**CC0003 / Ethics and Civics in a Multicultural World**

**Sem 1 AY21-22**

**Essay Topic for Group B1**

**Due by 11:59pm on Friday 3 September (Week 4)**

Please write a 500-word essay responding to either *one* of these topics. Please do not write on both topics.

1. **Outline and justify what you think is the strongest objection against ethical egoism. Propose a rebuttal to that objection. Does that rebuttal provide an adequate defense of ethical egoism?**

**"To be happy, we must not be too concerned with others." (Albert Camus, 1956). does this mean it is acceptable for us to be selfish? Human beings act according to what they believe will bring the most benefit to them, study for their future career and eat for their survival chance are examples of the action that is beneficial to themselves. Ethical egoism supports such behaviors that act in their self-interest.**

**However, there are strong objections against ethical egoism. one such example is ethical egoism provides no moral basis for solving conflicts between two people. Ethical egoism has no answers to the trouble that arises related to conflicts of interest. For example, an oil company desires to empty waste right into a river as it is an easy solution for them to handle the waste from their company, the decision upset the people residing downstream object to the idea as it will damage their ecosystem. Ethical egoism advises that each event actively pursue what they want. It doesn’t endorse any type of decision or common-sense compromise.**

**The rebuttal against that objection will be ethical egoism was not a tool to resolve arguments and how people decide their self-interest is another whole issue as described by an American philosopher, Allan Bloom. (1987). Closing of the American Mind "Self-interest is hostile to the common good, but enlightened self-interest is not. And this is the best key to the meaning of enlightenment" self-interest is often not consistent. for example, an oil company might have decided that emptying the waste into the river is the best for their interest for that moment, but this idea might be different if the company considered the downside of this activity, such as company reputation will be affected and might cause them to lose support from the customer and they might also have their company license revoked by the government due to the complaints from the resident which works against their interest. and therefore based on ethical egoism, they will not empty the waste into the water as it will be contradicting with the company's interest. Even if there are cases where there are two parties with a different set of self-interest are having a conflict, it will be up to other authorized parties (police or judges) that are neutral to both ideals of self-interest to interfere and resolve the conflict.**

**In conclusion, the rebuttal argument above provides an adequate defense to the ethical egoism theory because it justifies ethical egoism as the ethical theory that everybody ought to act in their self-interest and not a tool to resolve an argument between two people with different goals. in addition, ethical egoism suggests people should do what is best for themselves but does not guarantee that an individual ideal of their self-interest is indeed the best solution that will end up benefiting them, how individuals determine their self-interest is up to them and their ability to identify their long-term self-interest (the one that will benefit them the most).**

1. **Outline and justify what you think is the strongest objection against ethical relativism. Propose a rebuttal to that objection. Does that rebuttal provide an adequate defense of ethical relativism?**

**Is it always true that we should do what the Romans do when we are in Rome? People often have their opinion on what is morally right or wrong to do, however as moral values differ from one culture to others, it is hard to decide which moral standard one should adopt. The solution to this problem is ethical relativism. An American philosopher describes ethical relativism as "an act is morally acceptable just because it is allowed by guiding ideals of the society in which it is performed, and immoral just because it is forbidden by those ideals" (Shafer-Landau 2019: 28).**

**The strongest objection toward ethical relativism is its self-contradiction toward its own beliefs and inconsistency. Examples of the contradiction are slavery is morally acceptable by the United States in the past, but it is not now and a Muslim people who live in the United States (a non-polygamy country) where it is both morally right (according to Muslim religion) and not morally right (according to United States law), this shows the ambiguous and contradiction of two different moral codes.**

**The rebuttal against the objection will be that right and wrong are not absolute, especially in ethical relativism, right and wrong of behaviour is dependent on society norm, ethical relativism main goal is to un**

You do not need to say why it is the strongest out of various objections, only to present which you think is the strongest.

The assessment criteria for the essay can be found in Appendix 1 of the CC0003 course outline.

For advice on how to write an ethics essay, you can read this short guide: Harvard Writing Center, “[A Guide to Writing in Ethical Reasoning](https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/er_15_guide_lo_res.pdf?m=1370456800) .”

*How to submit your essay:*

1. Go to the NTULearn site of your CC0003 tutorial group: <https://ntulearn.ntu.edu.sg/>
2. Go to “Assignments.” There you’ll find a submission portal with the name **“Essay Submission for Group B1”.**
3. Click on the submission portal. It will take you to a Turnitin website.
4. Follow Turnitin’s instructions for entering your information and uploading your essay. Please don’t write your name anywhere in your essay. Instead, identify yourself by writing your matriculation number. This will allow your instructor to mark essays without knowing the exact identity of the author. Your instructor will be able to identify you based on your matriculation number after they’ve finished grading.

*Word count policy:*

Your essay should not be more than 500 words long, not counting the title, footnotes, and bibliography. If the whole document is more than 500 words long, your instructor will not read more than 500 words in the main text of the essay.

*References & bibliography:*

Your essay should include references and a bibliography. Any referencing style may be used. Here is a complete guide to referencing styles, which includes recommended styles for different disciplines: <https://guides.lib.monash.edu/citing-referencing/recommended>

*Late submission policy:*

Extensions will be granted only for students who present valid reasons for not submitting the essay by the deadline. Valid reasons include falling sick, a family tragedy, and special learning needs. All such requests for extensions should be supported by documentation, such as a medical certificate, a record of the family tragedy, or a letter from the NTU Accessible Education Unit.

There will be a grade penalty for students who submit their essays after the deadline without a valid reason. The penalty will be one half of a letter grade for every calendar day the essay is submitted after the due date (less than one day late will be counted as a full day late).