

# Moral Philosophy - Last Semester's Quizzes

## 1 First Quiz

1. In just a few lines explain what the cradle argument is and what the Epicureans think it shows. (worth four points)
2. In Book I of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle sets out a number of features that we can reasonably expect happiness, whatever it is, to have. What are those features? What candidate for happiness, according to Aristotle, best fits them? Your answer doesn't need to be more than a few sentences. (worth six points)

## 2 Second Quiz

Hume writes:

What is a man's property? Any thing, which it is lawful for him, and for him alone, to use. But what rule have we, by which we can distinguish these objects? Here we must have recourse to statues, customs, precedents, analogies, and a hundred other circumstances; some of which are constant and inflexible, some variable and arbitrary. But the ultimate point, in which they all professedly terminate, is, the interest and happiness of human society. Where this enters not into consideration, nothing can appear more whimsical, unnatural, and even superstitious, than all or most of the laws of justice and of property.

Explain this paragraph in a way that would make it clear and intelligible to someone who had never read Hume.

## 3 Third Quiz

1. Hume writes that,  
  
there are mental passions, by which we are impelled immediately to seek particular objects, such as fame, or power, or vengeance, without any regard to interest; and when these objects are attained, a pleasing enjoyment ensues, as the consequences of our indulged affections. Nature must, by the internal frame and constitution of the mind, give an original propensity to fame, ere we can reap any pleasure from that acquisition, or pursue it from motives of self-love, and a desire of happiness. . . . Were there no appetite of any kind antecedent to self-love, that propensity could scarcely ever exert itself; because we should, in that case, have felt few and slender pains or pleasures, and have little misery or happiness to avoid or to pursue.

What does Hume mean in this passage? (8 points)

2. What is consequentialism? (2 points)

## 4 Fourth Quiz

Mill writes:

. . . I cannot help referring, for illustration, to a systematic treatise by one of the most illustrious of [moralists], the *Metaphysics of Ethics* by Kant. This remarkable man, whose system of thought will long remain one of the landmarks in the history of philosophical speculation, does, in the treatise in question, lay down a universal first principle as the origin and ground of moral obligation; it is this: "So act that the rule on which thou actest would admit of being adopted as a law by all rational beings." But when he begins to deduce from this precept any of the actual duties of morality . . . [a]ll he shows is that the consequences of . . . universal adoption [of immoral rules of conduct] would be such as no one would choose to incur.

Why does Mill stress this point? How does he misinterpret Kant here?

## 5 Fifth Quiz

Explain the contrast that Korsgaard draws between content skepticism and motivational skepticism.