

Study Sheet for FinalPossible Short-Answer Questions (You'll have to answer 15/16—1 pt each)

- (1) State all three formulations of Kant's categorical imperative.
- (2) Explain the difference between hypothetical and categorical imperatives.
- (3) Define "rule utilitarianism."
- (4) Define "act utilitarianism."
- (5) How does Kant define "humanity"?
- (6) Explain the difference between direct and indirect forms of utilitarianism.
- (7) According to Kant, what is the difference between unconditioned value and intrinsic value?
- (8) Describe Kant's distinction between rules of skill and counsels of prudence.
- (9) Define "autonomy." What value must a pregnant person weigh against the value of her autonomy to determine whether aborting her late stage fetus is morally permissible?
- (10) What is the difference between a priori and a posteriori moral knowledge? Describe what Kant would consider an article of a priori moral knowledge. Describe what Kant would consider an item of a posteriori moral knowledge.
- (11) What, according to Kant, are the two functions of "empirical ethics"?
- (12) Explain why Kant thinks that happiness does not have unconditioned value.
- (13) Kant thinks that only actions done from duty have true moral worth. State the "**counterfactual** account" of what makes it the case that an act is done *from* duty.
- (14) Kant thinks that only actions done from duty have true moral worth. State the "**actual** account" of what makes it the case that an act is done *from* duty.
- (15) Define "indirect act utilitarianism."
- (16) Explain Mill's distinction between *internal* and *external* sanctions.
- (17) Define "analytic truth" and provide two examples.
- (18) Mill says that "the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it." Explain how someone might desire something that is not desirable.
- (19) State Mill's desire-based characterization of intrinsic goodness.
- (20) Define "supererogatory."
- (21) How might someone argue for the consistency of the following two positions: (a) killing a fetus is never justified; (b) capital punishment is a justified punishment for convicted murderers?
- (22) Explain Mill's distinction between "higher" and "lower" pleasures.
- (23) Define "meta-ethics" and list three meta-ethical views.
- (24) Who was Kitty Genovese?
- (25) Define "perfect duty" and "imperfect duty" and provide an example of each.
- (26) What questions does moral psychology address? List some positions in moral psychology and describe the answers they give to these questions.
- (27) Describe Kant's conception of the will.
- (28) According to Mill, how can we determine which of two kinds of pleasure is more worthy of promotion?
- (29) According to Mill, what population should we consider when we're trying to evaluate which of several available actions will maximize happiness?
- (30) Define "non-culpable ignorance."
- (31) Define "brute relativism."
- (32) Define "fancy price" and explain how Kant distinguishes it from "dignity."
- (33) Describe three functions that Mill assigns to a first principle of morality.
- (34) Explain the difference between consequentialism and utilitarianism.
- (35) Explain how Williams argues against the seemingly obvious claim that it is not immoral to do what you know will make the world better than it would have otherwise been.

Possible Medium-Length Essay Questions (You'll have to answer 3/5—15pts each)

- (1) Thomson's discussion of abortion suggests that we have no perfect positive duties. Is she right about this? Did Kitty Genovese have a right to assistance of some sort? What makes benevolence an imperfect duty? When, if ever, are we permitted (or even obligated) to violate a perfect, negative right so as to discharge an imperfect positive duty? When answering this last question discuss one of the hypothetical cases we analyzed in class in which it seems (to some people) that we should violate the rights of one to help someone else: e.g. the Trolley case.
- (2) Apply the principle of utility (PU) to the issue of suicide. Does the PU permit or prohibit suicide? Apply Kant's universal law formulation of his categorical imperative (FUL) to the issue of suicide. Does the FUL permit or prohibit suicide? Make sure to consider the various circumstances in which a person might commit suicide and defend your answers to these questions with argumentation.
- (3) Apply the formulation of humanity version of the categorical imperative to laziness or sloth. Why, according to Kant, is laziness immoral? Are Kant's reasons compelling? How might a utilitarian approach this issue? How might Mill, given his distinction between higher and lower pleasures? Which moral theory provides a better account of laziness and our (purported) obligation to study and develop our talents? Defend your answer with an argument.
- (4) State Kant's first formulation of the categorical imperative. Does the categorical imperative on this formulation prohibit lying to escape embarrassment? What sort of inconsistency (if any) arises from trying to "universalize" a maxim of lying to escape embarrassment? Make sure you use examples to back up your answers.
- (5) Is it a mistake to value money for its own sake? Is happiness the only thing that really has intrinsic value? How would Mill answer these questions? How would Williams? Are their answers compelling? Defend your response with arguments.
- (6) Is Kant right in connecting morality and free will in the manner that he does? Are we free to act immorally—e.g. to kill ourselves when life gets tough or kill other people to take what they have? How, if at all, does this sort of freedom differ from the kind of freedom disclosed to us when we realize we can do the right thing even when we are strongly inclined to do what we know to be wrong? Defend your answers with arguments.
- (7) Explain and evaluate Kant's teleological argument against the claim that being happy is the purpose, end, or function of a human being.
- (8) What would Kant say about William's case of Jim the botanist? Would Jim's killing the one Indian to save the others amount to treating humanity in another merely as a means? Why or why not?
- (9) Does our intuitive response to Nozick's experience machine present a problem for utilitarianism? Does it present a problem for all forms of consequentialism? Explain your answers.

Possible Long Essays (you'll have to answer 2—no choices—20 pts each)

- (1) Mill tries to "prove" utilitarianism by arguing that nothing is desired for its own sake except happiness. Explain Mill's argument and the problem posed for it by the miser and the monk. Does the miser (who isn't visibly happy) value money for its own sake independently of happiness as defined in terms of pleasure? Does the monk (who doesn't help others) value virtue for its own sake independently of happiness similarly defined? Do the miser and monk (so described) refute Mill's attempt to prove utilitarianism? Why or why not?
- (2) Kant distinguishes between the **dignity** possessed by humanity in ourselves and others on the one hand and the lesser value—**market price** and **fancy price**—of pleasure and its sources on the other hand. Explain this distinction and Kant's injunction to always treat humanity as an end in itself and never as a mere means to our ends. What is the significance of this distinction and injunction for our moral evaluation of colonialism? What is the significance of this distinction and injunction for our moral evaluation of slavery? Defend your answers with arguments.
- (3) Suppose there is a gene that codes for automatic or instinctive sympathy: a propensity to experience benevolent feelings when seeing others in need. Suppose further that Irene has this gene, and as a result, she has the relevant benevolent feelings when she sees people in need. Ultimately, the desire engendered by these feelings leads her to become a fireman. Now suppose Irene is led by her sympathy for the people trapped in the crumbling World Trade Center to run in and try to rescue them. Does her act have moral value? Does she deserve credit or praise for what she has done? What would Kant say? Suppose instead that Irene doesn't want to go in, and doesn't feel any sympathy for those trapped. (She is emotionally numb or in shock.) But she goes in anyway because she judges it is her moral duty to do her duty as a fireman. Does her act have moral value? Does she deserve credit or praise for what she has done?

What would Kant say? What, if anything, distinguishes the value of the act done from sympathy from the value of the act done from duty? What, if anything, explains why some people do what they know duty demands of them while others fail to do what they know they are obligated to do?

(4) The first formulation of the categorical imperative provides us with a way to test principles (or maxims) to see whether it would be moral to act on those principles. Critics have complained that the test is both too weak (it lets in bad principles) and too strong (it keeps out perfectly fine principles). Explain these criticisms using examples. How might Kant respond to these criticisms? How might Kantians modify Kant's theory to respond to them? Are these answers compatible with Kant's claim that the categorical imperative does no more than articulate the "the universal lawfulness" of a permissible action "in general."

(5) Suppose that you were the last human alive and you had access to nuclear weapons you could use to destroy the Earth's environment. If you set the timer, immediately upon your death all the rest of the animals on Earth would perish immediately after you, you being the last human. Would it be wrong to set the timer and destroy the rest of nature? What would Mill say? What would Kant say, given his view that value depends on an exercise of humanity: i.e. a choice of ends?