ADVANCE INFORMATION ON FINAL EXAM    PHILOSOPHY 13
FALL, 2004
The final exam for this course will take place on Friday, December 10, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Cognitive Science Bldg. 002 (our regular classroom). The final exam will comprehend all course materials (required readings, lectures, and handouts) but will emphasize the material covered after the midterm exam.
No use of books or notes will be permitted at any time during the final exam.

The final exam counts for 40 per cent of your overall course grade. (If you are enrolled in this course on a Pass/Not Pass basis, you must earn a C- or better grade on the final exam in order to get a Pass grade in the course, with one exception: If you have an A- or better average grade on the midterm and the writing assignment, you have earned a Pass grade and you are not required to take the final exam.)

The first hour and a half of the exam will consist of short-answer questions testing comprehension of course readings. You will have some choice as to what questions to answer.

The final hour and a half of the exam will consist of four essay questions drawn from the list of eight questions that begins toward the bottom of this page. Four questions from this list will be posed on the actual exam, and you will be asked to answer two questions.

The short-answer section of the final exam counts for one-half of your exam grade and the essay section for one-half.

ESSAY QUESTIONS.

1. In course readings Robert Adams affirms a version of a divine command theory of moral obligation. He then confronts this theory with a problem he labels “Abraham’s Dilemma.” State in your own words Adams’s divine command theory, the difficulty he poses for it, and his response to the difficulty. Does Adams’s response successfully meet the difficulty? Why or why not?

2. In his essay “Moral Luck,” Thomas Nagel writes, “Kant believed that good or bad luck should influence neither our moral judgment of a person and his actions, nor his moral assessment of himself.” Nagel adds that Kant’s position on moral luck “appears to be wrong, but it arises in response to a fundamental problem about moral responsibility to which we possess no satisfactory solution.” Should we accept or reject the no-moral-luck thesis?

3. Does determinism (that is, the idea that all events are determined by prior conditions according to physical laws) imply that when we decide what to do, we are never free to choose anything other than what we actually choose? State the response to this issue developed by Immanuel Kant in section 3 of his Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. Evaluate his argument on this point.

4. On p. 38 of his Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant states the humanity formula of the categorical imperative in these words: "So act that you use humanity,
whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." Explain this version of the categorical imperative principle in your own words. Does the humanity formula as you interpret it allow, forbid, or require lying to the would-be murderer at the door when that is the only way to save the life of the intended victim? For what reasons? Use the humanity formula to elucidate the position Kant takes regarding the murder at the door example in his essay “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy.” Present the strongest argument you can develop in support of Kant’s verdict as to what one ought to do in such a case.

5. Kant identifies being moral with being wholeheartedly resolved to act only on universalizable maxims. That is to say, a moral agent is disposed to act in conformity with the categorical imperative principle come what may. In chapter 1 of *Utilitarianism* Mill criticizes this doctrine. He states that when Kant “begins to deduce from this precept any of the actual duties of morality, he fails, almost grotesquely, to show that there would be any contradiction, any logical (not to say physical) impossibility, in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct.” Assess Mill’s criticism in the light of Kant’s four examples of applying his principle.

6. Is sexual fidelity in marriage morally required, never morally required, or morally optional (required if the couple agrees to it but not otherwise)? Contrast the approaches to answering this question supplied by Mill’s utilitarianism and Kant’s categorical imperative doctrine. What factors would determine the answers each of these doctrines would reach? Which method of determining what ought to be done seems superior to you? For what reasons? (If both approaches strike you as unacceptable, defend your opinion.)

7. Are there any kinds of action that one ought morally never to do whatever the consequences? Consider one of these examples of moral rules that some affirm to be exceptionless: (1) Do not kill innocent nonthreatening people, (2) Do not betray those you love, or (3) Do not break your promise when doing so would seriously harm the person to whom the promise was made. With regard to the example you have chosen, ought one always to follow the rule, whatever the consequences? Your discussion should consider relevant arguments in some of the following course authors: Robert Nozick, Thomas Nagel, Amartya Sen, J.S. Mill, or Immanuel Kant.

8. Is restriction of a person’s liberty for her own good against her will (paternalism) always ruled impermissible by the humanity formula of Kant’s categorical imperative? Why or why not?