

STUDY GUIDE

PHIL08 Midterm

I will choose seven of the following questions, and you will be required to provide responses to five of my selections. You will be given twenty-five minutes in class. You will not need a blue book.

1. Explain the difference between normative and descriptive language.
2. How does Rachels characterize "the minimum conception of morality"?
3. What is the "cultural differences argument"?
4. Describe at least one major objection to cultural relativism.
5. How is emotivism distinct from general ethical relativism (subjectivism)?
6. Identify at least two theoretical advantages of the Divine Command Theory as described by James Rachels.
7. According to one interpretation of the Divine Command Theory, God forbids certain actions (such as murder) *because* they are wrong. Why, according to Rachels, is this a problematic interpretation?
8. What are the three key elements of the Theory of Natural Law?
9. How is psychological egoism distinct from ethical egoism?
10. Reconstruct Ayn Rand's argument for Ethical Egoism.
11. Moral philosophers often maintain that "'ought' implies 'can'". What does this mean?
12. Singer's central argument in "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" rests on two key premises. The first is that death and suffering due to malnutrition, inadequate medical care, etc. are bad. What is the strong version of the second key premise?
13. According to Colin Gavaghan, it makes no sense to say that discarded embryos are harmed by PGD (pre-implantation genetic diagnosis). Why does he think this?
14. One objection to PGD contends that widespread implementation of the process would reduce the political 'clout' of "disabled persons who already exist or who will be born regardless of the availability of PGD" (Gavaghan). Gavaghan does not think that this possibility is a good enough reason to prohibit PGD. Why not?