

MIDTERM TAKEHOME EXAM PHILOSOPHY 160 WINTER, 2009

This exam is due at the start of class on Monday, February 9. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty.

Write essays responding to TWO of the following numbered topics, one A topic and one B topic. Please indicate clearly which two questions you are addressing. Your essay in response to an A topic counts for 60 per cent of your exam grade. Your essay in response to a B topic answer counts 40 per cent of your exam grade. Your exam should be the equivalent of about eight typed double-spaced pages. Your answers may be hand-written if you prefer, but should be legible.

A1. In *Morals by Agreement* David Gauthier writes, "One chooses rationally in endeavouring to maximize the fulfillment of those preferences that one holds in a considered way in the choice situation" (p. 32). He also writes, "We shall defend the traditional conception of morality as a rational constraint on the pursuit of individual interest" (p. 2). Explain carefully how Gauthier attempts to reconcile these claims. Is the attempt successful or not? Why or why not?

A2. Explain Kant's distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. Is morality better regarded as a system of categorical or hypothetical imperatives? For what reasons? Your answer should consider relevant arguments by Gauthier, Kant, and Philippa Foot.

B3. On p. 38 of the *Groundwork* Immanuel Kant states a formulation of his Categorical Imperative principle: "So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." Taking into account Kant's derivation of that principle earlier in that same paragraph, and his own application of this principle to four examples in the next four paragraphs, and perhaps the discussion of dignity versus price on p. 42, develop an interpretation of the humanity formulation (HF). What exactly is Kant affirming? Explain how HF as you interpret it would apply to the issue of the permissibility of committing suicide to avoid chronic severe pain. What verdict would HF yield for this type of action? Does this verdict on the permissibility of suicide enhance or undermine the plausibility of Kant's HF, regarded as a candidate for the status of fundamental moral principle, in your view?

B4. (1) Could there be conscientious people who do morally wrong actions but in such a way that they are morally praiseworthy for doing them (these actions have moral worth)? Why or why not? Consider for example the possibility of conscientious Nazi racists. (2) Could there be morally worthy, morally praiseworthy actions that are not, as Kant puts it, "done from duty"? Your answer should take into account relevant arguments with a bearing on this issue advanced by Immanuel Kant, Nomy Arpaly, and the class notes author. (For Kant's views, see Section I of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. The central reading for this question is the N. Arpaly essay.)

Your answers will be graded according to the cogency of your arguments, the clarity of your prose, and the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you display. Your answers should avoid lengthy quoting of course texts. To show that a course author holds the view you are attributing to him, provide precise footnote references that support your interpretations. University rules and moral norms of honesty forbidding plagiarism apply to this assignment.

I'll place a couple of guides for writing moral philosophy papers at the course web page (or if all else fails, I'll get them to you by email attachment. Especially if you are taking a first philosophy course, these might be useful.

I'll hold extra office hours this week. To be announced. Regular office hours are Wednesdays 1-3 in HSS 8057.—RJA.