

Information about the in-class exam

PHIL 230, Fall 2014

Exam date: Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014, 3:30-4:45pm

Material covered on the exam

Anything starting from our first discussion of moral relativism (Tuesday, Sept. 9) until our discussion of Rule Utilitarianism on Tuesday, Oct. 7, could appear on the exam.

Remember that anything that was on the screen as lecture notes in class is also posted on the course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil230/lecture-notes/>. The notes from Oct. 7 will be posted as soon as I can do so after class on Oct. 7 (possibly before class, if I get time!)

Format of the exam

A. Short answer questions: 20% of the mark: There will be some short-answer questions in which you'll need to define a few terms that have been introduced since class started (e.g., "descriptive moral relativism"). You may also be asked to explain how this term fits into one of the moral theories we've discussed. Or, some of them may be comparative terms, where you have to compare/contrast two related terms in one answer.

There will be a list of terms and you'll be able to choose from this list (you won't have to do all of the terms listed on the exam). Most likely you will need to choose 3 or 4 terms out of a list of at least 6.

B. One essay question: 80% of the mark: You will need to write **one** essay question during the exam. **Three of the following will appear on the exam, and you'll need to choose one to write on.**

1. Explain Susan Wolfe's two levels of pluralism, then discuss either one of the following:

- (i) Is this a plausible metaethical view (recognizing that it would require a great deal more argumentation to show that it is actually *true* than either she or we can do right now)? Do you see any flaws in it as a theory? OR:
- (ii) On p. 788, Wolfe says that her view of first-level pluralism is not the same as saying, for example, that if one wants to promote happiness, there may be more than one equally good way to go about doing so. How is it different? Or in other words, how would Mill's Utilitarianism not support a pluralist view similar to Wolfe's first-level pluralism, according to her argument here?

2. How does Mill argue, in Chapter 4 of *Utilitarianism*, that happiness (defined as pleasure and reduction or absence of pain) is what we should use to determine the moral value of actions? What criticisms could there be of this argument or of the claim that happiness is the only thing we seek as the ultimate goal of all action? Do you agree with these criticisms? Why or why not?

3. Explain the difference between Act Utilitarianism and Brandt's version of Rule Utilitarianism, and argue for the benefits and drawbacks of each approach to utilitarianism, on your view.

4. The distinction between Act Utilitarianism and Rule Utilitarianism was not around during Mill's time. But it could make sense to think of what he says in Chapter 5 of *Utilitarianism* about justice, and Chapter 2 about secondary rules, as leading in the direction of rule utilitarianism. Scholars disagree on whether it makes sense to classify Mill as an act utilitarian or a rule utilitarian or neither. What do you think?