

First paper

Length: 2 pages (regular 12 point font, 1-inch margins)

Citations: You can use any accepted citation style (e.g. MLA, Chicago, etc.) as long as you use it consistently and correctly. As an aside, you are not expected to do much citation in this assignment.

Due: 11:59pm Oct. 3. You will submit a PDF or Word document through Canvas.

Assignment:

In this short paper you will consider the following moral dilemma:

Say my dying friend is an art collector, who has sacrificed all other comforts in order to be able to spend his every spare penny on acquiring some works of great beauty and value. He takes great pride in his collection and regards it as one of the great achievements of his life to have assembled it and to be able to pass it on to his children after his death. As it happens, however, his family have suffered such difficult circumstances that, during his illness, and unknown to him, they have had to sell the collection off in order to get by. He has nothing left to pass on to them. Effectively his life's achievement has been reduced to nothing. The family are desperate to keep this from my friend so that he can die happy. Should I tell him? (Bennett, *What is this thing called Ethics*, pp. 104-105)

You will:

- (i) Explain both how a utilitarian and a virtue ethicist would respond, and why.
- (ii) Explain which of the responses you think is superior, and why.

Grading Rubric

- A: An A-grade paper demonstrate an understanding not only of the position each moral theorist would take, but also their reasoning in coming to their respective judgments. It will also be convincing and articulate in evaluating their respective positions. Finally, of course, it will be clearly and elegantly written.
- B: A B-grade paper will show an understanding of each position, and the reasoning undertaken to reach those positions. It will take a clear stance on which is better, even if it is not entirely clear about the reasoning behind that stance. It will be clearly written.

- C: A C-grade paper will demonstrate an understanding of what each position will say, though it may not demonstrate a clear understanding of the moral reasoning involved. It will take a stance on which position is superior, though may not clearly explain why.
- D: A D-grade paper will not demonstrate understanding of either position, or the reasoning involved, or will be poorly written. It will take a stance, though it may be unclear or poorly reasoned.
- F: Anything that does not meet the lowly standards of a D-grade paper will receive an F.