

PHI 169 – CRITICAL REASONING – FALL 2014

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ASSIGNMENT #2 – DUE MONDAY SEPTEMBERS 29TH

1 FINDING THE RIGHT TEXT [30%]

In the slides for week 4, you'll find my own reconstruction of Mill's and Beccaria's argument. Is my reconstruction accurate? Identify the parts of Mill's or Beccaria's text that show that my reconstruction is accurate. If you think that my reconstruction is not accurate, identify the parts of the text that disagree with my reconstruction. You need to do this only for Mill's or Beccaria's argument, not for both. Pick the one you are more comfortable with.

2 DISAGREEMENTS [30%]

- (a) Why does Beccaria think that the death penalty is less effective than life imprisonment at deterring crimes? Why does Mill think that the death penalty is at least as effective (if not more effective) than life imprisonment at deterring crime?
- (b) Why does Beccaria think that the death penalty is more cruel than life imprisonment? Why does Mill think that the death penalty, instead, is less cruel than life imprisonment? What are they disagreeing about, exactly?

3 WHAT DO YOU THINK? [40%]

- (a) Which parts of Beccaria's and Mill's argument did you find particularly persuasive?
- (b) Which parts of their arguments did you find weak or unpersuasive?
- (c) If you were to weigh the relative strength of Beccaria's and Mill's argument, which one do you think is the better argument? Imagine that you have neither the time nor the resources to look for more data. Imagine that you need to make up your mind about the death penalty as soon as possible, on the basis of Mill's and Beccaria's arguments.

Please always motivate your answers.