

Exam 3 Study Guide (Fillable Worksheet)

I. Garrett Hardin – “Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor”

Topic: Whether rich nations have moral obligations to aid poorer ones.

1. **Main Claim:**

Hardin argues that treating the world as a “spaceship” rather than a “lifeboat” is dangerous because _____.

2. **Reason:**

He believes that unrestricted aid or generosity will lead to _____.

3. **Counterpoint:**

Many people believe we *ought* to help the poor because _____.

4. **Response/Transition:**

Hardin replies that this moral impulse overlooks _____.

5. **Conclusion:**

Therefore, he concludes that we _____.

Key Terms to Review:

Spaceship Earth • Lifeboat metaphor • Tragedy of the commons • Carrying capacity

II. Peter Singer – “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”

Topic: The moral obligations of affluent individuals toward global suffering.

1. **Guiding Moral Principle:**

Singer claims that if we can prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, then

2. Example:

In his “drowning child” example, Singer asks us to imagine

3. Application:

The same logic applies to global poverty because

4. Philosophical Implication:

This principle challenges the usual distinction between charity and duty by showing that _____.

5. Conclusion:

Singer ultimately concludes that affluent individuals

Key Terms to Review:

Drowning child • Charity vs. duty • Moral impartiality • Global ethics

III. Judith Jarvis Thomson – “A Defense of Abortion”

Topic: Whether abortion is morally permissible even if the fetus is a person.

1. Opening Claim:

Thomson grants, for the sake of argument, that the fetus is a person but argues that

2. Example (The Violinist Case):

She asks us to imagine _____.

3. Philosophical Analysis:

The example shows that having a right to life does not mean

4. Clarification:

Thomson distinguishes between *killing* and *killing unjustly* because

5. Conclusion:

She concludes that abortion can be justified when

Key Terms to Review:

Violinist analogy • Right to life vs. right to bodily autonomy • Consent • Unjust killing

IV. Thomas Nagel – “Moral Luck”

Topic: Whether moral judgment can survive the influence of luck.

1. Kantian Starting Point:

Nagel begins from the idea that we can be morally responsible only for

2. Example:

For instance, a reckless driver who accidentally kills a pedestrian shows that

3. Philosophical Tension:

These examples challenge the control principle because

4. Synthesis:

Nagel connects moral luck to broader skepticism about moral responsibility by arguing that _____.

5. Conclusion:

He concludes that the phenomenon of moral luck reveals

Key Terms to Review:

Control principle • Resultant/circumstantial/constitutive luck • Paradox of moral judgment

V. Comparative Reflection (Bonus)

Choose any two thinkers and write a short (4–6 sentence) paragraph comparing them.

1. Point of Contrast:

How do they differ in their moral frameworks?

2. Source or Limit of Responsibility:

Hardin/Singer/Thomson/Nagel each locate moral responsibility in

3. Transition:

Explain how their views relate (or clash) with each other.

4. Evaluation:

Which thinker do you find more convincing, and why?
