

Preparation for the Midterm Exam: Ethics and Benson

The midterm exam will cover the main topics, texts, ideas, and terms of the first half of the course. The topics, texts, ideas and terms found in the quizzes should give you a good picture of the range of issues and the level of specificity expected. Of course, the quizzes were not exhaustive of the topics the midterm could cover.

Science and Policy Lectures

What are the basic philosophies of Science that Dr. Lin went over in lecture? Know them by name.

What are the basic ways in which Science relates to Ethics and Policy? Be familiar with the names for each framework.

Benson

You are expected to be familiar with the *main ideas and terms* found in the chapters by Benson:

Chapter 1

Meanings of “environment.”- Independent and Dependent Moral Status ▪ Status Conferring Characteristics ▪ Differences between Light Green and Dark Green Environmentalism ▪ Last Man Example

Chapter 2

How notions of human well-being get us beyond chauvinism ▪ Instrumental and Non-instrumental value

Chapter 3

The problem of limited sympathies ▪ Public goods ▪ The problems of assuring cooperation in environmental issues ▪ Prudence versus morality

The thesis(s) and key terms of the essays by the following authors in Benson’s text:

Norton ▪ Wilson ▪ Howarth ▪ Hardin ▪ Hepburn

Friday Ethics Lectures

Post-Modernism

The Critique of Universal Moral Claims – How the Death of God Frees up Humans to be Authentic – the Hope that lay in Local Cultural Narratives

Modernism - Deontology

What are some of the characteristics of a moral duty? Why are consequences of little importance for the deontologist?

Utilitarianism

What does the utilitarian seek to maximize in a given decision? The importance of consequences?

Virtue Ethics

The basic meanings of virtue, character and happiness as the final good. The importance of habituation. How moral discernment and understanding is achieved through communities, narratives, and exemplars.

Gospel Ethics

What are the distinct Christian virtues? - What is the human good for Christian ethics? What are the differences between Christian Ethics and other approaches the lecture series considered.

Study tips

Texts: Presumably, when you worked through your texts you either made substantial notations in the texts and margins or you took notes on the texts on something other than the text itself. Either way, you should review these notations/notes to refamiliarize yourself with the content of the course.

Below are several questions you can ask yourself when you are looking over things:

What is the author's main point (i.e. thesis)?

Example: Bryan Norton defends a strategic approach of justifying political environmental policy based in anthropocentric arguments. If we understand human interests to be complex enough, this can result in similar environmental policies to the intellectual approach.

What school of thought or ethical framework is the author sympathetic to?

Example: Bouma-Prediger is sympathetic to the Evangelical Protestant worldview, and defends its view of creation care. This worldview entails: a theo-centric view of nature that puts God's interest ahead of human or natural interests; a Trinitarian theology that understands God and humanity as relational; an understanding of Christ's redemption that includes the restoration of a fallen creation; a view of the church that embodies this commitment to creation care.

What school of thought or ethical framework is the author critical of?

Bouma-Prediger critiques those who claim that Christianity is without a concern for creation and the natural world.

What are the key terms used in the text and what do they mean?

Examples: Norton: Strategic versus Intellectual Debate; Howarth: Intrinsic, Instrumental Value; Hardin:

Cooperation, Mutual Coercion; Wilson: Bio-philial;

What seems utterly confusing? If you do not understand a point the author makes, and cannot figure it out after considering it carefully, ask a friend or bring it to class on Monday.

Lecture Notes:

Presumably, you have been taking notes throughout the term. These were most straightforward to take during the Friday lectures and our common lectures between the two environmental classes, but you should also have note important elements of our discussion days as well. Link these notes with the actual text or chapter we were discussing on that day. Inquire about the speaker using the same questions as above.