Practical Assessment Week 3

RMIT University - PCP/APD 2020 Semester 1

ACTIVITY ONE

Ethics and Critical Thinking

Mark: 3 x 0.166 = 0.5

In the following exercises, you are assumed to have an opinion about a particular subject. Someone is presenting you with an argument and demanding that you change your mind. Analyse the argument and answer the following questions about each.

1. What type of argument is it (e.g. valid or invalid; sound or unsound; inductive or fallacious; if it is a known fallacy)? Explain why.
2. Is the argument in the domain of ethics? If not, discuss why and explain what the relevant domain is?

Assume your position is …

Assume you believe that euthanasia[1] is ethically right in order to relieve pain and suffering.

Arguments to Consider

1. It is virtually impossible to make sure that all acts of euthanasia will be truly voluntary and that the law will not be abused.
2. Euthanasia is killing a human being, and killing a human being is a sin. You must not commit a sin.
3. The assumption that patients should have a *right to die* would impose on doctors a *duty to kill*, thus restricting the autonomy of the doctor. Doctors must be able to autonomously exercise professional judgement to make decisions that best meet the needs of patients.

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[1] According to Oxford dictionary, euthanasia is "the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma". Read the Wikipedia article to form a general understanding about the issues related to this matter.

ACTIVITY TWO

Mark: 4 x 0.125 = 0.5

Decide whether the following arguments belong to the domain of ethics. If not, specify the relevant domains (i.e. either social conventions, religion, politics or law).

ARGUMENT	DOMAIN
If someone is proved to have betrayed their country, it is fine to torture them in order to learn about who they work for. It is not only generally acceptable to do so, but such practice is even legal.	
Lying is a terrible habit. It damages the reputation of the person. It is very difficult to trust a dishonest person. Further, most religions also strongly condemn and prohibit lying.	
Interracial marriage is not a good idea. Many societies have socially stigmatized interracial marriages.	
It is correct to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle because this is the law in our state.	

ACTIVITY THREE

Mark: 1

Read the following real-life scenario and consider the following matters.
1. Identify the ethical issues that arise.
2. Determine if any of them are unique to Cybertechnology.
3. Identify what ethical theory/theories can apply in this context to answer the question.

Ownership of Twitter Accounts[2]

Noah Kravitz was employed by PhoneDog Media, a mobile phone company, for nearly four years. PhoneDog had two divisions: an e-commerce site (phonedog.com) that sold mobile phones and a blog that enabled customers to interact with the company. Kravitz created a blog on Twitter (called Phonedog_Noah) while employed at PhoneDog, and his blog attracted 17,000 followers by the time he left the company in October 2010. However, Kravitz informed PhoneDog that he wanted to keep his Twitter blog, with all of his followers; in return, Kravitz agreed that he would still "tweet" occasionally on behalf of his former company, under a new (Twitter) "handle," or account name, NoahKravitz. Initially, PhoneDog seemed to have no problem with this arrangement. In July 2011, however, PhoneDog sued Kravitz, arguing that his list of Twitter followers was, in fact, a company list. PhoneDog also argued that it had invested a substantial amount of money in growing its customer list, which it considered the property of PhoneDog Media. The company has sought $340,000 in damages—the amount that Phone-Dog estimated it had lost based on 17,000 customers at $2.50 per customer over an eight-month period (following Kravitz's departure from the company).

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[2] Borrowed from Tavani, Herman T. Ethics and Technology: Controversies, Questions, and Strategies for Ethical Computing, 5th Edition.

ACTIVITY FOUR[3]

Mark: 1

Analyse the dilemma in the following scenario from the vantage point of both utilitarian and deontological ethical theories. In particular, how might Ross's theory of act deontology applies in this situation?

In order to learn what Ross's theory, you need to undertake some online research before answering this question. Before applying the theory to the context, first explain what the theory that you are about to apply is.

The U.S. government, with the approval of the majority of Americans, has decided to round up all Arab-Americans and relocate them into internment camps. You have a friend who is an American citizen of Arab descent. She asks you to protect her from the authorities. You have known this person all of your life, and you are convinced that she is a loyal American. So you agree to hide her in the third floor of your house.

Next, imagine that a U.S. federal agent knocks on your door and asks if you know the whereabouts of the person you are hiding. How would you respond to that agent? You realize that you cannot both keep your promise to your friend and tell the truth to the federal agent. Initially, your gut reaction might suggest that the solution to your dilemma is really quite simple: A far greater good will be served by lying to the federal agent than by breaking your promise to your friend. However, to embrace the moral principle underlying that line of reasoning is to embrace a form of utilitarianism. And we have already seen some of the difficulties that can result from trying to be a consistent and thoroughgoing utilitarian. Furthermore, could you consistently universalize a moral principle that states: Whenever you must choose between telling the truth to authorities and breaking a promise to a friend, you should always keep your promise? Will that principle always work?