

### Review Sheet for Final Examination

The purpose of this sheet is to provide you with a guide to help you prepare for the April 9 exam. Remember that in studying the positions of a philosopher, you must be concerned with the particular claims of the philosopher, the reasons which are offered to support the claim, and the definitions of critical terms provided by the philosopher. I don't expect you to repeat definition of terms verbatim from the notes or the text. You may express definitions in your own words. But, of course, your statement of the definition of a term must be equivalent in meaning to the definitions given in the class/text to get full credit.

Essay questions will be restricted to material covered in class alone or along with the text. However, some of the short answer questions will draw a bit on material in the readings that has not been covered in class (e.g., the definition in the of imperfect duties regarding Kant's ethics.)

You may be asked to compare and contrast the positions we have studied in class. The concepts of compatibility and incompatibility play a crucial role in assessing philosophical positions as well as comparing and contrasting them with other positions. Statements are COMPATIBLE with each other when they can be held without contradiction. For example, the statement (A) there are rationally discoverable moral standards is compatible with (B) the utilitarian claim that actions are good only when they promote good consequences for the greatest number. Statement (A) is also compatible with (C) Kant's claim that actions are inherently right or wrong. Statements are INCOMPATIBLE with each other when they cannot be held without contradiction: if one is false the other must be true (although both may be false). For example, statements (B) and (C) above are incompatible with each other. Also, for example, (at least in the world in which we live) it is incompatible to hold that Dr. Jones is a porcupine and that Dr. Jones is a giraffe. (Note that both these statements are false.)

- I) For the material related to the review of ethical theories, you should be able to:
- A) define, compare and contrast the categories of ethical standards: invented (personal and cultural) and discoverable (contextual and absolute).
  - B) discuss, compare and contrast the principal western ethical theories which posit discoverable standards: teleological ethics (virtue/natural law ethics); consequentialism (ethical egoism and utilitarianism) and deontological ethics (Kantian ethics.)

For each theory, you should be able to articulate its basic norm governing human moral activity and describe the process of ethical reasoning within the theory. Note I will ask questions about teleological ethics only in a very general fashion as covered in class. Questions about egoism, utilitarianism, and deontological ethics (including Kant) will go into more detail. For example, you should be able to discuss differences between the ethical egoist and the utilitarian regarding which consequences individuals should consider in making moral decisions. You should be prepared to discuss why Kant would reject any role for consequences in moral reasoning. You should be prepared to discuss the sense in which utilitarianism is an empirical theory. You should

be able to identify the five factors that utilitarians must consider in making ethics judgments (as discussed on the review sheet.). **(Don't worry about the material on human rights on the review sheet. We'll get to that for the final.)**

2 For Kantian ethics:

(A) You should be prepared to define critical terms like: hypothetical imperative, categorical imperative, imperfect duty (text), intention of an action, happiness, etc.

(B) explain (1) the distinction between objective and subjective moral standards; (a) why Kant believes that hypothetical imperatives lead to subjective moral standards; (b) why moral imperatives must take the form of categorical imperative; and (c) how Kant would distinguish between different kinds of actions (e.g., taking human life) to argue that some killing of human life is morally justified while other is not.

(C) compare and contrast acting from duty, acting from inclination, acting in conformity with duty, and acting in conformity with inclination. Explain why only acting from duty has moral worth for Kant.

(D) State and discuss the two forms of the categorical imperative: (!) act always in such a way that you could will that act to be universally binding and (2) always treat others as ends in themselves and not just as means to an end.

(E) explain why the critic of Kant will argue that Kant inevitably brings consequences to bear in determining whether actions are right or wrong.

3. For Deontological Ethics in general: distinguish between rule deontological ethics (e.g., Kant) and act deontological ethics (intuitionism).

Sample questions for the exam.

Part 1 will have about 8 questions at 5-6 points. They may consist of definitions; true/false statement; or short answer questions. In both part I and II, it is crucial for you to define all critical terms and to give reasons for what you assert or attribute to others.

1) Define the following terms at 2 points each:

- a) Culturally invented moral standards
- b) categorical imperative (2<sup>nd</sup> Version – Kant)
- c) principle of utility

2) If moral standards are invented, then they must be personal and subjective. T/F? Why/Why not?

3) Present a brief argument (about 3- 4 lines) setting forth an objecting that a utilitarian calculation of consequences may amount to nothing better than guesswork.

Part II. You will be asked to answer three of four essay questions (about 1 solid paragraph in length).

1) Kant thinks that actions are universally right or universally wrong. Yet he thinks that capital punishment is morally justified although he generally think that taking human life is morally wrong.

Why does Kant think that moral actions are universally right or universally wrong? How can he avoid the apparent contradiction above – be specific and precise. (20 points).