

**ADVANCE INFORMATION ON FINAL EXAM PHILOSOPHY 13
FALL, 2005**

The final exam for this course will take place on Thursday, December 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Center Hall 216 (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.

On the actual final you will be asked to answer one A question and one B question.

****Note.** When questions ask you to “assess” or “evaluate” a course author’s view, you should indicate the considerations and arguments the author advances and indicate where and how these considerations and arguments go wrong or why they are sound. A bare statement of your opinion does not constitute an assessment for purposes of this exam.

A1. Does Kant’s Categorical Imperative doctrine imply that it is morally wrong to tell a lie in order to save a life by misleading a would-be murderer? Why or why not? In your view, does the handling of this issue by the Categorical Imperative doctrine amount to an objection against the doctrine or rather constitute some reason to accept it? In either case, why so? Your answers should engage and assess Kant’s discussion of this question in his essay “On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns” and Christine Korsgaard’s essay “The Right to Lie: Kant on Dealing with Evil.” Korsgaard suggests that the moral of the story, part of it anyway, is that we need a two-level moral theory. Is this suggestion right or wrong in your view? Explain your reasons.

A2. Suppose the world gradually becomes more and more filled with people who are egoists--disposed always to do whatever is in their own interest, and ready to lie, cheat, steal, commit murder, or do anything else that is, in the circumstances, advantageous for them. Finally, all people are egoists except you. You are firmly resolved to live in conformity with the requirements of moral principles, but you are wondering what moral principles require of you in these circumstances. Carefully explain what (a) act-utilitarianism and (b) Kant’s Categorical Imperative principle would hold that you are required to do in these circumstances. Which set of recommendations is more defensible, in your view? Why so? (If you think neither set of recommendations is defensible, explain your reasons for thinking this is so.)

A3. Suppose a parent is moved by strong love for her child to make great efforts to care for her child and even risks her life to save her child from lethal danger. According to Kant’s position developed in section 1 of his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, would the mother’s

actions so described have moral worth? Why or why not? What considerations underlie Kant's view on this issue? Attack or defend Kant's position concerning the basis of moral worth.

A4. Compare two versions of a universalization test (what would happen if everyone or nearly everyone did the same?) for the moral permissibility of proposed courses of action: (a) Kant's Universal Law formulation of the Categorical Imperative and (b) Hooker's rule-consequentialism. Describe situations in which the two moral doctrines would give conflicting verdicts, explain how the two doctrines would deliver their verdicts, and defend Kant against Hooker or Hooker against Kant.

B5. In your view, under what conditions, if any, is it morally permissible or morally required to kill another person or persons in order to save one's own life? Your discussion should include an elucidation and assessment of (a) the answer to this question developed by Judith Thomson in her essay "Self-Defense" and (b) the answer to this question implied by act-utilitarianism.

B6. In his essay "On the Nature and Value of Rights," Joel Feinberg urges that a world without moral rights (or a world in which no one believed that anyone had any moral rights) would lack something of great moral value and would in fact be worse than our present very imperfect world even if people were all very nice and beneficent and let us say always behaved as they should according to the utilitarian principle endorsed by J. S. Mill. In your view do the considerations Feinberg adduces amount to a cogent criticism of Mill's utilitarianism? Why or why not? Your answer should include a consideration of what you believe Mill's best reply to Feinberg would be.

B7. Many people would hold that the moral person, the person of integrity, is the person who always behaves in conformity with common-sense moral rules such as tell the truth, keep your promises and contracts, respect private property, be loyal to family and friends, and so on. Compare how such common-sense moral rules should figure in moral decision making according to (a) the ethics of prima-facie duties developed by W. Ross and (b) rule-consequentialism as developed by B. Hooker. Defend Ross's position against the criticisms Hooker would make of it or Hooker's position against the criticisms Ross would make of it.

B8. Suppose a bad man credibly threatens that unless you do something really bad, he will do something far worse. For example, his threat is that unless you murder his hated enemy the innocent and nice mayor, he will murder three other equally innocent and nice mayors of other cities. After careful deliberation, you perceive that you really have only two choices: resist the threat, in which case you do not murder the mayor and he murders three others, or comply with the threat, in which case you murder the mayor and the three others continue to live. Explain how the Doctrine of Double Effect as affirmed by E. Anscombe in her essay "War and Murder" would bear on the question, whether or not complying with the bad man's threat in these circumstances would be morally permissible. Compare this case to another: You can choose either to do nothing or to save three people from suffering death of a kind they rate as just as bad as what the three mayors might suffer in the previous case, but an unavoidable side effect of your rescue operation will be that you cause one other person to die a death of a kind the person rates as just as bad as what the one mayor might suffer in the previous case. If you do nothing, the three will die and the one will live. Again, explain how the Doctrine of Double Effect as affirmed by E. Anscombe would bear on the question, whether you ought to save or do nothing.