

Ethics Study Guide 1

Introduction

- What is the difference between metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics?
- What is value, and what kinds of value are there?
- What are normative judgments? Give some examples of normative judgments.
- How is moral reasoning structured? How do normative and applied ethics aid in the reasoning process?
- Give some problems with using economic reasoning to make moral choices.

History

- Why did Socrates ask people for definitions?
- Did Socrates think we should fear death? Why or why not?
- Name some ways in which Aristotle and Plato disagreed about ethics.
- How did the stoics, epicureans, and skeptics disagree about how to respond to fatalism?
- What is distinctive about the medieval period? Give examples of ethics-related questions medieval philosophers attempted to answer.
- Say how Kant unified the empiricist and rationalist traditions before him. How did that affect how Kant thought about ethics?
- What did Hegel think about ethics? How do Kierkegaard and Nietzsche respond to Hegel?

Logical Positivism/Emotivism/Non-cognitivism

- What is the verification principle? How does it show that moral statements are meaningless?
- Give two objections to logical positivism.
- Give two objections that show the fact/opinion division is obsolete.
- What is emotivism? How would its truth impact how one does ethics? What is prescriptivism?
- What is non-cognitivism about ethics? What arguments do non-cognitivists generally give?
- What is one problem for all versions of non-cognitivism?

Moral Relativism

- What is individual moral relativism? What is cultural moral relativism?
- Give and reply to two arguments for individual moral relativism.
- Give two objections to individual moral relativism.
- How does cultural moral relativism overcome the objections to individual moral relativism?
- Give four objections to cultural moral relativism.

Free Will & Moral Responsibility

- What is determinism? Give an argument that determinism undermines our moral responsibility.
- Give Strawson's argument that we are not morally responsible for our actions.
- What is compatibilism? What is incompatibilism? Give arguments for each.
- Give Frankfurt's example. What is the example supposed to show?
- How do incompatibilists respond to Frankfurt's example?
- What is the difference between libertarians, soft determinists, and hard determinists?
- Which position do you find most compelling, and why?

Moral Luck

- What is moral luck? What is the problem of moral luck?
- What are four ways in which we can be morally lucky/unlucky? Give an example of each.
- What are some ways in which one could escape the problem of moral luck?
- Which way do you find most persuasive, and why?

Moral Dilemmas

- What is the logical form of a moral dilemma? Give an example of a dilemma that fits this form.
- Give an example of something that seems like a moral dilemma but isn't. Why isn't it a dilemma?
- Name three ways to get out of a moral dilemma.