

PHIL 167: Contemporary Political Philosophy
Fall 2005; David O. Brink
Final Exam Study Questions
Monday, November 21

The final exam will be held on Monday, December 5 from 11:30am to 2:30pm in York 4080A. The exam questions will be drawn from these study questions; there will be no "surprise" questions. You will notice there is overlap among some of the study questions in different categories. The exam itself will be closed book, though you will be allowed to consult two pages (= two sides of paper) of notes during the exam (small fonts are ok). You can study together, but you must write your own notes. Also, answers to essay questions can draw on material from the handouts, but should paraphrase and analyze this material, rather than reproducing it verbatim (which is prohibited). I will hold a review session during our last class on Friday, December 2. Please bring two empty blue books to the exam.

SHORT ANSWER (roughly, 50-100 words each or somewhere between a couple of sentences and a short paragraph)

1. Explain consequentialism, utilitarianism, and the relation between the two.
2. Explain the difference between direct and indirect utilitarianism.
3. Explain the difference between act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.
4. Explain what hedonism is and at least one possible reservation about hedonism.
5. Explain Mill's claim about the role of sanctions in specifying an agent's duties.
6. Explain the differences among restrictions on liberty that are paternalistic, moralistic, and based on the harm principle.
7. Describe the process by which Nozick thinks that a minimal state would emerge from the state of nature.
8. What does Nozick mean when he describes rights as side constraints?
9. What is a public good?
10. What is an externality, positive or negative?
11. What is the Lockean proviso?
12. What is the free rider problem?
13. Explain the four-part structure of Nozick's entitlement theory.
14. How does Nozick understand the main conceptions of justice in holdings? Explain the differences between the entitlement theory, patterned principles, and end-state principles.
15. What is Rawls's Difference Principle, and how egalitarian is it?
16. What is the Original Position, and what role does it play in Rawls's theory of justice?
17. What is the difference between Rawls's General and Special conceptions of justice?
18. What is diminishing marginal utility, and what does it suggest about how utilitarians will distribute goods and resources?
19. What is the difference between classical and average utilitarianism, and how does Rawls think that this difference might be relevant to parties in the Original Position?
20. What does Rawls mean by the fair value of political liberties, and what is the significance of this principle within Justice as Fairness?

ESSAY (roughly, 175-300 words each or 2-3 blue book pages)

1. Explain Mill's higher pleasures doctrine and how it is meant to respond to criticisms of utilitarianism. Is the higher pleasures doctrine a form of hedonism? Why or why not?
2. Explain Mill's theory of duty in chapter 5 of Utilitarianism and how it affects the act utilitarian interpretation of Mill's moral philosophy.
3. Explain and assess Mill's proof of the principle of utility.
4. Explain and assess Mill's various arguments against censorship. What are his strongest arguments? Under what conditions, if any, does Mill think that censorship might be permissible?
5. Explain and assess Nozick's claim that the minimal state can arise without violating anyone's rights.
6. Explain and assess Nozick's assumptions about the theory of justice in acquisition and their role in his entitlement theory of justice in holdings.
7. How does Nozick think that "liberty upsets patterns," and what role does this claim play in his argument against the extraminimal state?
8. Explain and assess the way in which Nozick argues for the minimal state by conceiving of rights as side-constraints.
9. Describe Rawls's contractual defense of Justice as Fairness. Why should we care about his hypothetical social contract?
10. Rawls identifies three possible interpretations of the second principle of justice: natural liberty, liberal equality, and democratic equality. Explain and assess Rawls's reasoning for his favored conception (democratic equality).
11. Why does Rawls think that the utilitarian cannot appeal to diminishing marginal utility to rescue utilitarianism from the charge of being distributionally insensitive?
12. Explain and assess Rawls's claim that utilitarianism ignores the separateness of persons.
13. Explain and assess Rawls's argument that parties in the original position would prefer his two principles of justice to utilitarianism.
14. Explain the ways in which Rawls's Difference Principle give priority to the worse-off. Is there anything objectionable about the way it gives them priority?
15. Rawls believes that the Difference Principle states fair terms of social cooperation between the better-off and worse-off. Explain and assess his reasoning.
16. Explain the difference between Rawls's General and Special Conceptions. Do you share his view about the conditions under which the Special Conception is appropriate?
17. In what ways is Justice as Fairness egalitarian and in what ways is it inegalitarian? Do Rawls's departures from equality make good sense to you?
18. It is sometimes thought that egalitarian liberals, in general, and Rawls, in particular, do not give sufficient importance to considerations of individual responsibility and personal desert. Explain and assess this criticism, especially in connection with the views of one or more egalitarian liberals, such as Rawls, Dworkin, or Arneson.