Assignment for TEE June 2026 and December 2026

BPYC-134

Western Philosophy: Modern

Note:

1. **Give Answer of all five questions.**
2. **All five questions carry equal marks**
3. **Answer to question no. 1 and 2 should be in about 400 words each.**

1. Write a note on the salient features of Modern Western Philosophy. 20

OR

Give an account of Hegel's dialectical method and explain it with appropriate examples. 20

2. What is Kant's view on the nature of knowledge? Explain and analyze. 20

OR

Explain and analyze Descartes' mind–body dualism.

20

3. Answer any **two** of the following questions in about **200 words** each. 2*10= 20

a) Explain the idea of causality. How does Hume criticize the notion of causation? 10

b) Contrast Descartes' and Locke's conceptions of substance with that of Spinoza. 10

c) What are innate ideas? How does Locke criticize the theory of innate ideas? 10

d) Explain the significance of pre-established harmony in Leibniz's philosophy. 10

4. Answer any **four** of the following questions in about **150 words** each. 4*5= 20

a) Distinguish between primary and secondary qualities according to Locke. 5

b) Examine Berkeley's refutation of materialism. 5

c) "Thoughts without content are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind." Explain this dictum of Kant. 5

d) Discuss Spinoza's idea of God. 5

e) Write a short note on Enlightenment. 5

f) Write a short note on historical materialism. 5

5. Write short notes on any **five** of the following in about **100 words** each. 5*4= 20

a) Alienated Labour 4

b) Locke's representative theory of perception 4

c) Synthetic *a priori* and Analytic *a priori* judgments 4

d) Tabula rasa 4

e) Cogito, ergo sum 4

f) Hegel's idea of Absolute Truth 4

g) Meaning of the term "Transcendental" in Kant's philosophy 4

h) The intellectual love of God 4

1. Write a note on the salient features of Modern Western Philosophy. 20

Answer

Modern Western philosophy developed mainly from the seventeenth century onwards, although its intellectual preparation began during the Renaissance and the scientific revolution. Philosophers increasingly asked how human beings could obtain reliable knowledge, whether reason or experience was its chief source, and how freedom, nature and society should be understood. Unlike a simple rejection of the past, the modern period reconsidered older philosophical questions through new methods, often influenced by discoveries in mathematics and natural science.

Independence of reason and the questioning spirit

A central feature was the determination to examine established beliefs rather than accept an authority simply because it was traditional. Medieval European philosophy often operated within a framework strongly connected with Christian theology. Modern thinkers did not all oppose religion, but they increasingly insisted that philosophical arguments should be supported by reasons which could be examined independently. René Descartes illustrates this attitude by using methodical doubt. He considered even familiar sensory beliefs open to question until he reached the certainty that a thinking subject exists: 'I think, therefore I am.' The aim was not permanent doubt but a secure starting point for knowledge. This critical spirit later became particularly important during the Enlightenment.

Influence of Renaissance humanism and science

Renaissance learning encouraged the study of classical texts, human capacities and worldly experience. The scientific revolution then transformed conceptions of the universe. The work of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton demonstrated the power of observation, experiment and mathematical explanation. Nature could be investigated through laws rather than understood only by appeals to inherited authorities. Many philosophers adopted the mathematical ideal of clarity, deduction and systematic order. Descartes searched for certainty comparable to mathematical knowledge, while Spinoza presented his philosophy through definitions, axioms and propositions. Other philosophers asked whether scientific laws described reality as it exists or only the regularities human beings observe.