

Ethics & Social Responsibility

January 2017

SECTION A-MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Answer all questions in the OMR sheet provided.

1. Utilitarianism is a good example of _____

A. Idealistic moral reasoning

B. hedonistic moral reasoning

C. categorical moral reasoning

D. non-consequentialist moral reasoning

2. Which feminist philosopher says Moral Philosophy is bankrupt and we should return to Aristotle's way of thinking, which is virtue ethics?

A. Ayn Rand

B. Carol Gilligan

C. Nel Noddings

D. Elizabeth Anscombe

3. Who said: "Justice is a name for certain moral requirements, which regarded collectively, stand higher in the scale of social utility and are therefore of more paramount obligation than any others"?

A. Immanuel Kant

B. John Stuart Mill

C. Thomas Hobbes

D. Jeremy Bentham

4. _____ focus on the action which will yield the greatest good in any particular case while _____ focus more closely on which general rule will yield the best outcome.

A. Kantians, virtue ethicists

B. Ethical egoists, Platonists

C. Act utilitarians, rule utilitarians

D. Feminists, social contract theories

5. Who wrote On Liberty and Utilitarianism?

A. Immanuel Kant

B. John Stuart Mill

C. Jeremy Bentham

D. Elizabeth Anscombe

6. According to the Social Contract theory, we are obligated to obey the laws because we each participate in a social system that promises more _____ than _____.

A. benefits, burdens

B. blessings, commitments

C. assistance, responsibilities

D. advantages, disadvantages

7. Moral judgments must be backed by good _____ and morality requires the _____ consideration of each individual's interest.

A. motive, biased

B. feelings, partial

C. reason, impartial

D. subjectivism, egoistic

8. Ethics takes us out of the world of 'This is the way I do it' or 'This is the way it has always been done' into the realm of 'This is the action that can be _____ justified'

A. rationally

B. egoistically

C. emotionally

D. subjectively

9. To Socrates, the unexamined life is _____.

A. worth living

B. not worth living

C. a life of hedonism

D. a life of happiness

10. Ethical theories that emphasize right actions are incomplete because they neglect the question of _____.

A. character

B. social standing

C. social responsibility

D. political correctness

11. _____ said women are not as rational as men, thus they are naturally ruled by men.

A. Hobbes

B. Socrates

C. Aristotle

D. Bentham

12. _____ posits that each person actually pursue his or her own self-interest exclusively.

A. Ethical egoism

B. Moral relativism

C. Ethical subjectivism

D. Psychological egoism

13. St. Augustine, the 4th century Christian thinker, made _____'s philosophy the basis of Christian ethics.

A. Plato

B. Socrates

C. Aristotle

D. St. Thomas Aquinas

14. When medieval philosophers discussed the virtues, it was always in the context of Divine Law, and the _____ of faith, hope, charity and obedience.

A. theological virtues

B. theosophical virtues

C. philosophical virtues

D. social contract virtues

15. Which French philosopher says that Kant's total prohibition against lying is wrong.

A. Albert Camus

B. Jean Paul Sartre

C. Benjamin Constant

D. Jean Jacques Rousseau

16. Which psychologist conducted an experiment during the Depression to prove that one can put dollar value on certain needs and preferences?

A. Carl Jung

B. Thorndike

C. Carl Rogers

D. William J. Doherty

17. The emphasis on personal relationships to the exclusion of an obligation to the rest of humanity does not seem to be either moral or rational and therefore raises a doubt about the _____ as a complete moral system.

A. ethics of care

B. ethical egoism

C. ethics of virtue

D. social contract theory

18. Who wrote Summa Theologica and Summa Contra Gentes?

A. St. Peter

B. St. Francis

C. St. Augustine

D. St. Thomas Aquinas

19. According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, an organization is seen as socially responsible by its commitment to contribute to sustainable economic development and to improve the_____of their employees, their families, the local community and the society at large.

A. social image

B. cost of living

C. quality of life

D. standard of living

20. History of Ethics in the West is divided into three main periods namely

A. Classical, Medieval and Modern

B. Antiquity, Middle Ages and Renaissance

C. Dark Ages, Renaissance and Postmodern

D. Before Christ, Anno Domini and Postmodern

Section B – Discussion & Exposition

Answer Four of the following questions.

1. Under what situations can we break the Argue your case based on social contract theory?

Ans:- The social contract theory suggests that individuals agree to live together in a society and follow its rules for mutual benefit. However, there are situations where one might argue that the social contract can be broken:

1. Violation of Basic Rights:- If a society fails to protect the fundamental rights and liberties of its members, individuals may argue that the social contract is broken because the government is not fulfilling its end of the agreement.

2. Unjust Laws:- If a society enforces laws that are considered blatantly unjust or discriminatory, individuals might argue that they have the right to resist or break the social contract to promote fairness and equality.

3. Abuse of Power:- When those in authority abuse their power and betray the trust placed in them by the citizens, it can be argued that the social contract is broken, as the government is not acting in the best interests of the people.

4. Failure of Reciprocity:- If a society fails to provide essential services, such as education, healthcare, or security, individuals may argue that the social contract is broken, as the expected reciprocal benefits are not being upheld.

5. Lack of Consent:- If individuals never explicitly or voluntarily agreed to the terms of the social contract, they might argue that they are not bound by its rules and can choose to break it.

In these situations, individuals may claim that the social contract is void or breached, justifying their resistance or non-compliance with societal rules.

2. In the context of organizations, social responsibility means implementing the "new" rules of corporate conduct. Explain

Ans:- In the context of organizations, social responsibility refers to the ethical and moral obligations that a company has towards its various stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment. Implementing the "new" rules of corporate conduct signifies a shift from traditional profit-driven approaches to a more holistic and socially conscious business model. This evolution in corporate behavior reflects an understanding that businesses are not only economic entities but also key players in shaping and influencing society.

The "new" rules of corporate conduct emphasize several key principles:

1. Ethical Practices:- Socially responsible organizations prioritize ethical conduct in all aspects of their operations. This includes fair treatment of employees, honest and transparent communication, and adherence to legal and regulatory standards.

2. Environmental Sustainability:- Modern businesses are expected to consider and minimize their environmental impact. This involves adopting sustainable practices, reducing carbon footprint, and promoting eco-friendly initiatives to address climate change and other environmental concerns.

3. Corporate Governance:- Transparency and accountability in corporate governance are crucial. This includes fair and transparent decision-making processes, protection of shareholder rights, and a commitment to preventing corruption and fraud.

4. Community Engagement:- Socially responsible organizations actively engage with the communities in which they operate. This can involve supporting local initiatives, investing in community development projects, and being responsive to the needs of the society.

5. Employee Well-being:- Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of employee well-being. This includes fair wages, a safe and healthy work environment, opportunities for professional development, and a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

6. Consumer Protection:- Socially responsible organizations prioritize the safety and well-being of their customers. This includes providing accurate product information, ensuring product safety, and addressing customer concerns responsibly.

Implementing these "new" rules of corporate conduct not only aligns businesses with societal expectations but also contributes to long-term sustainability and success. Companies that embrace social responsibility are often viewed more favorably by consumers, attract top talent, and are better positioned to navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing business landscape.

3. What are the strengths of cultural relativism?

Ans:- Cultural relativism is an anthropological concept that suggests that all beliefs, customs, and ethics are relative to the culture from which they originate. It emphasizes the idea that there are no universal standards to judge all cultures, and each culture should be understood and evaluated within its own context. While cultural relativism has its critics, it also has some strengths and advantages:

1. Cultural Understanding:- Cultural relativism promotes a deeper understanding of different cultures by encouraging individuals to suspend judgment and approach cultural practices from the perspective of those within the culture. This can lead to increased empathy and tolerance.

2. Avoidance of Ethnocentrism:- Ethnocentrism is the tendency to believe that one's own culture is superior to others. Cultural relativism helps counteract ethnocentrism by challenging individuals to recognize and appreciate the diversity of human cultures without imposing their own cultural values.

3. Respect for Diversity:- The concept reinforces the idea that cultural diversity is valuable and enriching. It discourages the imposition of a single set of values on diverse societies and encourages a more pluralistic view of the world.

4. Preservation of Cultural Identity:- Cultural relativism helps communities maintain their cultural identity without feeling pressured to conform to external standards. This can be particularly important in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization.

5. Promotion of Cultural Anthropology:- Cultural relativism is fundamental to the field of cultural anthropology. It encourages anthropologists to approach their research with an open mind, without imposing preconceived notions about what is considered "normal" or "right."

6. Recognition of Cultural Evolution:- Cultural relativism acknowledges that cultures evolve over time and that what might seem strange or unfamiliar in one era or context could be perfectly normal in another. This perspective helps in understanding cultural change and adaptation.

While cultural relativism has these strengths, it is not without its criticisms. Some argue that it can lead to moral relativism, where all cultural practices are considered equally valid, even those that involve human rights violations. Striking a balance between cultural understanding and the promotion of universal human rights remains a challenge in the application of cultural relativism.

4. What are the strengths of the Ethics of care?

Ans:- The ethics of care is a moral framework that emphasizes the importance of relationships, empathy, and compassion in ethical decision-making. While there may be variations in how the strengths are articulated, here are five commonly recognized strengths of the ethics of care:

1. Emphasis on Relationships:- The ethics of care places a strong emphasis on relationships and interpersonal connections. It recognizes the significance of caring for others and being responsive to their needs within the context of relationships, whether in personal, professional, or societal settings.

2. Contextual Understanding:- This ethical framework takes into account the specific context and details of a situation. Instead of relying on abstract principles or rules, the ethics of care encourages individuals to consider the unique circumstances and nuances of each ethical dilemma.

3. Valuing Emotions:- The ethics of care acknowledges the role of emotions in moral decision-making. It values emotions such as empathy, compassion, and sympathy, considering them important sources of moral insight. This stands in contrast to some other ethical theories that prioritize rationality and objectivity.

4. Feminist Perspective:- The ethics of care is often associated with feminist ethics, as it challenges traditional, male-centered ethical theories. It highlights the importance of traditionally feminine virtues like nurturing, empathy, and cooperation, aiming to create a more inclusive and diverse approach to ethics.

5. Practical Application:- Care ethics is often praised for its practicality and applicability to everyday life. By focusing on concrete relationships and real-life situations, it offers a guide for ethical decision-making that is grounded in the complexities of human interactions.

It's important to note that while the ethics of care has its strengths, it also has critics who argue that it may not provide clear guidelines for action in all situations or that it may be too subjective. Like any ethical framework, its applicability and effectiveness may depend on the specific context and individual perspectives.

5. Describe Kohlberg's six stages of moral development.

Ans:- Lawrence Kohlberg, a psychologist, proposed a six-stage theory of moral development, building upon the earlier work of Jean Piaget. Kohlberg's theory focuses on the development of moral reasoning and the ability to make ethical decisions. The stages are grouped into three levels, each consisting of two stages. Here is an overview of Kohlberg's six stages of moral development:

Level 1:- Preconventional Morality

Stage 1:- Obedience and Punishment Orientation (Preconventional):** At this stage, individuals are focused on avoiding punishment. They adhere to rules to avoid consequences and seek to follow authority figures.

Stage 2:- Individualism and Exchange (Preconventional):** Individuals at this stage begin to recognize that there is not just one right view handed down by authorities. They understand that different individuals have different perspectives, and they are motivated by self-interest, focusing on reciprocity and fairness.

Level 2:- Conventional Morality

Stage 3:- Interpersonal Relationships (Conventional):** In this stage, individuals value interpersonal relationships and seek approval from others. They want to be perceived as good and caring, following the expectations of family and society.

Stage 4:- Maintaining Social Order (Conventional):** Individuals in this stage are concerned with maintaining social order and obeying laws. They understand the importance of following established rules for the greater good of society.

Level 3:- Postconventional Morality

Stage 5:- Social Contract and Individual Rights (Postconventional):** At this stage, individuals recognize the importance of social contracts and the need for democratic processes. They understand that rules and laws are social agreements that can be changed for the greater good.

Stage 6:- Universal Principles (Postconventional):** This is the highest level of moral development according to Kohlberg. Individuals at this stage adhere to universal ethical principles, such as justice, equality, and human rights, even if they conflict with laws or social norms.

It's important to note that not everyone reaches the higher stages of moral development, and individuals may not progress through all the stages. Kohlberg's theory has been influential in understanding moral reasoning, but it also has its criticisms, such as cultural bias and the potential for gender differences in moral development.

SECTION C-CRITICAL ESSAY

Instruction: Answer TWO of the following questions.

1. In the summer of 1972, a shocking disclosure was made about a government sponsored medical syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease. The Public Health Service had begun the experiment in experiment that had gone on, unnoticed for forty years. The experiment concerned the effects of Alabama. It's purpose was to determine the extent of the damage that syphilis will do if left untreated. (it's effects, most of them known or at least surmised at the time of the experiment was insanity and death). Six hundred Black men were selected for the experiment. They were promised begun, are blindness; deafness; degeneration of the heart, bones and central nervous system free transportation to the hospital, free medical treatment for diseases other than syphilis, and free burial. Apparently they did not receive clear explanations of the possible harm the disease could cause them if left untreated. Was the experiment ethical? Look at the case from the utilitarian, Kantian and virtue ethics perspectives.

(Adapted from Vincent Ryan Ruggiero's book, "Thinking Critically About Ethical Issues" 2012, p.102)

Ans:- The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, as described in the passage, was a notorious example of unethical human experimentation conducted by the United States Public Health Service (PHS) from 1932 to 1972. Analyzing its ethics from three ethical perspectives—utilitarian, Kantian, and virtue ethics—provides a comprehensive understanding:

1. Utilitarian Perspective

Evaluation:- From a utilitarian standpoint, the harm caused by the Tuskegee Syphilis Study far outweighed any potential benefits. The study caused severe harm to the participants, leading to unnecessary suffering and death. Moreover, the information gathered from the study was not justifiable in terms of advancing medical knowledge, as the harmful effects of syphilis were already well-known.

Conclusion:- The utilitarian perspective would likely deem the Tuskegee Syphilis Study as highly unethical due to the significant harm inflicted on the participants without meaningful benefits to society.

2. Kantian Perspective

Evaluation:- From a Kantian perspective, the study violated the principle of treating individuals as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. Participants were deceived and not treated with the respect and dignity they deserved. The study also lacked transparency, and the participants were denied their autonomy by not providing informed consent.

Conclusion:- Kantian ethics would strongly condemn the Tuskegee Syphilis Study for violating fundamental principles of respect for individuals and their autonomy.

3. Virtue Ethics Perspective

Evaluation:- Virtue ethics focuses on the moral character of individuals and the development of virtuous traits. In the case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the actions of those involved, including the researchers and public health officials, exhibited a lack of compassion, honesty, and integrity. Virtue ethics emphasizes the importance of cultivating virtues such as empathy and honesty, which were clearly lacking in this study.

Conclusion:- From a virtue ethics standpoint, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study would be considered ethically reprehensible due to the absence of virtuous behavior among those responsible for its planning and execution.

In summary, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study was widely recognized as ethically indefensible from multiple ethical perspectives. It demonstrated a disregard for the well-being and autonomy of the participants, lacked transparency, and failed to provide any meaningful benefits to society.

2. Some senators threaten to block any candidates for superior courts who are not avowedly pro-choice on abortion. Critics say that such a requirement for prospective judges is a disservice to them and to the country because it refuses to allow what has traditionally been considered essential in judges - an open mind on all issues. Discuss the moral dimension of this issue, (Adapted from Vincent Ryan Ruggiero's book, "Thinking Critically About Ethical Issues" 2012, p.161)

Ans:- The moral dimension of requiring judicial candidates to be avowedly pro-choice on abortion raises several ethical considerations. At the heart of this issue is the tension between the desire for a judiciary that reflects certain values and the importance of preserving the principle of impartiality and open-mindedness in the judicial system.

1. Freedom of Thought and Expression

Advocates for an open-minded judiciary argue that judges should be able to approach each case with a fresh perspective, free from preconceived notions or ideological commitments. Imposing a litmus test on a specific issue like abortion may be seen as a restriction on the freedom of thought and expression for potential judges. This limitation could hinder the diversity of perspectives within the judiciary and limit the exploration of alternative viewpoints.

2. Preserving Judicial Independence

Judicial independence is a cornerstone of a democratic society. Judges should be free from external pressures and should not feel compelled to conform to a specific ideological stance. Requiring candidates to be avowedly pro-choice on abortion may compromise the independence of the judiciary, as judges might be more inclined to align with certain political or social ideologies rather than objectively interpreting the law.

3. Balancing Personal Beliefs and Professional Duties

Judges, like any other individuals, have personal beliefs and values. However, the ethical responsibility of a judge is to set aside personal biases and render decisions based on the law. The moral dimension here involves finding the balance between respecting a judge's right to personal beliefs and ensuring that these beliefs do not unduly influence their professional duties.

4. Representation and Democratic Values

On the other hand, proponents of a pro-choice litmus test may argue that it ensures representation of certain values within the judiciary. They may contend that judges with a pro-choice stance are more likely to understand and uphold the rights and choices of individuals in matters of reproductive freedom. This perspective emphasizes the importance of aligning the judiciary with societal values.

5. Impact on Justice System Credibility

A judiciary perceived as biased or driven by specific ideological considerations may undermine public trust in the justice system. If judicial appointments are seen as based on a narrow set of litmus tests rather than merit and legal expertise, it could erode confidence in the fairness and impartiality of the legal system.

In conclusion, the moral dimension of requiring judges to be avowedly pro-choice on abortion revolves around the tension between ensuring representation of certain values and maintaining the fundamental principles of an open-minded, impartial, and independent judiciary. Striking the right balance is crucial to uphold the credibility and integrity of the justice system.

3. In the landmark case of The Queen vs. Dudley and Stephens, the cabin boy, Parker was sacrificed to save the lives of three others. All of them were marooned at sea. They were adrift on a life boat for days and had to subsist on two cans of turnips and a turtle they caught at sea. There was no fresh water. Parker drank sea water against the advice of the others. Very soon he got sick. With the prospect of a rescue getting dimmer and dimmer, Dudley, the captain suggested that they draw lottery to decide who should die so that the others may live. Stephens, the second mate agreed but Brooks, the sailor was very much against the idea. Failing to get a consensus Dudley and Stephens hatched the idea that Parker should be sacrificed so that they can feed on his flesh and blood. The three crew members were later rescued after 20 days being shipwrecked. Brooks turned state witness and the other two were charged with murder. Using what you have learnt from this course were the acts of Dudley and Stephens ethical?

Ans:- The case of The Queen v. Dudley and Stephens is a well-known legal case that occurred in 1884 and involved ethical dilemmas arising from survival at sea. The key ethical question revolves around whether the actions of Dudley and Stephens were justified in sacrificing the cabin boy, Parker, to save themselves.

From an ethical standpoint, the actions of Dudley and Stephens can be analyzed through various ethical theories:

1. Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism focuses on maximizing overall happiness or well-being. In this case, sacrificing Parker might be seen as an attempt to maximize the well-being of the majority (Dudley, Stephens, and Brooks) by increasing their chances of survival.
- However, the ethical dilemma arises in determining whether the overall happiness achieved by the three survivors justifies the sacrifice of one individual.

2. Deontology

- Deontological ethics emphasizes the inherent morality of actions, regardless of their consequences. According to this perspective, the intentional killing of an innocent person, even for the greater good, may be considered morally wrong.

- Dudley and Stephens' actions may be viewed as violating a fundamental duty to respect the sanctity of human life.

3. Rights-Based Ethics

- Rights-based ethics asserts that individuals have certain inherent rights, and violating these rights is ethically unacceptable. In this case, Parker had a right to life, and intentionally taking that right away raises ethical concerns.

4. Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics focuses on the character of the individuals involved. Dudley and Stephens' decision to sacrifice Parker for their own survival may be seen as a lack of virtues such as compassion, empathy, and selflessness.

In conclusion, the ethical analysis of Dudley and Stephens' actions in sacrificing Parker is subjective and depends on the ethical framework used. Many ethical theories would likely find fault with intentionally causing harm to an innocent person, even in extreme circumstances. The legal system ultimately ruled against Dudley and Stephens, convicting them of murder. This case raises important questions about the limits of ethical behavior in extreme situations and the balance between individual rights and the common good.