

Signature Assignment for The Examined Life

PHIL 140

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Final Projects

This assignment will be completed in several stages. You will work in groups of 3–4. Your group will pick a topic from the list below. You will research the current status of the topic in question and then use the ethical theories introduced in Module 6 to address it.

Pick a Topic (Class Assignment)

Each group picks one of the questions from the list below. Note that each group must pick a different topic:

1. Is it permissible to abort a fetus?
2. Ought a doctor help her terminally ill patient die if the patient requests it?
3. Should we ever execute people for their crimes?
4. Should we allow people to reproduce by cloning?
5. Should prostitution be legal?
6. To what extent ought we give to charity?
7. May I pirate music?
8. Should recreational drug use be illegal?
9. Is it permissible to eat meat?
10. On whom are we allowed to perform medical trials?
11. Should corporations be considered persons?
12. Should we curb climate change for the sake of future generations?

Draft 1: Background Research

In the first part of your project, you will be collecting and thinking through the information needed to write your final paper. Decide between yourselves

how to fairly proportion the work, but clearly indicate in your submission how you divided up the tasks. Note that you will be grading each others' level of participation.

Applied Ethicists are more concerned with particular, practical cases than with more abstract theoretical questions. They want to know how, if at all, a hospital should distribute donated organs, whether it is permissible to bribe officials in foreign states to do business, etc. The questions listed above are all hot topics in the United States. Your job will be to answer them as an Applied Ethicist. In this first draft, write three short documents:

1. After researching articles at www.nj.com from the last 5 years, outline the major downsides and benefits of the current policy governing your chosen issue for society as a whole. What are the likely major downsides and benefits for society as a whole if the policy is changed? Provide full citations to the newspaper articles. (600–800 words)
2. After researching articles at www.nj.com, identify some specific individuals who have been affected by your chosen issue. Detail the real life downsides and benefits to everyone involved. What would the benefits and downsides have been if the event had not occurred? Back up your answer with evidence from the newspaper articles. (600–800 words)
3. Explain both act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. How are they different? (600–800 words) Use the textbook and include proper citations.

Oral Presentation

Each group will prepare a power point presentation on their chosen topic. Each presentation should be 10–15 minutes long with a minimum of 6 slides and a maximum of 12.

- The presentation should **summarize** the findings of the three documents prepared in the research phase.
- Each member of the group must present at least one slide.

Final Submission

You must prepare your final submission by yourself, not in groups. You can refer to the documents prepared by your group as background research, but you must cite those group members who were responsible for those documents.

Prompt: Compare and contrast how the act and rule utilitarian would answer your chosen question. Which theory has the most unsettling consequences? Give reasons for your answer. (1250–1500 words)

Grade Breakdown

1. Background Research: 10 pts.
2. Oral Presentation: 10 pts.
3. Final Submission: 10 pts.
4. Peer Evaluation of Work Contribution: 5 pts.
5. **Total Points: 35pts**

The first two grades will be awarded to your group contribution, the third to your individual final paper, and the fourth by averaging each group member's evaluation of your level of participation.

- *12/07/2015*, Research documents in-class peer review. Bring hard copies to class.
- *12/09/2015*, Research documents due through Blackboard by 9:55.
- *12/14/2015*, In-class presentations.
- *12/18/2015*, Final submission due through Blackboard by 1:00pm.

General Education Program Assessment

General Education courses participate in programmatic assessment of the six University-wide student learning goals. They include instruction in, and assessment of, at least two of these learning goals. Signature assignments, which may include document, picture, sound, or video files, are uploaded to a secure server for anonymous distribution to the NJCU assessment team, which scores them using approved program rubrics. While instructors also grade their own students' signature assignments, which count toward the course grade, assessment team results are aggregated to provide information about the Gen Ed program as a whole. Your name will not be included in any programmatic assessment data.

Academic Integrity

All the work you turn in (including papers, drafts, and discussion board posts) must be written by you specifically for this course. It must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Being a student at NJCU requires you to follow [NJCU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). Penalties for violations are as follows: 1st infraction will result in a 0 for the assignment. 2nd infraction will result in a 0 for the entire course & application for permanent record on student's transcript. (Repeated violations can lead to expulsion from NJCU).

- If a document is plagiarized during the research phase, the penalty will apply to the group as a whole. Make sure you are happy with each document before it is submitted.