

Central Problems in Philosophy: Paper Three

Requirements

You are to submit one 6–8 page research paper on Thursday 14 May, addressing one and only one of the questions listed below. A printed copy of the paper must be submitted in class.

Guidelines

Essay guidelines are available here: <http://goo.gl/jrx25>

Questions

Note: You may address a question from those assigned for the first or second paper, as long as the topic is not from the same section of the course on which you wrote either of those papers.

- Explain and evaluate the argument made by Frankfurt (1969) against what he calls “the principle of alternate possibilities”.
- Strawson (1962) develops arguments against both “optimists” and “pessimists” about the compatibility of determinism and moral responsibility. Explain and evaluate one argument he makes against optimists, and one argument he makes against pessimists.
- Explain the difference between what Smart (1956) calls “extreme” and “restricted” utilitarianism, explain and evaluate Smart’s argument against restricted utilitarianism, and explain and evaluate one objection Smart considers against extreme utilitarianism.

References

- Harry G. Frankfurt. 1969. “Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”, in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 66, No. 23, Dec. 1969, pp. 829–839. Reprinted in Frankfurt (1998, pp. 1–10). URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2023833>.
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- Louis P. Pojman. 2007. *Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Louis P. Pojman. 5th edition. Belmont CA: Wadsworth.

- Russ Shafer-Landau. 2012. *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau. 2nd edition. Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- J. J. C. Smart. 1956. "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism", in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 25, Oct. 1956, pp. 344–354. Reprinted in Pojman (2007, pp. 205–211) and Shafer-Landau (2012, pp. 423–427).
- Peter Strawson. 1962. "Freedom and Resentment", in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 187–211. Reprinted in Strawson (2008, pp. 1–28).
- . 2008. *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*, London: Routledge.