

This assignment is due on Friday, November 11 (a holiday). Late papers will be subject to grade penalty. Papers may be turned in at class Wednesday (Nov. 9), or at section that week, or given to your TA, or placed in Arneson's mailslot on Thursday (in Philosophy faculty mail slots near the 7th floor elevator door, H and SS Bldg), or emailed to your TA or to rarneson@ucsd.edu.

Write an essay of about five to seven pages on one of the following topics: (Please indicate clearly which topic you have chosen in the title of your essay.)

1. What, if anything, do we owe to distant needy strangers? In his essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" Peter Singer argues for a particular answer to this question. In course readings Garrett Cullity and Richard Miller criticize Singer's position. State Singer's position and either attack or defend it. Your essay may focus on Singer's discussion of the issue, Cullity's discussion, or Miller's, but in any case you should address some significant points raised by Cullity or Miller. In your discussion you should state explicitly some argument or arguments of a course author with which you are taking issue, and identify how the argument (or arguments) you are criticizing goes wrong.

2. Consider the morality of terrorism—the deliberate infliction or threat of infliction of violent harm on innocent nonthreatening persons for political purposes. Suppose you are engaged in furthering an important just cause, but your side is militarily very weak. You cannot further your cause by engaging the enemy's troops, but you might succeed by attacking and terrorizing innocent civilian noncombatants. In your view, would such terrorism always be morally wrong, or might it be permissible or even morally mandatory, depending on the circumstances? Your answer should consider what the act utilitarian (such as J. S. Mill), the act consequentialist of rights (whose position is sketched by Amartya Sen), the advocate of rights as spongy side constraints, and the advocate of rights as rigid side constraints (maybe Robert Nozick, certainly Elizabeth Anscombe) would assert in response to this question. In your discussion you should state explicitly some argument or arguments of a course author with which you are taking issue, and identify how the argument (or arguments) you are criticizing goes wrong.

3. In her essay on "Self-Defense" Judith Thomson asserts the Irrelevance-of-Intention-to-Permissibility thesis and the Irrelevance-of-Fault-to-Permissibility thesis. These claims affirm that it is irrelevant to the question whether or not it is morally wrong for an agent to do a given act (a) what intention the agent would do it with if she did it and more broadly (b) whether or not the agent would be at fault in doing the act if she were to do it. To accept these claims of Thomson would be among other things to reject the Doctrine of Double Effect, defended by course authors Thomas Nagel and Elizabeth Anscombe. Taking into account Thomson's arguments and other considerations that bear on the Doctrine of Double Effect, should it be rejected or upheld? Why so?

****Your essays will be graded according to the cogency of your arguments, the soundness of the understanding of course texts you display, and the clarity of your prose.

****Avoid long quotations from course texts. To show that a course text says what you say it does, support your interpretations of texts with precise footnote references.

****Your essay should reflect your own independent reading and thinking about the topic, and should not plagiarize—represent another person's ideas or words as your own. Any borrowing of the words or ideas of another in your paper should be acknowledged in footnotes. See the UCSD policy on Integrity of Scholarship, accessible at

<http://www.ucsd.edu/catalog/0506/front/AcadRegu.html>

****Arneson's office hours: Mondays 3:30-4:30 and Wednesdays 4:00-5:00 in HSS 8057. Email rarneson@ucsd.edu phone 858 534-6810