

**MIDTERM TAKE-HOME EXAM****PHILOSOPHY 13****FALL, 2005**

This assignment is due in class on Wednesday, October 19. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty.

Answer any **two** of the following three questions.

Each of your two answers should be roughly the equivalent of two to three double-spaced typewritten pages with 12-point font.

1. (a) Explain what John Mackie means in asserting “there are no objective values” and state his main arguments for this assertion. (b) State the main considerations in opposition to Mackie’s position that Ronald Dworkin adduces in his essay “Objectivity and Truth: You’d Better Believe It.” (c) In your view, do Dworkin’s arguments successfully undermine Mackie’s position? Explain your reasoning.

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2. What is it for a person’s life to go well for that very person? Answers to this question take a stand on the nature of human good. In his essay “Desire and the Human Good” Richard Kraut presses several objections against desire satisfaction and informed desire satisfaction accounts of what constitutes human good and develops an alternate proposal. Suppose Kraut were to add that J. S. Mill’s answer to this question (advanced in the first few paragraphs of chapter 2 of *Utilitarianism*) is a view according to which something is intrinsically better or worse for a person to get or achieve depending on (a) how much she enjoys it and (b) to what extent she would choose to seek that thing over others if she were fully informed. As such (Kraut might say) Mill’s view is refuted by Kraut’s essay.

Defend Kraut’s position as just stated or defend Mill against Kraut or attack both Mill’s and Kraut’s arguments. Be sure your answer states Kraut’s and Mill’s positions on the issue at hand.

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3. Sally is the head of an anti-terrorist government agency. The funding for this agency is about to be severely cut unless Sally quickly engineers a successful conviction. Sally correctly believes that if the funding for her agency is maintained, within a few months the agency will capture significant terrorists and save many innocent lives and if the funding is severely cut, these innocent lives will not be saved (and nothing remotely comparably valuable will be achieved with the saved funds in their alternate deployment). Sally has no legitimate case to prosecute against any suspected terrorist now, but she knows that she can successfully bring about the arrest and conviction of an innocent person Fred on trumped-up capital charges. The conviction and execution of Fred will qualify as a successful conviction and there is no other possibility of success. So either she engineers the judicial murder of Fred and blocks the threatened funding cut-off or she refrains from engineering the judicial murder of Fred and the funding for her agency will definitely be cut resulting in the loss of many innocent lives. According to J. S. Mill’s utilitarian morality, ought Sally in the circumstances as described bring about the judicial murder of Fred or refrain from doing so? Explain how utilitarianism delivers a verdict as to what should be done in this example. Suppose someone argues that utilitarianism requires us to do what is unjust in this sort of example and is thereby shown to be unacceptable. Does Mill advance considerations in chapter 5 of *Utilitarianism* that add up to a good reply to this objection? Why or why not? Explain your reasoning.

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*Your answers will be assessed according to the clarity of your prose, the soundness of the understanding of relevant course materials that you display, and the cogency of your reasoning.*

*You are responsible for conforming to the University code of academic honesty. If you are presenting an idea that you have learned from another person, you should credit that person. If you are using the words (or a close paraphrase of the words) of another person, you should cite your source.*