

# Signature Assignment for The Examined Life

## PHIL 140 (3251)

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### **Final Projects**

This assignment will be completed in several parts. Please see the syllabus for the relevant deadlines. 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 5 short documents:

1. After researching articles in the NY Times from the last 3 years, outline the legal and regulatory status of your chosen issue. (400–600 words)
2. Identify and summarize the major public concerns relating to the issue at hand discussed in those articles. (400–600 words)
3. Explain both act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. How are they different? (400–600 words)
4. How would the act utilitarian answer your chosen question? Give reasons for your answer. (400–600 words)
5. How would the rule utilitarian answer your chosen question? Give reasons for your answer. (400–600 words)

## 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 5 slides and a maximum of 10.

- The presentation should **summarize** the findings of the five 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.