# Ethics: Exam 2

**Due Date: Friday, August 6 at 11:59 PM.**

Here are the guidelines for Exam 2.

1. The questions are listed below. You should only answer **THREE** of them (not all of them!).
2. Each essay should be between **500** and **1000 words.** I won’t penalize you for going over, though you should think carefully about whether you *need* the extra words.
3. Direct quotes from the book or handouts can be **cited** simply as (page number or handout name). If you choose to use outside resources, please use a standard citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago), and provide a full citation. In general, **no more than 15%** of your paper should be quotes.
4. Please don’t use the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. Please see the syllabus for details on the policy regarding **plagiarism and academic integrity.** I regularly use [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) to check for plagiarism or related issues.
5. Since the goal of the exam is to demonstrate how well *you* understand the material, you should try to **use your own words/examples**. Essays that simply reproduce the handouts will not receive good grades.
6. Please submit your exam as a SINGLE MS WORD file to the D2L assignment folder. Each essay should start on a new page.

## The Questions

Answer THREE of the following questions. If you’ve already written on these topics (e.g., in Perusall annotations), it’s fine to reuse what you wrote. However, I do expect that you will make an effort to revise and improve earlier work.

1. Carefully explain at least TWO of Judith Thomson’s arguments regarding the morality of abortion. Now, give an analogical argument of your own that relates to abortion, either pro-life or pro-choice (this might just be a twist on one of Thomson’s, or an entirely original one).
2. Choose a character from a book, TV show, movie, etc. who enjoys eating meat. Now, write a dialogue between Peter Singer and this character, with Singer providing arguments \*against\* eating meat and the character defending their actions.
3. Describe 2-3 important ideas from EITHER Appiah’s essay on “Racisms” OR Cudd and Jones’ essay on “Sexism.” (You should spend at least a paragraph explaining each idea). Now, show how these ideas apply to some contemporary story from the news.
4. Write a short story about a character who has to deal with a “moral dilemma” (that is, a case where it isn’t obvious what the morally right thing is to do is). In attempting to respond to the moral dilemma, the character should rely on ideas or concepts from at least TWO different readings we’ve done in class.
   1. Please choose readings you have NOT already discussed in your other essays. It’s fine to use readings from the first half of class.
   2. Here, you’re going to be graded on how we’ll you’ve explained and applied the ideas from class, not on how well-written the short story is (so, have fun with it!).
5. Write an essay arguing for/against some legal restriction on immigration (e.g., Should undocumented immigrants be deported? Is it morally OK for rich countries to set immigration quotas?). In your essay, be sure to consider the arguments we’ve covered in class.
6. What is the “meaning of life”? In answering this question, you should carefully explain and evaluate the ideas from at least ONE of the readings we did for class about this topic. Then, you are free to give your own ideas in response to this.

## Exam Grading Rubric

Each essay is worth TEN points, and the whole exam is worth 30 points. Your grade will depend on how well you do each of the following:

1. How well are you able to **explain** the relevant course material? (Very important)
2. To what extent can you make an (evidence-based) **argument** for a **thesis?** (Very important)
3. To what extent do your paper’s **structure** (e.g. intro/body paragraphs/conclusion) and **language** (e.g. grammar, style) make it easy for a reader to follow? (Important to the extent that they impact the two criteria above)

The grading criteria are as follows:

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| Grade | Description |
| *0* | No answer submitted, or evidence of plagiarism. |
| *1-4* | Significantly below minimal requirements, in terms of content (e.g., doesn’t address the question at all), or word count. |
| *5-6* | Fails to meet minimal requirements in terms of content (e.g., addresses a related question) or word count. Essays that simply report what you “believe” or “feel,” without providing an *argument* may receive this grade. |
| *7* | Meets minimal requirements in terms of both content (it clearly addresses the assigned question) and word count. However, there may be some significant errors or omissions when it comes to the explanation of relevant class material, or providing a detailed response to the question. |
| *8* | Fully meets both content and word count requirements, and provides satisfactory explanations of relevant arguments and concepts from class. There are no majorerrors in argumentation or explanatory gaps. |
| *9-10* | Goes *significantly* above the minimal requirements. The essay’s treatment of course material shows a full mastery of the relevant content, and provides a creative, well-thought out response to it. |

I will grade essays in the order they are submitted (first-come, first-serve). Grades go up in whole-number increments (there is no .5).

## Tips on Writing Philosophy

Philosophy essays can be a bit different from other sorts of writing. Here are some general tips:

1. You should have an **introduction** that concisely introduces the topic, and a **thesis sentence** that clearly states your position. Philosophy papers often begin with theses of the form “I will argue X because Y.”
2. When discussing tough ethical or philosophical issues, **avoid phrases like “I feel,” “I think,” or “I believe.”** Part of taking these issues seriously involves granting that one’s actions and beliefs have consequences for other people, and that (for this reason) they need to be defended with the sorts of ***arguments*** and ***reasons*** that these other people could actually accept. For this reason, appeals to your *own* emotions, religious beliefs, etc. are generally (though not always) inappropriate.
3. Pretend you are writing to **an intelligent and interested (but relatively ignorant) 12-year-old** who doesn’t know anything about the subject (rather than your philosophy professor). This means you’ll need to write clearly, explain new concepts, and offer interesting, memorable examples. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your ability to explain the arguments/concepts we’ve been studying using your own words and examples.
4. Your essay should have multiple paragraphs, each of which has a clear **topic sentence** that clearly relates back to your thesis. When writing philosophy, it’s easy to get “off topic.” So, always ask yourself: is this paragraph helping me provide evidence for my thesis? If the answer is “no,” it should be cut or revised.
5. You should always consider possible **objections** to your thesis. Ask yourself: “How would a smart, well-educated opponent respond to my argument?” In some cases, this might be a real author who you can cite; in other cases, you’ll have to play your own “devil’s advocate.”
6. The conclusion should help the reader appreciate the way your argument fits into the “big picture.” For example, what exactly do you take yourself to have shown? How does this relate to similar cases? What might be the “next ste” of this argument, if you had more time and space?