Please discuss the following in a comprehensive essay that incorporates at least four of the assigned readings/resources in addition to the excerpt from Plato.

**In Plato’s Republic, Socrates has a dialogue with a number of persons. In the excerpt, the “Ring of Gyges,” Glaucon argues that the practice of justice arises only in society, i.e., where there is fear of punishment.**

* **In your opinion, does it make sense to act in an ethical manner or to do the right thing outside of the dictates of society?**
* **In other words, if a person could be certain not only that an action resulting in personal benefit would not be discovered but also that if this action were discovered, no punishing consequences would follow, then would there be any reason for that person to act morally?**
* **Are there universal moral principles that are right for all persons at all times?**

Your essay must address the assigned essay question and should be between 500 and 750 words (2 to 3 pages in standard format) in length.

Content: 50%

Does your essay contain important, relevant, and/or interesting arguments? Do you support your thesis with facts, research, and compelling theoretical discussions? Do you incorporate the assigned readings and other sources to support your arguments and opinions?

Organization: 25%

Does your essay contain a well-written introduction, a body, and a conclusion? Do your arguments follow logically within paragraphs and throughout the essay? Is your conclusion supported by the arguments and evidence you offer in the body of the essay? Do you explain in a logical and compelling manner why you have come to this particular conclusion?

Conventions: 25%

Is your essay well-written and free of grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors? Does it display sentence fluency and appropriate word choice? Does it follow basic formatting guidelines?

The following is a standard suggested format for writing essays. It is very basic, but will provide a good starting place for student writers who are novices.

INTRODUCTION- State your thesis and/or the purpose of your essay clearly. What is the chief reason you are writing the essay? Explain briefly the major points you plan to cover in your essay and why your topic is important or interesting. The beginning lets your readers know what the essay is about, the topic. The essay's topic does not exist in a vacuum, however; part of letting readers know what your essay is about means establishing the essay's context, the framework within which you will approach your topic. For instance, in an essay about the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech, the context may be a particular legal theory about the speech right; it may be historical information concerning the writing of the amendment; it may be a contemporary dispute over flag burning; or it may be a question raised by the text itself. The point here is that, in establishing the essay's context, you are also limiting your topic. That is, you are framing an approach to your topic that necessarily eliminates other approaches. Thus, when you determine your context, you simultaneously narrow your topic and take a big step toward focusing your essay

BODY- This is where you present your facts and arguments to support your thesis statement. Remember the Rule of 3: find at least three supporting arguments for each position you take. Begin with a strong argument, then use a stronger one, and end with the strongest argument for your final point. Try to anticipate objections to your view and respond to them. Keep your thesis in mind at all times. Be sure that everything you write is relevant to your thesis. In addition, be sure to say in the essay how it is relevant.

Do not make your reader guess. Explain yourself fully: **explain it; give an example; make it clear how the point helps your argument**. But "explain yourself fully" also means to be as clear and explicit as you possibly can. It is no good to protest, after I have graded your paper, "I know I said this, but what I meant was..."

Pretend that your reader has not read the material you are discussing, and has not given the topic much thought in advance. This will of course not be true. But if you write as if it were true, it will force you to explain yourself in a way that your arguments become clear to your reader. In fact, you can profitably take this one step further and pretend that your reader is lazy, stupid, and mean. She is lazy in that she does not want to figure out what your convoluted sentences are supposed to mean, and she does not want to figure out what your argument is, if it is not already obvious. She is stupid, so you have to explain everything you say to her in simple, bite-sized pieces. And she is mean, so she is not going to read your paper charitably. (For example, if something you say admits of more than one interpretation, she is going to assume you meant the less plausible thing.) If you understand the material you are writing about, and if you aim your paper at such a reader, you will probably get an A.

CONCLUSION- Restate or reword your thesis. Summarize your arguments. Explain in a logical and compelling manner why you have come to this particular conclusion. A basic purpose of your essay's concluding paragraph is both to restate the essay's argument and to restate how you have supported this argument in the body of the essay. However, your conclusion should not simply be a copy of your introduction. The conclusion draws together the threads of the essay's argument and shows where the argument of your essay has gone. An effective conclusion gives the reader reasons for bothering to read your essay. One of the most important functions of this paragraph is to bring in fresh insight.

If you can, show your draft to a friend or two, and get their comments and advice. I encourage you to do this. Do your friends understand your main point? Are parts of your draft unclear or confusing to them? Your paragraphs and your argument may be perfectly clear to you but not make any sense at all to someone else. Another good way to check your draft is to read it out loud. This will help you tell whether it all makes sense. You may know what you want to say, but that might not be what you have really written. Reading the essay out loud can help you notice holes in your reasoning, digressions, and unclear prose.

**Moral motivation thought experiment – Ring of Gyges**

Glaucon - Egoism:

* People only act justly to avoid punishment
* Laws designed to protect weak from strong
* Just and unjust man would both fail test
* Even if someone acted justly, friends would think him a fool
* “Right” does not exist outside laws
* Social contract
  + We agree not to harm each other
  + Only to protect ourselves
* What is the good? Some things are good in and of themselves regardless of consequences. Others are good because of their consequences.
  + Justice is good because of good consequences
  + Justice = obeying law, created to keep individuals from harming each other
* People behave justly to avoid consequences of disobeying the law

Socrates’ Response:

* A man who abused power becomes morally bankrupt
* Doing good has intrinsic merit
* Just man is happy
* Unjust man is ultimately miserable
* Justice = all morality, that which is good in and of itself independent of consequences.
* Society exists because individuals make a compact to not harm each other in order to protect their own self-interest.
  + Justice = obeying laws that come out of this compact
  + Justice is good because of its consequences and prevents us from harming one another

Both are right, both are wrong. Depends on the individual.

Unjust man would fail test – means to commit unjust acts for purpose of self-enrichment

Unjust man is happy for fulfilling selfish desires

Vulgar type – Nicomachean (Aristotle)

Leviathan State of Nature

Modern-day supervillain (Invisible Man)

Profit: Injustice leads to more and all men know this in their hearts

Purely just man would pass the test – means to commit just acts for purpose of societal enrichment

Doing good has intrinsic merit

Just man is happy for doing good for society

Political Type - Nicomachean (Aristotle)

Modern-day superhero (Captain America. Gains immense power, uses it for good because he is truly a good man.)

A man who does good without expectation of recognition (invisibility) is inherently good

Modern-day ring of Gyges: Internet anonymity

* Saying hateful, racist, bigoted things without consequence. People bullied to death.
* Also doing good acts without desire for recognition.

Define justice.

Laws =/= justice. Because something is legal, does not mean it is just. Examples: Nestle.

At their respective points in history the philosophers may have been mostly, if not completely correct due to their experiences in their respective societies at the time. As time goes on and societies, people, and governments evolve, so do the respective philosophical views. Technology and the development of increasingly sophisticated scientific instruments furthers our understanding of the world and therefore influences philosophical change.

Utilitarian vs categorical imperative

*In your opinion, does it make sense to act in an ethical manner or to do the right thing outside of the dictates of society?*

*In other words, if a person could be certain not only that an action resulting in personal benefit would not be discovered but also that if this action were discovered, no punishing consequences would follow, then would there be any reason for that person to act morally?*

Yes.

*Are there universal moral principles that are right for all persons at all times?*

Universal moral principles: Moral position is to do things that don’t cause harm.

Socrates

Aristotle

Plato

Kant

Hobbes