

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 1: Ethical Thought, Year 2

D. Meta-ethical approaches - Naturalism

- Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings, moral terms can be understood by analysing the natural world;
- ethical statements are cognitivist and can be verified or falsified;
- verified moral statements are objective universal truths. Bradley - ethical sentences express propositions;
- objective features of the world make propositions true or false;
- meta-ethical statements can be seen in scientific terms.
- *Challenges: Hume's Law (the is-ought problem);*
- *Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy (moral language is indefinable);*
- *the Open Question Argument (moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties).*

E. Meta-ethical approaches - Intuitionism

- Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings;
- moral truths can be discovered by using our minds in an intuitive way;
- intuitive ability is innate and the same for all moral agents;
- intuition needs a mature mind so not infallible;
- allows for objective moral values. H.A. Prichard, 'ought to do' has no definition;
- recognise what we 'ought to do' by intuition;
- two ways of thinking (general and moral).
- *Challenges: no proof of moral intuition exists;*
- *intuitive 'truths' can differ widely;*
- *no obvious way to resolve conflicting intuitions.*

F. Meta-ethical approaches – Emotivism

- Theory that believes objective moral laws do not exist;
- a non-cognitivist theory;
- moral terms express personal emotional attitudes and not propositions;
- ethical terms are just expressions of personal approval (hurrah) or disapproval (boo);
- explains why people disagree about morality.
- A.J. Ayer - ethical statements are neither verifiable nor analytic;
- made to express joy or pain (emotion);
- expressed to be persuasive;
- emotivism is not subjectivism.
- *Challenges: no basic moral principles can be established;*
- *ethical debate becomes a pointless activity;*
- *there is no universal agreement that some actions are wrong.*

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

- Whether ethical and non-ethical statements are the same.
- The extent to which ethical statements are not objective.
- Whether moral terms are intuitive.
- The extent to which moral terms are just expressions of our emotions.
- Whether one of Naturalism, Intuitionism or Emotivism is superior to the other theories.
- The extent to which the different meta-ethical theories encourage moral debate.

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).

Theme 2: Deontological Ethics, Year 2

D. John Finnis' development of Natural Law

- Development of the seven basic human goods
 1. Life
 2. Knowledge
 3. Friendship
 4. Play
 5. Aesthetic experience
 6. Practical reasonableness
 7. Religion
- distinction between theoretical / practical reason
- Nine Requirements of Practical Reason
 1. view life as a whole
 2. prioritise certain goods over others
 3. basic goods apply equally to all
 4. do not become obsessed with a particular project
 5. use effort to improve
 6. plan your actions to do the most good
 7. never harm a basic good
 8. foster common good in the community
 9. act in your own conscience and authority)
- the common good and the need for authority.

E. Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

- As a hybrid of Natural Law, a deontological / teleological ethic;
- Hoose's proportionalist maxim ('it is never right to go against a principle unless there is a proportionate reason which would justify it');
- distinction between an evil moral act (an immoral act) and pre-moral/ontic evil;

- distinction between a good act (an act that follows the moral rule) and a right act (an act that is not necessarily a good act, but creates the lesser of two evils);
- proportionality based on agape.

F. Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's Proportionalism: application of the theory

The application of Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's Proportionalism to both of the issues listed below:

1. immigration

2. capital punishment

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

- Whether Finnis' Natural Law is acceptable in contemporary society.
- The extent to which Hoose's Proportionalism promotes immoral behaviour.
- Whether Finnis and/or Hoose provide a basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers.
- The strengths and weaknesses of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Hoose's Proportionalism.
- The effectiveness of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Hoose's Proportionalism in dealing with ethical issues.
- The extent to which Finnis' Natural Law is a better ethic than Hoose's Proportionalism or vice versa.

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

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.

Theme 4: Determinism and Free will – Determinism, Year 2

A. Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to the teachings of: St Augustine

- Doctrine of Original Sin:
- role of concupiscence
- humanity as "a lump of sin" (massa peccati),
- an essentially 'free' human nature (liberum arbitrium),
- the loss of human liberty (libertas) to our sinful nature,
- God's grace and atonement for the elect / saints.

John Calvin

- Doctrine of Election:
- the absolute power of God,
- the corrupted nature of humans
- the Elect and the Reprobates,
- unconditional election,
- limited atonement,
- irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.

B. Concepts of determinism

- Hard determinism: philosophical (John Locke - free will is an illusion, man in bedroom illustration)
- scientific (biological determinism - human behaviour is controlled by an individual's genes)
- psychological (Ivan Pavlov - classical conditioning).

- Soft determinism: Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes),
- A.J. Ayer (caused acts v forced acts).

C. The implications of predestination/determinism

- The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility:
 - the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value,
 - the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts,
 - the usefulness of normative ethics.
- The implications of predestination on religious belief:
 - the link between God and evil,
 - the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence,
 - the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.

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

- A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination.
- The extent to which God predestines humanity.
- The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will.
- Strengths and weaknesses of Hard and/or Soft Determinism.
- Whether moral responsibility is an illusion.
- The extent to which pre-destination influences our understanding of God.

D. Determinism and Free will – Free will

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of:

Pelagius

- The role of original sin,
- humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will,
- free will as used to follow God's laws,
- the role of grace in salvation.

Arminius

- Denial of predestination,
- the effect of original sin on free will,
- God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will,
- the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace,
- the election of believers being conditional on faith.

E. Concepts of libertarianism:

Philosophical

- Jean Paul Sartre: man is not free not to be free
- waiter illustration

Scientific

- Angela Sirigu's research evidence that the brain allows for free will

Psychological

- Carl Rogers: humanist approach
- self-actualisation

F. The implications of libertarianism and free will

- The implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility:
 - the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value,
 - the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts,
 - the usefulness of normative ethics.
- The implications of free will on religious belief:
 - the link between God and evil,
 - the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence,
 - the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.

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

- How convincing are religious views on free will.
- The extent to which an individual has free choice.
- The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.
- The extent to which free moral agents should follow a normative ethic.
- The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant.
- The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.