**ARRUPE COLLEGE**

Jesuit School of Philosophy and Humanities

**BA Honours in Philosophy**

**EPISTEMOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS APH 405**

**DECEMBER 2015**

**THREE (3) HOURS**

**ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS.**

1. “Descartes set out in his philosophical project to defeat scepticism regarding the possibility of knowledge, but his proposed resolution of this problem in fact made it worse.” Describe the problem of scepticism in general, Descartes’s ‘solution’ to it via ‘methodological doubt’, and give your assessment of the claim made in the above quotation.

1. What difficulties do you see in both empiricist and rationalist forms of epistemological foundationalism, and how do you assess any one of the non-foundationalist alternatives?
2. “Bernard Lonergan’s approach to the issue of knowledge was not to ask the question of ‘modern’ epistemology, ‘Does knowledge exist?’ Instead, he set out to inquire into the nature of knowledge, by which he meant, ‘What happens when knowledge takes place?’” Explain this project and make your own assessment of its success. Give reasons for your view.
3. Charles Taylor speaks of “a new orthodoxy that the whole [epistemological] enterprise from Descartes, through Locke and Kant […] was a mistake” (from Taylor’s “Overcoming epistemology”). Why does Taylor think that epistemology should be “overcome” and what are the “moral and spiritual ideas of the modern age” that, in his view, are closely linked to it?

1. “The most common construal of the idea of ‘a traditional culture’ – at least in popular thought and speech in Africa – is in fact thoroughly ‘modern’ and ‘intellectualist’, and carries with it assumptions about the boundaries between cultures, the uniformity within them, and their non-historical nature which actually hide more than they reveal.” Discuss and assess this judgement in the light of your knowledge of any traditional culture. Give reasons for your view.
2. Describe and discuss Pierre Bourdieu’s views on “the objectification of objectivism”. Does it provide a helpful model of what is involved in “understanding another culture”? Give reasons for your view.

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**