

## Phil 3—Topics for Paper #2—Kant

Choose one of the topics below. A hard copy of your paper is due in class on **Friday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**. You *must* also upload a copy of your paper to Turnitin (through CCLE). You will not receive a grade for your paper until you do so. The papers should be 3-4 pages, with standard formatting (double spaced, 12 pt font, 1.25" margins, page numbers, single-sided and **with the topic number in the title**). Given the later due date, no automatic extensions will be granted for this paper. Any extensions granted will be on a case by case basis as determined by your TA. **If you want comments on your paper, make a note of it in your title (e.g. "comments please!").**

In writing your paper, you may use anything from your notes or the text, but you may **NOT** (for any reason or to any degree) use any other material, especially internet research. (This restriction is for your own benefit. The answers are *not* to be a research paper—i.e., *not* to show that you can extensively research and explain other's opinions, but to formulate your own.) Everything you need to know in order to answer the questions are in your notes/text, *but you will have to do something with that material to develop your answer*. This means you will have to be creative—i.e. say *how* you think Kant's theory would apply in this new context, and *why* you think it would end up with this result and not something else. The *why* will be the most important part of your answer.

I will remind you (once again!) that I take plagiarism, and academic misconduct of any sort, very seriously. If you need help, we are always available. (If you choose to violate the restriction above about internet research, you *must* cite the material you use. One is a restriction for your own benefit, the other constitutes academic misconduct that will have to be turned over to the Dean.)

1. Suppose that your mother is sick and in the hospital. Kant would certainly hold that you have a duty to care for your mother when she is in need (i.e., to aid in her recovery). Therefore, visiting her in the hospital is (generally speaking) a morally required action. However, Kant also says that only actions done from duty have moral worth (i.e., can be called fully moral). Actions from sympathy or compassion alone may be praiseworthy in some respects, but they cannot be said to have moral worth. Some of Kant's critics think this creates a serious problem for his moral theory, because most of us share the belief that visiting our mother out of love and concern for her recovery is not only an ideal moral action, but also that the same action motivated by *mere* "duty" is lacking in at least one morally significant respect (i.e., would you like it if someone visited you merely out of obligation?) Why, then, does Kant hold the position that he does about actions motivated from love or compassion alone? In explaining, be sure to discuss what exactly it is to act from duty, from sympathy/compassion/love, why the two are different, and why it matters. What then would Kant ultimately say about the scenario? Is love enough? Is mere duty enough? Or would he want both in a perfect world? And if so, how might he accomplish it? If not, why not?
2. Kant claims that duty, or acting from the moral law, is unconditionally binding. We must do what duty requires. But Kant's opponents often question whether it is always possible to act as the moral law requires, especially in cases where two duties seem to conflict. Consider the following example:

After a thorough set of tests are done, a doctor determines that her patient requires a very safe series of injections to treat a certain hereditary condition. However, she is also aware that similar injections were used on her patient's father, and that after reading a controversial study, the patient now believes that they led to his father's death. The doctor is sure that if the patient receives the injections, he will eventually be glad he did so. But she is also sure that if she tells him the truth about the type of injections that will be used, he will refuse the treatment and his quality of life will deteriorate significantly. Given the circumstances, the doctor is morally conflicted.

What are the two (potential) duties at play in the example? Be sure to explain all that is involved in determining an action to be a duty—i.e., explain what a duty is in general and how it motivates, what the maxim of action would be in this case, and how it would relate to the categorical imperative (either formulation—FUL or FoH). Do these duties actually conflict? If so, then is the doctor morally obligated to act on both? Is this a problem for Kant's theory? Why or why not? Or would Kant think that one of the two duties would take priority over the other? If so, explain why it would—i.e., what is it about the character of the two "duties" that would justify one taking priority over the other.