

Running head: SHORTENED TITLE

The Title of the Paper

First name Last name

PHI 208 Ethics and Moral Reasoning

Prof. Immanuel Kant

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Title

Your first sentence should establish the question that orients the essay, taking account of any ways in which you may need to modify or refine it. The rest of this paragraph provides an introduction to the topic. Your introduction should focus on setting out the topic and scope of the discussion in a way that clearly establishes what exactly you will be talking about and why it is significant, and provides any necessary context such as the background, current state of affairs, definitions of key terms, and so on. You want to try to do this in a way that stays as neutral as possible, avoids controversial assumptions, rhetorical questions, and the like. In other words, you should try to construct an introduction to the topic that could be an introduction to a paper defending any position on the question at issue. Your introduction should include a brief remark about the kind of theory you will be using to approach this question. The last sentence of the introduction should briefly summarize the conclusion or position on this issue that you think is best supported by this theory, and succinctly state what the objection will be.

Theory Explanation

You should explain the core principles or features of either utilitarianism or deontology and the general account of moral behavior it provides. “You must quote from at least one Required Resource that defends or represents that theory, drawn from the list included with the assignment instructions” (Author, YEAR, p. ##). Make sure that you first understand the theory that you are using, and that you have read the Instructor Guidance and any additional resources from the Required and Recommended Resources as needed. If you do not adequately understand and explain the theory, you will not be able to apply it adequately to the topic. You will need to explain the core principles in

such a way that the theory's application to the question raised in the Week One Assignment will be as straightforward and clear as possible.

Theory Application

Explain how the core principles or features of this theory apply to the problem or question under consideration and identify the specific moral conclusion that results. Your application should clearly show how the conclusion follows from the main tenets of the theory as explained in the previous paragraph(s). An application involves showing how general ideas about how to live and act ethically, when combined with the specific circumstances under consideration, lead to conclusions about how one should act in those circumstances. A very simple, non-moral example of such reasoning might start with the general idea that "if I'm hungry, I ought to eat," apply that to the specific circumstances in which "I'm hungry," leading to the conclusion that "I ought to eat." The application of an ethical theory to an actual moral problem will be much more complicated, nuanced, and detailed, but that should give you a sense of how to proceed.

For example, if you were examining capital punishment from a utilitarian perspective, you might start by explaining the general principle that we should do that which leads to the greatest happiness. You would then consider the effects of capital punishment, including not just the suffering and death of the punished, but also the positive and negative effects on other individuals and society as a whole. You could compare that with the effects of abolishing capital punishment, and demonstrate which policy has the best overall outcomes.

Remember that when applying utilitarianism, you want to explain the benefits and harms that would result from one action or policy, what the overall utility of that would

be, and compare that with the same analysis of the available alternative action(s) or policy. Doing this carefully will allow you to demonstrate the utilitarian conclusion as clearly as possible.

On the other hand, if you were applying a deontological argument, you might apply Kant's Categorical Imperative, examining whether a maxim that involved capital punishment could be willed as a universal law, or whether capital punishment treats persons as ends-in-themselves.

Remember that when applying deontological theory, what you are looking for is a kind of argument that says that we have a duty to do or not do to thus-and-such regardless of the consequences. In other words, while doing something may indeed lead to a better overall state of affairs, that's not the primary reason why we ought to do it. Similarly, even if doing something leads to a better overall state of affairs, if it violates a duty we have not to do a certain kind of action, we ought not do it.

You might show this by providing an explanation of Kant's Categorical Imperative, and an application of the "Categorical Imperative" test. For example, you might consider the relevant maxim involved, and whether that is something that could be willed to be universal law; or, you could determine whether people's humanity is being respected as an end-in-itself or being used as a mere means.

You may have to provide evidence for your views, in which case, "I would expect you to quote from the required resources on this topic, and any other relevant scholarly resources" (Author, YEAR, p. ##). See the Required and Recommended Resources, as well as the textbook and Instructor Guidance, for examples. By the end of your

discussion, it should be clear what conclusion utilitarian or deontological reasoning would lead to on the issue.

Objection

Raise a relevant objection to the argument expressed in your application. A relevant objection is one that exposes a weakness in the argument or the theory, and so you should explain how it brings out this weakness. Note that this does not necessarily mean that the objection succeeds, or that the conclusion the theory supports is wrong. It may be an obstacle that any adequate defense of the conclusion would have to overcome, and it may be the case that the theory has the resources to overcome that obstacle. On the other hand, you may find this objection to be a pretty conclusive argument against that theory's approach to the problem (and perhaps the theory itself). However, you shouldn't attempt to draw such larger conclusions from the objection (that's for the Final Paper). Your task here is simply to raise the objection or present the "obstacle."

For example, if you were writing on capital punishment, you might find that utilitarianism entails a certain position that you think is completely wrong, and so you may find the objection to be persuasive. Or, you may agree with the utilitarianism approach and think that ultimately the objection does not undermine it. Or, you might think that utilitarianism's conclusion is right but their approach is wrong (sort of like what Tom Regan thought regarding animal ethics), and so you think the objection is strong, even though you end up agreeing with the conclusion. Again, you should not be trying to explain whether you think the objection succeeds. Rather, the task is to show that you can think critically about an issue from the perspective of the moral theory, and to raise

questions and concerns about that theory based on how it applies to a concrete issue.

Please see the “notes and guidance” for additional direction on this part of your essay.

Conclusion

Conclude your paper with a brief review the main claims and accomplishments of your essay.

References

Required: Primary text in support of the theory, drawn from the list of acceptable resources provided with the assignment instructions.

Required: Resource pertaining to the moral problem that is the primary topic of the paper, drawn from the required or recommended readings in the course, or found in the Ashford University Library.

Suggested: Other resources as needed.

Note that resources must be cited in the text as well as included in the bibliography to satisfy the requirement.

The textbook and guidance do not count toward the resources requirement, though you are free to use them as additional resources.