

Study Questions for the First Exam

Philosophy 150: Fall 2007

Tim Black

MILL

- [1] State and explain the moral theory known as utilitarianism. (This should include at least the following: (a) stating the principle of utilitarianism; (b) explaining why utilitarianism is hedonistic and non-egoistic; and (c) providing an example or two of utilitarianism in action.) Also, explain at least one of the objections to utilitarianism that we noted in class.
- [2] Explain why happiness is not limited to pleasures of “mere sensation,” and explain how we are supposed to decide which kinds of pleasures are more desirable.

SINGER

- [3] State Singer’s argument for the claim that we should give to famine-relief funds. Explain *one* of the two objections to Singer’s argument that he addresses in his article, and explain how he responds to that objection.

KANT

- [4] Briefly explain what Kant means by a “good will.” Also, explain why Kant regards a good will as particularly important to ethics.
- [5] State the practical-imperative version of Kant’s categorical imperative. Provide an example in which the practical imperative is violated, and explain *why* the act performed in that example is one that violates the practical imperative.

O’NEILL

- [6] State and explain the Kantian argument that Tim proposed, on O’Neill’s behalf, for the conclusion that we ought to give to famine-relief funds.

ARISTOTLE

- [7] According to Aristotle, what is a virtuous person? Your response to this question should include a detailed explanation of the two basic components of being a virtuous person.

HURSTHOUSE

- [8] According to Hursthouse, what are “the two familiar dominating considerations” of discussions of abortion? How, according to her, does virtue theory dismiss these two considerations “as, in a way, fundamentally irrelevant”?

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RAWLS

- [9] Briefly explain what Rawls means by a “veil of ignorance.” Explain the function of the veil of ignorance in Rawls’s “Original Position” argument for his specific conception of justice.
- [10] State and explain the maximin rule. Briefly explain how that rule works and how, when obeyed in the original position, it leads to Rawls’s specific conception of justice.
- [11] Explain why utilitarianism seems to allow the possibility of slavery as a social institution. Explain how Rawls’s theory of justice is supposed to preclude this possibility.