HISTORY ADMISSIONS TEST

Marking Scheme for 2015 Specimen Paper

QUESTION ONE

(a) In your own words, write a single sentence identifying the main argument of the first paragraph.

Criteria Assessed
This question is intended to assess the ability of students to critically read and understand a targeted section in the passage, and to distil what they have read into their own words with precision and clarity.

Description of Passage
The author’s main point is that scholars must define magic and its relationship to science, religion, and medicine. Although acknowledging that this can sometimes prove challenging, the author insists that even in such cases it is crucial to focus at least on defining the border between magic and other phenomena. In addition, the author notes that scholars disagree with each other over how to interpret certain practices, for example in deciding whether the conjuring of a demon to predict the future constitutes magic or not.

Awarding of Marks
- For 9-10 marks, candidates will correctly and concisely identify the author’s main point about the importance of defining magic and its relationship to other phenomena. They will do so in a single grammatical sentence which makes sense.
- For 5-8 marks, candidates will, in a single sentence, identify significant features of the author’s analysis in the first paragraph, but with less precision in identifying the main point. An otherwise excellent answer which uses two sentences, or is seriously ungrammatical or very badly expressed, also belongs in this band.
- For 0-4 marks, candidates will have failed to accurately identify any features of the author’s analysis in the first paragraph. They may comment on the passage as a whole, advance extraneous information, or rely too much on the wording used by the author. Answers in this band may also be very poorly expressed or contain two or more sentences without being especially accurate on the main point covered.

(b) What does the author argue in this passage regarding beliefs about magic in medieval Europe? Answer in not more than fifteen lines and using your own words.

Criteria Assessed
This question tests the candidate’s ability to effectively summarise the main ideas in the author’s argument, and to present the author’s argument faithfully, economically, and in the candidate’s own words.

Description of Passage
The author makes a distinction between beliefs about magic as they circulated among intellectuals and/or elites and those beliefs that were held by ordinary people. Most ordinary Europeans would have recognised that magic was alive in their society, i.e., that this knowledge existed and was used by certain people for specific ends. But, this author argues, ordinary people would not have used the term ‘magic’ to refer to most of these practices, which were usually categorized in written texts under a host of names, for example charms, blessings, and cures. Instead, the author argues that it
was primarily elites and intellectuals who used the idea of ‘magic’ to describe practices that most people in society simply took for granted. The author believes, therefore, that it is possible to better understand what medieval Europeans believed about magic by focusing on the ideas held by intellectuals. The author concludes the argument by identifying two forms of magic in medieval Europe: the first was called ‘natural’ magic and it developed out of science with a concern for the hidden powers of nature. The second type—demonic magic—was more religious in nature, and it rejected God and turned to demons for assistance in human affairs.

**Awarding of Marks**

- For **14-20 marks**, candidates will, within fifteen lines, capture the main ideas of the author’s argument and the logic of his reasoning faithfully and completely. The best and better answers will be clearly and fluently written, in the candidate’s own words, with appropriate reference to the text. Weaker answers in this band will be less well-written and/or less clear and well-organised, but will still be in the candidate’s own words; they may make less reference to the text, but remain focused on the author’s core arguments.

- For **8-13 marks**, candidates will show some awareness of the author’s main argument about the distinction between elite and popular ideas of magic, and they will do so accurately and clearly and mostly in their own words. They may be less cogent than candidates scoring in the top band with regard to their understanding of the author’s logic behind defining two forms of magic in medieval Europe. Answers in this band may be less economically, deftly or clearly written than those in the top band; they may include minor misunderstandings, which nonetheless do not prevent them from conveying the substance of the author’s argument.

- For **0-7 marks**, candidates will provide an answer that has little relation to the ideas, argument, or evidence used in the passage. They will make little sense of the progression of the author’s overall argument. The weakest candidates may even fail to understand the question entirely. They may present nothing more than a series of quotations or near-quotations. Answers which are very unclear should belong in this category, even if there are grounds for seeing some engagement of the question in them.

- **N.B.** In all cases, answers must be concise. Deduct one mark for every line over fifteen, assuming that the candidate’s handwriting is normal size (about ten words per line).

**QUESTION TWO**

Write an essay of 1.5 to 3 sides assessing and explaining the role played by beliefs or ideas as causes of historical change. You may answer with reference to any society, period or place with which you are familiar.

**Criteria Assessed**

This question assesses the candidate’s ability to respond to a broad, open essay question in a relevant, coherent, and analytically sophisticated manner. It may be helpful to have in mind typical degree class boundaries in assessing this exercise, and the relevant criteria are (1) engagement with the question, (2) coherence of argument, (3) the effective use of evidence, and (4) clarity of structure and elegance of prose. But N.B., the essential proviso is that depth and accuracy of knowledge (as distinct from precision in its deployment) are not being tested here. Essays placed in the top band, therefore, will display clarity, cogency, relevance, conceptual power and – perhaps – originality. Essays falling in the middle band will answer the question soundly, but lack the analytical flexibility, the perceptiveness, or the argumentative coherence of a top-band answer. Essays in the bottom band will have qualities characteristic of a Lower Second or worse: a hazy or
Awarding of Marks

Markers must be prepared to show flexibility in the ways in which candidates may approach this question, which will be influenced heavily by the great variety of case-studies that could be used to answer the question. Some students may define ideas and beliefs very broadly – e.g. as synonymous with a religion, ideology, or movement– others might highlight the ideas and beliefs of particular individuals or institutions. As long as the student has given some thought to identifying a particular set of ideas/beliefs and their relation to historical change, any of these approaches is acceptable.

- For **21-30 marks**, candidates will write a relevant, well-organised and clearly-written answer, which has adopted a sustained and consistent focus on the role played in historical change by a particular set of ideas or beliefs, however narrowly or broadly defined. Answers in this band must answer the question. The candidates in this band will have thought carefully about what the question is asking and will demonstrate this with precision in their response. The very best answers in this band may problematize the language of ideas, beliefs, or historical change as presented in the question in a variety of ways, e.g., going beyond the categories in their analysis, questioning the utility of the terms, etc. Answers in this band are not merely descriptive, but rather they are consistently analytical, keeping the question in mind at all times. Even answers that have minor deficiencies in analysis will be in this category if they have managed to answer the question clearly and effectively.

- For **12-20 marks**, candidates will present relevant evidence, and apply it somewhat to the question, but less directly, consistently and forensically. Answers in this band may be a little episodic and disparate in places, and/or lack a clear integrative thesis. They may not appear to have thought carefully enough about the mechanisms through which ideas contribute to historical change, and their analysis will lack the sophistication of answers in the higher band. Especially towards the bottom of the range, they may possess only a perfunctory conclusion, or one that is inconsistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the essay, or it may lack a discrete conclusion altogether. Their definition of ideas and beliefs may be so vague as to stand in the way of any reasonable analysis. Even if candidates have chosen a poor or vague example, they may be placed in this band if they have endeavoured at least to explore a relationship between ideas/beliefs and a specific historical change.

- For **0-11 marks**, the candidate’s choice of case will generally be poor here: this may be because it is intrinsically inappropriate (e.g. due to a failure to identify a discrete set of ideas/beliefs); or it may be because the candidate simply does not know enough about the case study to provide a persuasive analysis. Answers in this category may ignore the question by ranging too widely or diffusely over several examples without scratching beyond the surface of any one example. They will generally lack much sense of coherence or momentum of argument, and will often be poorly written, containing errors of syntax, spelling and punctuation. They will contain many of the flaws listed in the mid-band category, but they will be present to a greater extent.
QUESTION THREE

What does this source reveal about American society during the Great Depression?

Criteria Assessed
This question assesses the student’s ability to act as a historian, that is, to analyse a primary source, and to use that analysis as the basis for a thoughtful, judicious interpretation of the past. As such, the relevant criteria for this question include careful and critical reading, attention to detail, historical imagination, the effective use of evidence, and precision, clarity and facility of writing.

Description of the Passage
The source offers a window into the memories of a particular individual about his experiences during the Great Depression. As the interview was conducted orally some forty years after the event it describes, it is difficult to assess to what extent his memories have been informed by stories of the Great Depression that he has told in the past or heard from others; nor is it clear what is the impact of the questions asked by the interviewer. The man’s recollections seem to capture the experiences of a migrant, and several related themes arise including the disconnect between the financial sector and the broader (especially rural) economy, the feelings of dislocation and strangeness experienced by the man, and the challenge to conventional social expectations especially related to suitability for employment. In general, the man’s memories are couched in a language of wonders and shock. How much of this is a result of the economic crash itself or, rather, of the newness of urban life is unclear. His memories of everyday life in San Francisco suggest anxieties about social breakdown, and his account of heated protests and violent action acknowledges the courage of the crowds as well as their culpability. Violence is a central theme here, but the account mostly emphasises the male experience of violence—as well as protest and work—and there is little here about the impact of the situation on women or children. While there is an acknowledgement of the importance of race in the composition of the crowds, the man emphasises the importance of class. There is repeated attention given to the emotions of the experience, i.e., the cyclical nature of unmet demands, the role of rumour in heightening the situation, and the ultimate desperation and stagnation of the employment market. Even so, the man’s narrative is punctuated by laughs, a sign of his discomfort, nervousness, or perhaps how normalized have become his memories of this difficult time.

Awarding of Marks
The marking scheme below is intended to provide markers with the flexibility to reward answers that stand out, particularly in terms of originality and historical imagination. Given the nature of the exercise, some candidates may interpret the evidence in unpredictable or surprising ways, which are, nonetheless, reasonable within the wider context of the passage. Candidates should not be penalised for singular interpretations, so long as they are backed up by evidence from the source.

For **27-40 marks**, candidates will show that they have read the text closely, accurately and thoughtfully and they are correspondingly able to speak in a concrete way about any of the themes raised above. They will link their analysis consistently to specific evidence from the text, and the higher marks in this band will do so with real sophistication and clarity. They will express historical imagination and/or originality in their analysis of the source, especially at the higher marks within this band. Some of the strongest answers in this band will even engage with issues of source criticism, issues of authorship, and the potential for conflicting interpretations of the source (although they will not necessarily use such terms to do so). But merely raising issues of source reliability will not in itself merit the awarding of a mark in this band; rather, answers in this band will present insights that demonstrate a genuine and consistent talent for historical analysis and the strongest answers will show real sophistication and independence of thought.
For **14-26 marks**, candidates will focus mainly on describing or recounting the details contained in the source, without the sophistication or thematic analysis of candidates in the higher band. They will have made some sense of the text and touched on some of the issues raised by it, but their judgements and speculations, though relevant, may be less penetrating, less clearly expressed, or less sustainable from the text. They may have engaged with one or more of the themes above, but they will be less effective at developing their analysis around specific evidence from the source. Their treatment of specific themes may be less analytical or precise.

For **0-13 marks**, candidates will more or less have failed to offer any analysis of the text, writing comments that simply reproduce what is in it, or are substantially inaccurate. Answers in this category may simply hone in on a few particular details without a wider demonstration of analysing the source in its entirety. Answers in this band may also suffer from the introduction of external knowledge or unreasonable speculation not backed up by evidence from the text. Similarly, some answers in this band may be too short, or poorly expressed. They may simply reproduce a list of observations, without a more comprehensive sense of the wider significance of the source as a window into American society during the Great Depression.
QUESTION FOUR

(for HISTORY AND ECONOMICS CANDIDATES ONLY)

30 marks for Question Four in total: 20 for Q1 and 10 for Q2.

1. Each minute during off-peak hours 12 cars arrive at the northern entry point to Oxford’s ring road and want to drive to the southern exit point. There are two possible routes. The time taken on the western route is \( x^2/2 \) minutes, where \( x \) is the number of cars taking this route. The time taken on the eastern route is \( y^2/8 \) minutes, where \( y \) cars take this route. (The notation \( x^2 \) denotes “\( x \) squared”, i.e. \( x \) multiplied by itself.)

Criteria Assessed

This question is designed to test whether candidates can think analytically about an everyday problem, make reasonable inferences from the information given about what is likely to happen, use simple mathematical tools to find a solution, and engage critically with the issues raised by the question.

(i) How many cars do you expect will go by each route and what assumptions are you making to reach this conclusion? How long do you expect each driver will take, on average, to reach their destination? (30%, 6 marks)

The natural solution has equal times taken on each route. This assumes that: (i) drivers want to minimize the time taken; (ii) drivers know what the times taken on each route are (this is reasonable if this happens every day, and the use of the phrase “on average” hints at this. Satnav or digital map services could also help). (iii) No authority (such as the traffic police) determines who can go by which route.

The argument for equal times is that if this were not true then drivers could try to gain an advantage by switching routes. On average we would expect there to be no advantage to switching.

The routes take equal time when

\[
\frac{x^2}{2} = \frac{y^2}{8}
\]

The total number, 12, equals the sum of the numbers going by each route: \( x + y = 12 \). So \( y = 12 - x \).

Replacing \( y \) in the above equation gives:

\[
\frac{x^2}{2} = \frac{(12 - x)^2}{8}
\]

This is one equation in one unknown, \( x \). Multiply both sides by 8:

\[
4x^2 = (12 - x)^2.
\]

Take the (positive) square root:

\[
2x = 12 - x.
\]

The solution is \( x = 4 \), and \( y = 12 - x = 8 \). (This could equivalently be solved by setting \( x = 12 - y \).)
The time taken on each route is \( 16/2 = 8 \) minutes on the western route (that \( x \) take) and \( 64/8 = 8 \) minutes on the eastern route.

A more laborious but equally valid way to look at this would be to try out all possible combinations and present the numbers in a table (or perhaps even a graph):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( x )</th>
<th>( Y )</th>
<th>Time for ( x: x^2/2 )</th>
<th>Time for ( y: y^2/8 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>15.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>3.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>1.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>0.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time taken is equal when \( x = 4 \) and \( y = 8 \). The first method is neater and easier to generalize. We can use the table to consider what would happen if someone switched. If one switches to \( y \) from \( x \) then \( x = 3 \) and \( y = 9 \) and the time taken for the switcher rises to 10.125. If one switches to \( x \) from \( y \) then \( x = 5 \) and \( y = 7 \), and the time taken for the switcher rises to 12.5. Neither will want to switch.

**Awarding of marks**

5-6 marks. The candidate solves each numerical part (how many, and how much time) clearly and correctly, and discusses briefly the assumptions made.

3-4 marks. The candidate solves each numerical part but does not present working, or does not discuss or present the assumptions made. Alternatively the candidate has the correct method but makes mistakes in the solution.

0-2 marks. The candidate does not present solutions to the numerical parts. 2 marks if the candidate discusses a sensible method without actually applying it.
(ii) During peak hours ("the rush hour") 18 cars arrive at the Northern entry point. How long will it take each car to reach the southern exit point, and how many will go by each route during peak hours? Comment on the difference between the times taken in off-peak and peak hours. (40%, 8 marks)

The method is the same as for part (i). Now the total number of cars is 18, so solve $\frac{x^2}{2} = \frac{y^2}{8}$ and $x + y = 18$ together. This gives $x = 6$ and $y = 12$, with time taken $\frac{36}{2} = \frac{144}{8} = 18$. The number of cars has risen by 50% but the time taken has risen by more than 100% (from 8 to 18 minutes). This captures the fact that each car imposes a cost on all the other cars – congestion increases rapidly in the amount of traffic.

Awarding of marks

5-6 marks. The candidate solves the numerical parts (how many, and how much time) clearly and correctly, and discusses briefly why congestion increases very rapidly in the amount of traffic.

3-4 marks. The candidate solves each numerical part but does not present working. Alternatively the candidate has the correct method but makes mistakes in the solution. The candidate solves the numerical parts fully but neglects to comment on the difference in time taken.

0-2 marks. The candidate does not present solutions to the numerical parts. 2 marks if the candidate discusses congestion sensibly.

(iii) The government can build a new road that goes directly from north to south. There will be no congestion on this road, and depending on the specifications of the road – number of lanes, location etc. – it will take between 10 and 20 minutes to go from north to south along this new road. What considerations might the government take into account when deciding whether this road is worth building? (30%, 6 marks)

This is open-ended. The government should consider the benefits of the new road (potentially reduced congestion and thus time saved for motorists) against the cost of construction and maintenance. If the new road takes 20 minutes then it is useless. There are no time-savings. If the existing routes are available no-one will use the new road, even at peak time. If the existing routes are withdrawn all the drivers are worse off because they take longer. In addition the cost of the new road will have been incurred.

Only if the new road is specified such that it takes less than 18 minutes is it potentially valuable. If the new road takes 10 minutes then it benefits everyone. If it takes between 12 and 18 minutes then it benefits the rush hour traffic. If the existing routes are retained then in the off-peak period the existing allocation of traffic will be maintained – the new road won’t be used then. Whether it is worth building such a road will depend on how long the rush “hour” is.

All this assumes that the amount of traffic remains constant. If a better road network is offered it may be that this generates new traffic (business and people choose to locate where the roads have been improved).

The effect on emissions (e.g. of greenhouse gases) may also be considered. A new road that does not generate new traffic and which reduces the time taken travelling is likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Note, however, that the cars need not emit greenhouse gases (they may be electric cars, which are charged using renewable electricity).
Awarding of marks
5-6 marks. The candidate considers at least two of the points above (or other relevant considerations), and assesses the issues in a reflective and critical way.

3-4 marks. The candidate discusses one of the points above (or another relevant consideration). Or the candidate discusses several points but has some confusion in their reasoning.

0-2 marks. The candidate does not engage with the details of the problem, for example only identifying the fact that the road should be built if the benefits exceed the costs.

2. There are two companies, Safe and Risky. Each company has $10 in the bank. The companies will exist for two months, and at the end of the second month all accumulated profits will be distributed to shareholders. Neither firm is able to borrow any money from the banks, or to raise finance in any other way. Safe has an equal chance of earning profits of $5 and of making a loss of $5 each month. Risky has an equal chance of earning profits of $6 each month and of losing $6 each month. Because both firms have limited liability neither can lose in total in the two months more than the initial amount of money in its bank account.

10 marks for this question. 5 for each part.

Criteria Assessed

This question is designed to test whether candidates can use deductive reasoning to make coherent inferences from the information given about what is likely to happen, and engage critically with the issues raised by the question.

(i) What are the possible amounts of money that Safe and Risky might have in the bank at the end of the two months? (50%)

Safe starts with $10. After one month it can have either $15 or $5. After two months it can have $15 plus or minus $5, i.e. $20 or $10, or $5 plus or minus $5, i.e. $10 or $0. So it could have $20 (both months good), $10 (one good, one bad, two ways of getting this), or $0 (both months bad).

Risky starts with $10. After one month it can have either $16 or $4. After two months it can have $16 plus or minus $6, i.e. $22 or $10, or $4 plus or minus $6. Here we need to use the information about limited liability: the firm can’t end up with a negative amount in the bank. So if in the second month it starts with $4 it can end up with either $10 (if the second month is good), or $0 if the second month is bad.

Awarding of marks
4-5 If the correct numbers are given and there is a brief explanation
2-3 If the correct numbers are given but there is no explanation or reasoning.
0-1 If the correct numbers for Safe are given but the limited liability point is forgotten for Risky, or 0 if the numbers are all wrong.
If you were a potential investor in one or other of the companies, which one would you be prepared to pay more for? Explain your reasons. (50%)

Safe can yield: 20, 10, 10 or 0 (two ways of getting to 10). The expected profit is $0.25 \times 20 + 0.5 \times 10 + 0.25 \times 0 = 10$.

Risky can yield: 22, 10, 10 or 0 (two ways of getting to 10, and limited liability means it cannot make a loss). Expected profit is 10.25.

Risky looks better for an investor: its “payoffs” dominate those of Safe (either the payoff is the same or in one case Risky pays out more, and the probabilities are all equal). This is the benefit of limited liability.

The expected profit is higher for Risky, which makes Risky more attractive. Risky also has profits which are more variable than those of Safe – normally this would make Risky less attractive. Here however the dominance argument given in the previous paragraph implies that this consideration is not relevant here.

(Note that someone else is losing out, perhaps a supplier that Risky trades with who gets paid $4 rather than $6 in the second month).

(Limited liability doesn’t always hold. Partnerships are fully liable. If Risky is owned by a partnership then its expected profits (without limited liability) are 10, the same as Safe, and it now has more volatile profits so it is likely that investors will prefer Safe.)

**Awarding of Marks**

4-5 If the candidate understands the dominance point and explains this carefully.

2-3 If the candidate just calculates expected profits and says that they are higher for Risky. This is true but not sufficient.

0-1 If the candidate says Safe is better because it is safe, without giving any reasoning.