Tripos Part III: History and Philosophy of Science

Questions released at 12noon on Wednesday 8 March 2023

Answers to be submitted by 12noon on Wednesday 15 March 2023

Before you begin, read these instructions carefully:

Students should answer **two** questions from the following list of 14 questions.

The two essays should be submitted by 12noon on Wednesday 15 March 2023 by being uploaded to the HPS Part III Coursework site on Moodle.

The question number, title and word count should be stated on the first page of each essay.

NST Part III History and Philosophy of Science

Set essays

Answer any **two** questions. Answers should not exceed 2,500 words each.

1. What methodological implications should historians of climate draw from debates on the origins of the Anthropocene?
2. 'The attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector' (Alma-Ata Declaration, 1978). What is the significance of this statement in the context of the history of international and global health?
3. Suppose there are multiple theories or models in a given scientific domain, and one of them is clearly superior to the others. What would be good reasons for maintaining at least some of the other ones?
4. What does the ideal of Evidence Based Policy stand for? What should it stand for?
5. 'Reliable observations of eclipses could not have been made outside the spheres of European civilization and technology' (Alex Pang, *Empire and the Sun*, 2002). Do you agree?
6. In what senses, if any, must scientists make value judgments?
7. Is 'retrospective diagnosis' a valid historical method?
8. Can scientists learn about natural features of people's sexual desires by asking them about their desires?
9. 'For all practical social purposes "race" is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth' (UNESCO Statement on Race, 1950, #14). Contextualize and evaluate this claim.
10. If the world were always in thermal equilibrium, would there be a direction of time?
11. 'A scholarly "spot the difference game" between more or less recent pandemic precedents'. To what extent is this statement a fair critique of historians' reflections on COVID-19?

12. What are affordances and do we perceive them?
13. Is it possible to describe the development of Western science as the succession of different regimes of visual representation?
14. 'We are not yet at a place where a global history of the scientific journal can be written...' Discuss the global history of scientific periodicals in Euro-American and non-western contexts with examples.

END OF PAPER