

The Singer Solution to World Poverty Essay Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is demonstrate your comprehension of an important piece of original philosophy and its theoretical foundations.

Skills: This assignment will help you practice the following skills:

- Reading comprehension.
- Presenting a philosophical idea in writing.
- Identifying the parts of an argument.
- Synthesizing a topic with theory.

Knowledge: This assignment will help you become familiar with the following content.

- Utilitarian ethical theory.
- The ethics of one of the most cited ethicists alive, Peter Singer.

Task

In this paper you will be summarizing and explaining Peter Singer’s argument that we should donate all the money we would normally spend on luxuries to charities that provide life-saving aid for children in need.

For your paper:

1. First, begin by stating what Singer ultimately concludes is morally impermissible and what is morally obligatory.
2. Next, describe the trolley problem that Singer invokes in his argument, and explain why it is central to Singer’s argument. Why think that the trolley problem is not merely a metaphor, but an accurate representation of the choices we actually make all the time? Describe a realistic trolley problem – one without Bugattis, X-Boxes, or toddlers on railroads – that instead uses only possibilities from the everyday happenings of American life.
3. When Singer calls himself a “utilitarian,” this term is synonymous with the term “consequentialism.” Read the first section of this article 1000wordphilosophy.com/2014/05/15/introduction-to-consequentialism/, and then explain what Peter Singer means when he calls himself a utilitarian in your own words. Identify what plausible assumption Singer makes about the value of a luxury purchase for yourself relative to food and medicine for a child in need and explain how this assumption is fundamental to his argument.
4. Then, describe two objections to his argument that Singer discusses in his essay, and explain what his response is to each.
5. Although he himself does not explicitly identify what would be supererogatory on his view, identify the kind of act that you think Singer would most likely say is supererogatory and explain why you think this is.

6. Explain whether or not you accept Singer's conclusion. If so, what changes in your beliefs and/or actions do you need to make, if any? If you reject his conclusion you must also reject at least one of his premises. Which premise(s) do you reject and why? (Be sure your reader knows that you are presenting your own original thoughts in this section. It's okay to use personal pronouns.)

Your paper should be in double-spaced 12-point font, Times New Roman, Vani, or Calibri. Give it an appropriate title and bold or underline the title. Make sure your name and date is on it, and also put the time your class meets (this will really help me stay organized) but don't put the name of the professor.

Criteria for Success

- Every step of the task is completed, and in the proper order.
- Every step is written in your own words. You do not need to quote Singer (and obviously do not plagiarize him). You should not be citing or quoting outside sources.
- The paper does not contain any "filler," i.e. sentences unrelated to the prompt.
- The paper is turned in on time.
- The paper has the proper typesetting spelling, grammar, paragraph structure and editing.

Rubric

The impermissible, and obligatory is adequately and accurately explained. /20

The Trolley Problem and its role in the paper is adequately described and a realistic example is given. /50

Singer's consequentialist philosophy is adequately explained. /30

Two sets of objections and responses are identified and explained. /40

A plausible claim is made about the supererogatory. /20

The student has a defensible and elaborated response to Singer's argument. /20

Proper spelling, grammar, typesetting, editing, and paragraph structure. /20

Total /200