ARRUPE COLLEGE

Jesuit School of Philosophy and Humanities

# Masters in Philosophy

**THE THOUGHT OF EMMANUEL LEVINAS MPA 511**

## DECEMBER 2015

### THREE (3) HOURS

### ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, ONE IN EACH SECTION. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS.

**Section A**

1. What is Levinas’ main critique of Husserl’s phenomenological method and what is his main critique to Heidegger’s project?
2. Clarify the notions of “sensibility”, “proximity” and “substitution” in Levinas’ thought and their relation to “responsibility.” What is Levinas’ conception of the human person and how does the human person achieve his or her identity, according to Levinas?

**Section B**

1. According to Levinas, is ontology fundamental? Justify your answer. Why does Levinas say that in ontology “... every relation with a being presupposes the ... forgetfulness of being” (“Is Ontology Fundamental?” 5)?
2. How does Levinas answer his own opening question in *Totality and Infinity* whether we are “duped by morality”? How does he relate his answer to his description of war as “the pure experience of pure being”? (*Totality and Infinity* 21)

**Section C**

1. Comment on Levinas’ claim that “truth,” as the ideal of Western philosophy, leans too much in the direction of integration, anamnesis and freedom not allowing the thinker to be surprised by an encounter with the unexpected.
2. Levinas criticizes Western political theory for linking the notion of justice to the notions of truth, being and freedom. By separating these notions, he presents the “work of justice” as contrary to the “work of the state”. Discuss.

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**