

Reading Guide #3: Kantianism

These reading guides are provided to assist you in your reading. I encourage you to read the material through, first, then go back to answer the questions. You are not expected to hand in written answers. You are expected to have responses ready for class discussion. Only the boldfaced questions will appear on exams. Page numbers refer to Arthur, *Morality and Moral Controversies*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

Immanuel Kant, 'The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals', pp 16-26

- 1. What is the only thing Kant thinks good without qualification? Why are intelligence and wealth not good without qualification?**
  2. Why is the good will good?
  3. Contrast Kant's notions of inclination and duty. When does an act have moral worth?
  4. "That an action done from duty derives its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place..." (18) Explain.
  - 5. Why can't lying be willed as a universal law?**
  - 6. What's the difference between an hypothetical and a categorical imperative?**
  - 7. Explain the categorical imperative in the formula of universal law.**
  8. Why is false promising wrong, according to the formula of universal law? (See Illustration 2)
  - 9. Why can't you neglect others in need, according to Kant? (See Illustration 4)**
  - 10. How are the answers to the previous two questions different? That is, what are the two ways in which one can fail to be able to will a maxim?**
  - 11. "Now I say: man and generally every rational being exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will..." (22) Explain.**
  12. What's the difference between things and persons?
  - 13. What, specifically, is the second formulation of the categorical imperative?**
  - 14. What is a 'kingdom of ends', according to Kant? In what does morality consist, for Kant?**
  15. What is Kant's distinction between price and dignity? What kinds of things have dignity?
  16. What is autonomy, for Kant? What is freedom?
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Onora O'Neill, 'Kant and Utilitarianism Contrasted', pp 40-45

1. What is a maxim? What are intentions? How do you turn an intention into a maxim?
- 2. How do we decide whether an action is right or wrong, for Kant?**
- 3. What is using someone as a mere means? How is it different from using that person as a means?**
- 4. Why is false promising wrong, on Kant's view?**
5. What are two ways to use someone as a mere means?
- 6. What does being good require, in Kant's view? What does beneficence require? What is the difference between them? Be specific.**
7. What kinds of acts are obligatory, for Kant? Provide an example.
8. Which types of acts are permissible? Provide an example.
- 9. How are Kantian ethics and utilitarianism different in terms of scope and precision, according to O'Neill? Provide examples.**
10. What kinds of acts can Kantian ethics not assess?
11. "It may seem a great limitation of Kantian ethics that it concentrates on intentions to the neglect of results." (43) Why? How does O'Neill respond to this criticism?
- 12. Why is human life valuable, according to utilitarianism?**
- 13. Why is human life valuable, according to Kantian Ethics?**
14. Why might a society of Kantians be less happy, overall, than a society of utilitarians? Where would you rather live? Why?