This assignment is due in class on Monday, March 7. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty.

Write an essay of about five to seven pages on one of the following topics. Please indicate which topic you have selected on the title page of your essay. Your essays will be evaluated according to the cogency of your arguments, the soundness of the understanding of course materials that you display, and the clarity of your prose.

1. “Ordinary moral thinking about aid to needy strangers discriminates in favor of the political closeness of compatriots and the literal closeness of people in peril who are close at hand,” writes Richard Miller. Peter Singer disputes ordinary moral thinking on both of these points. When the issue is whether we ought to provide assistance, do we owe more to fellow countrymen than to outsiders and more to those close at hand who are in need than to distant needy persons? Why or why not? Your essay should consider relevant arguments by R. Miller and P. Singer.

2. David Schmidtz writes, “an institution helps people to live peaceful and productive lives when it leads people to take responsibility for their own welfare.” Regarding the internalization of responsibility, does Schmidtz hold that we ought never to coerce anyone, against her will, to induce her to confer benefits on others (whom she has neither contracted nor pledged to help), just for the sake of those others? What are his main arguments on this issue? Attack or defend his position.

3. In “Assisting’ the Global Poor,” Thomas Pogge argues that even if there is no duty of charity to help distant needy strangers as such, members of affluent societies in the contemporary world still are bound by strict obligations to the global poor. His basis for this claim is that “we are imposing a global order whose unfairness benefits us while exacerbating severe poverty abroad. We must then at least compensate the global poor. Failing to do this, we would be harming them and profiting from injustice at their expense.” State Pogge’s main arguments for these claims and attack or defend his position.

4. In different ways both David Schmidtz and Robert Goodin reject the idea that holding people responsible (in the sense of assigning blame or credit appropriately) should significantly shape social welfare policy. Consider then the proposal that social policy should discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving poor (favoring state aid to the former) and between the deserving and the undeserving rich (favoring taxing the latter to aid the poor). How would
Schmidtz respond to this proposal from his standpoint? How would Goodin respond to this proposal from his opposed standpoint? Criticize or defend either or both of their positions on this matter.

5. Liam Murphy urges that morality requires us only to do our fair share to improve the world, not more. Jean Hampton urges that unless stringent conditions are met, it is not even morally permissible, let alone required, to sacrifice one’s own interests for the sake of other people’s interests. Carefully state Murphy’s or Hampton’s position or both positions and attack or defend one or both of them.

When doing this assignment, as always, you should observe the university rules on plagiarism. Arneson's office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 and Thursdays 12-2 in H and SS 8057. Email rarneson@ucsd.edu Office phone 534 6810