

Here are some sample questions for the final paper. The paper should be at minimum 3 pages but try to keep it shorter than 8 (double-spaced, standard font/size).

Your paper should be devoted to answering a question. If you are coming up with your own question, ask yourself whether it is something that can sustain an answer that is compatible with the length of the paper assignments (some questions are too easy, some would be too complex to adequately answer). You are invited to use outside sources where you think they are called for, but you must include, in whatever question you are answering, reference to at least one of the course texts (on the blackboard page - excluding Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" which was an optional supplement; also excluding the notes I typed up about Wiggins chapter 11).

- 1) What is presented by the 1619 project which seems to fall outside of the notice of the traditional moral/ethical approaches we have discussed in the course (in Plato, Aristotle, Kant, or Utilitarianism)? Choose one of the approaches and outline how it might have engaged with what you take to be significant to any one of the 1619 texts.
- 2) How would you describe the vision of the social whole that emerges in Baldwin's letters? Does he have a central claim that is in common between the two?
- 3) What approach to ethics or morality does Thoreau rely upon in Civil Disobedience? Is there a particular line of thinking we have covered this semester which would particularly agree with Thoreau? Is there one that would be particularly opposed to Thoreau's efforts? Explain your reasoning for both of these connections.
- 4) Kant made his intentions clear to explore for once the possibility of grounding moral philosophy entirely upon a priori reason alone. Describe your sense of his accomplishment. What are the main points that Kant puts forward? What sorts of problems do you think a Kantian account would run into, and can a good-faith Kantian address these problems?
- 5) Is there any friction between the early vision of feminism as articulated by Wollstonecraft and the intersectional concerns raised by bell hooks? What alternative approaches might be considered (here you might look up Simone de Beauvoir's introduction to *The Second Sex*)?
- 6) How does David Wiggins's shaping of neo-Aristotelian accounts of justice match with your understanding of Aristotle's original vision in *Nicomachean Ethics*? What are the ways in which Wiggins improves upon Aristotle? Is there any room for Aristotle to respond in a significant way?
- 7) What is important about David Wiggins's contribution to objectivism in ethics (chapter 11 of the course book)? How does this account clash with the account of relativism which Bernard Williams puts forward?
- 8) Is it possible to be a thoroughgoing and loyal utilitarian today? Whose vision of utilitarianism do you support (Bentham in his *Principles*... link here: <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/bentham1780.pdf> OR the version of Utilitarianism offered by J. S. Mill here: <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf>)? Why support this over the other?

- 9) What criticisms of utilitarianism do you think are the most substantial (you might consider Bernard Williams's critique of utilitarianism <http://homepage.westmont.edu/hoeckley/PHI006SP12/documents/Williams.pdf> ; or consider the ways in which utilitarianism intersected with the account of killing vs. letting die in Philippa Foot's article)?
- 10) Carens describes the most straightforward ethical solution to immigration to be a policy of open borders. What do you think about this? Is there a problem in Carens's account?
- 11) Look up any recent debate on the subject of gene-editing or euthanasia and offer your analysis of how the debate stands. This should include at least one of the course readings.
- 12) Stoicism and Epicureanism might be described as intensifying initial Socratic insights into ethics. Describe a few of these intensifications. (You may wish to consult, in particular the end of Plato's *Phaedo*). What sense of 'self' or 'pleasure' or 'control' is needed today to commit oneself to either of these hellenistic moral theories?
- 13) What are the important take-away points from part 5 of Foucault's *History of Sexuality volume 1*? Are there any points from this part of the text, or of the opening (called "We 'Other' Victorians") that you think are pressing concerns for contemporary life or has Foucault's relevance been eclipsed somehow?