

### Review Sheet for Final Examination

The purpose of this sheet is to provide a brief list of learning objectives for the exam. It focuses principally on the sorts of material that will be covered on the longer essays and in some of the sort essay questions. It is NOT meant to cover all material assigned in the readings. **Some shorter questions will focus on material assigned in reading but not covered in class.** 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. For Kantian/deontological ethics, you should be able to:**

- 1) define critical terms like: hypothetical imperative, categorical imperative, intention of an action, happiness, etc.
- 2) explain 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.
- 3) 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. You should be able to discuss this matter in light of Kant's claim that only the will is good without qualification.
- 4) 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.
- 5) explain why the critics will argue that Kant often brings consequences to bear in determining whether actions are right or wrong.

#### **II) For the material related to "rights," you should be able to:**

- 1) define and distinguish between the various kinds of rights: natural positive, natural negative, conventional positive, and conventional negative.
- 2) set forth the features of moral rights: their relation to an agent who has rights; their relation to others on whom obligations are imposed
- 3) discuss various bases for universal moral rights: "endowed by their creator", "actual features shared by all human beings;" and "the potential for free and rational action," etc. Many rights theorists seek to extend moral rights to all and only human beings. What problems arise with this if the basis of having moral rights lies exclusively in certain empirical features of humans. Why would the proponent of animals rights reject the claim that only humans have moral rights.

4) Discuss the libertarian argument that the only natural or moral rights are negative in character. Present an objection against this view, namely, that there are some positive natural rights.

5) discuss the contrast between consequentialist ethics and rights based ethics.

**II) For the material relating to virtue/teleological ethics, you should be able to:**

1) define: end, final end, happiness, human nature, virtue, practical reason, mean of action;

2) discuss why Aristotle regards happiness as the final end of human activity and why he defines it as virtuous activity in conformity with reason;

3) set forth the formal characteristics of happiness (living well), e.g., self-sufficiency, final end, etc, and show how Aristotle employs these criteria to eliminate certain contenders for constituting happiness (e.g., wealth and pleasure).

4) discuss Aristotle's conception of virtue as the mean of action between the extremes of excess and deficiency. Discuss the nature of practical reasoning in determining the mean; what factors it takes into account and the manner in which it uses general moral rules;

5) compare and contrast Aristotle's basic question for ethics (why kind of person should we become to be happy) with the basic question in consequentialist and deontological ethical theories (what sorts of actions should we perform.);

6) Discuss criticisms of Aristotle's ethics in terms of the 'objectivity' of his conception of flourishing and the determination of virtues.