

PHILOSOPHY 13-ADVANCE INFORMATION ON MIDTERM EXAM FALL, 2002

The midterm exam will consist of questions drawn from the following list. On the actual exam, three of these questions will be posed, and you will be asked to answer exactly two of them.

At the exam no use of books or notes will be permitted.

1. Suppose someone claims that the good life for humans consists of sex, drugs, and rock and roll and someone else replies that the good life for humans consists of philosophical contemplation of the true nature of the universe. Consider the status of these claims according to (a) Mill's arguments in paragraphs 3-10 of chapter 2 of *Utilitarianism*, (b) the desire-satisfaction view, and (c) the views embraced respectively by Richard Kraut and Robert Adams. How would these theories of human good assess these claims? Do any of these proposals concerning the nature of intrinsic good yield good reason to accept or embrace these claims? Why or why not?
2. In his essay "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism," J. J. C. Smart observes, "For an extreme utilitarian moral rules are rules of thumb." He defends extreme against restricted utilitarianism. Explain what is at stake in this debate. Using arguments drawn from some of J.S. Mill, John Rawls, and R.M. Hare, defend or attack Smart's position.
3. In "Rights and Agency" Amartya Sen imagines a decision problem faced by someone he calls Donna. He urges that the Donna's choice and the variants of it he introduces yield objections both against utilitarianism (and utility-based morality) and against the idea that individual moral rights should be regarded as side constraints. State Sen's arguments to these conclusions and either defend or criticize them.
4. Utilitarianism, it is claimed, implies that if one could gain the very small pleasure of a single lick of ice cream for a large enough number of people, but only by killing an innocent person who is not threatening anyone, one morally ought to do the killing to get the lickings. Is this claim correct? Does this claim generate a cogent objection against utilitarianism? In each case, why or why not? Your answer should include consideration of relevant views in John Rawls's reading on "Classical Utilitarianism."
5. In "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect," Philippa Foot concludes that the Doctrine of Double Effect "plays only a quite subsidiary role in determining what we [should] say in these cases, while the distinction between avoiding injury and bringing aid is very important indeed." Explain the Doctrine of Double Effect and state Foot's objection against it. Assess Foot's position.

6. "Sacrificing your own interests for the sake of other people is sometimes morally heroic, and always morally permissible, but never morally required unless you can secure a great gain for others at trivial cost to yourself." To what extent would the positions adopted by (a) Peter Singer in "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" and (b) Susan Wolf in "Moral Saints" agree or disagree with the quoted statement? What do Singer and Wolf recommend regarding self-sacrifice for the sake of others? Either attack Singer's position, or Wolf's, or both.