

Theme 1: Ethical Thought, AS

A. Divine Command Theory

- Meta-ethical theory - God as the origin and regulator of morality
- right or wrong as objective truths based on God's will/command, moral goodness is achieved by complying with divine command
- divine command a requirement of God's omnipotence
- divine command as an objective metaphysical foundation for morality.
- Robert Adams' 'Modified DCT' (divine command based on God's omnibenevolence).
- *Challenges: the Euthyphro dilemma (inspired by Plato);*
- *arbitrariness problem (divine command theory renders morality as purely arbitrary);*
- *pluralism objection (different religions claim different divine commands).*

B. Virtue Theory

- Ethical system based on defining the personal qualities that make a person moral;
- the focus on a person's character rather than their specific actions;
- Aristotle's moral virtues (based on the deficiency; the excess and the mean);
- Jesus' teachings on virtues (the Beatitudes).
- *Challenges: virtues are not a practical guide to moral behaviour;*
- *issue of cultural relativism (ideas on the good virtues are not universal);*
- *virtues can be used for immoral acts.*

C. Ethical Egoism

- Normative agent focused ethic based on self-interest as opposed to altruism;
- ethical theory that matches the moral agent's psychological state (psychological egoism);
- concentration on long term self-interests rather than short term interests;
- Max Stirner, self-interest as the root cause of every human action even if it appears altruistic;
- rejection of egoism for material gain;
- union of egoists.
- *Challenges: destruction of a community ethos;*
- *social injustices could occur as individuals put their own interests first;*
- *a form of bigotry (why is one moral agent more important than any other?).*

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- Whether morality is what God commands.
- Whether being a good person is better than just doing good deeds.
- Whether Virtue Theory is useful when faced with a moral dilemma.
- The extent to which ethical egoism inevitably leads to moral evil.
- The extent to which all moral actions are motivated by self-interest.
- Whether one of Divine Command Theory, Virtue Theory or Ethical Egoism is superior to the other theories.

Theme 2: Deontological Ethics, AS

A. St Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law - laws and precepts as the basis of morality

- Aquinas' four levels of law (eternal, divine, natural and human);
- Natural Law derived from rational thought;
- based on a belief in a divine creator (the highest good as being the rational understanding of God's final purpose).
- Natural Law as a form of moral absolutism and a theory which has both deontological and teleological aspects.
- The five primary precepts (preservation of life, ordered society, worship of God, education and reproduction of the human species) as derived from rational thought and based on the premise of 'doing good and avoiding evil';
- the secondary precepts which derive from the primary precepts; the importance of keeping the precepts in order to establish a right relationship with God and gain eternal life with God in heaven.

B: Aquinas' Natural Law - the role of virtues and goods in supporting moral behaviour:

- The need for humans to be more God-like by developing the three revealed virtues (faith, hope and charity) and four cardinal virtues (fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice).
- Aquinas' definition of different types of acts and goods: internal acts (the intention of the moral agent when carrying out an action) and external acts (the actions of a moral agent);
- real goods (correctly reasoned goods that help the moral agent achieve their telos) and apparent goods (wrongly reasoned goods that don't help the moral agent achieve their God given purpose).

C. Aquinas' Natural Law - application of the theory

- The application of Aquinas' Natural Law to both of the issues listed below:
- 1. abortion

- 2. voluntary euthanasia

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- The degree to which human law should be influenced by Aquinas' Natural Law.

- The extent to which the absolutist and/or deontological nature of Aquinas' Natural Law works in contemporary society.

- The strengths and weaknesses of Aquinas' Natural Law.

- A consideration of whether Aquinas' Natural Law promotes injustice.

- The effectiveness of Aquinas' Natural Law in dealing with ethical issues.

- The extent to which Aquinas' Natural Law is meaningless without a belief in a creator God.

Theme 3: Teleological ethics, AS

A. Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics - his rejection of other forms of ethics and his acceptance of agape as the basis of morality

- Fletcher's rejection of other approaches within ethics: legalism, antinomianism and the role of conscience;
- Fletcher's rationale for using the religious concept of 'agape' (selfless love) as the 'middle way' between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism;
- the biblical evidence used to support this approach: the teachings of Jesus (Luke 10:25:37) and St Paul (1 Corinthians 13).
- Situation Ethics as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.

B. Fletcher's Situation Ethics - the principles as a means of assessing morality

- The boss principle of Situation Ethics (following the concept of agape);
- the four working principles
 1. pragmatism
 2. relativism
 3. positivism
 4. personalism
- the six fundamental principles
 1. love is the only good
 2. love is the ruling norm of Christianity
 3. love equals justice
 4. love for all
 5. loving ends justify the means
 6. love decides situationally

C. Fletcher's Situation Ethics - application of theory

- The application of Fletcher's Situation Ethics to both of the issues listed below
 1. homosexual relationships
 2. polyamorous relationships

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- The degree to which agape is the only intrinsic good.
- Whether Fletchers' Situation Ethics promotes immoral behaviour.
- The extent to which Situation Ethics promotes justice.
- The effectiveness of Situation Ethics in dealing with ethical issues.
- Whether agape should replace religious rules.
- The extent to which Situation Ethics provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers.

D. Classical Utilitarianism - Jeremy Bentham's Act Utilitarianism

- happiness as the basis of morality: Bentham's theory of 'utility' or 'usefulness'
- ultimate aim is to pursue pleasure and avoid pain; principle of utility ('the greatest happiness for the greatest number').
- The hedonic calculus as a means of measuring pleasure in each unique moral situation;
- by considering seven factors:
 1. intensity
 2. duration
 3. certainty
 4. remoteness
 5. fecundity
 6. purity
 7. extent.
- Act Utilitarianism as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.

E. JS Mill's development of Utilitarianism: types of pleasure, the harm principle and the use of rules

- Mill's idea that not all pleasure is the same: 'higher pleasures' (intellectual) are superior to 'lower pleasures' (basic physical pleasure);
- the 'Harm Principle': the actions of individuals should be limited to prevent harm to other individuals;
- not all actions need to be morally assessed as actions are morally right if they conform to a historical rule that has demonstrated that it fulfils the principle of utility (now known as 'Rule' Utilitarianism).

- Mill's Utilitarianism as a teleological/deontological hybrid.

F. Bentham's Act Utilitarianism and Mill's Rule Utilitarianism - application of the theory

- The application of Bentham's Act Utilitarianism and Mill's Rule Utilitarianism to the issues listed below:
 1. animal experimentation for medical research

2. the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

- The degree to which pleasure can be seen as the sole intrinsic good.
- The extent to which Act and/or Rule Utilitarianism works in contemporary society.
- The extent to which Rule Utilitarianism provides a better basis for making moral decisions than Act Utilitarianism.
- Whether Utilitarianism promotes immoral behaviour.
- The extent to which Utilitarianism promotes justice.
- The extent to which Utilitarianism provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers.