

Theme 1

Prior synoptic links:

GCSE Abortion and Euthanasia

F: Meta-ethical approaches - Emotivism:

Theory that believes objective moral laws do not exist; a non-cognitivist theory; moral terms express personal emotional attitudes and not propositions; ethical terms are just expressions of personal approval (hurrah) or disapproval (boo); explains why people disagree about morality.

A.J. Ayer - ethical statements are neither verifiable nor analytic; made to express joy or pain (emotion); expressed to be persuasive; emotivism is not subjectivism.

Challenges: no basic moral principles can be established; ethical debate becomes a pointless activity; there is no universal agreement that some actions are wrong.

A. Divine Command Theory: Meta-ethical theory - God

as the origin and regulator of morality; right or wrong as objective truths based on God's will/command, moral goodness is achieved by complying with divine command; divine command a requirement of God's omnipotence; divine command as an objective metaphysical foundation for morality. Robert Adams' 'Modified Divine Command Theory' (divine command based on God's omnibenevolence).

Challenges: the Euthyphro dilemma (inspired by Plato); arbitrariness problem (divine command theory renders morality as purely arbitrary); pluralism objection (different religions claim different divine commands).

Scholars

Max Stirner
Cicero
Aristotle
St Thomas Aquinas
Ayn Rand
F.H. Bradley
A.J. Ayer

Theme 1: Ethical Thought

E: Meta-ethical approaches - Intuitionism:

Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings; moral truths can be discovered by using our minds in an intuitive way; intuitive ability is innate and the same for all moral agents; intuition needs a mature mind so not infallible; allows for objective moral values.

H.A. Prichard, 'ought to do' has no definition; recognise what we 'ought to do' by intuition; two ways of thinking (general and moral).

Challenges: no proof of moral intuition exists; intuitive 'truths' can differ widely; no obvious way to resolve conflicting intuitions

B. Virtue Theory: Ethical system based on defining the personal qualities that make a person moral; the focus on a person's character rather than their specific actions; Aristotle's moral virtues (based on the deficiency; the excess and the mean); Jesus' teachings on virtues (the Beatitudes).

Challenges: virtues are not a practical guide to moral behaviour; issue of cultural relativism (ideas on the good virtues are not universal); virtues can be used for immoral acts.

Issues for analysis and evaluation:

Whether morality is what God commands.

Whether being a good person is better than just doing good deeds.

Whether Virtue Theory is useful when faced with a moral dilemma.

The extent to which ethical egoism inevitably leads to moral evil.

The extent to which all moral actions are motivated by self-interest.

Whether one of Divine Command Theory, Virtue Theory or Ethical Egoism is superior to the other theories.

D: Meta-ethical approaches - Naturalism:

Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings, moral terms can be understood by analysing the natural world; ethical statements are cognitivist and can be verified or falsified; verified moral statements are objective truths and universal.

F.H. Bradley - ethical sentences express propositions; objective features of the world make propositions true or false; meta-ethical statements can be seen in scientific terms.

Challenges: Hume's Law (the is-ought problem); Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy (moral language is indefinable); the Open Question Argument (moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties).

C. Ethical Egoism: Normative agent focused ethic based on self-interest as opposed to altruism; ethical theory that matches the moral agent's psychological state (psychological egoism); concentration on long term self-interests rather than short term interests; Max Stirner, self-interest as the root cause of every human action even if it appears altruistic; rejection of egoism for material gain; union of egoists.

Challenges: destruction of a community ethos; social injustices could occur as individuals put their own interests first; a form of bigotry (why is one moral agent more important than any other?).

Future synoptic links

Situation Ethics/ Christianity: Bible as source of wisdom/ Biblical canon/ Key moral principles in Christianity/ Theodicy/

Theme 2

Prior synoptic links:

Situation Ethics/
Christianity: Bible as
source of wisdom/ Biblical
canon/ Key moral
principles in Christianity/
Theodicy/

Issues for analysis:
Whether Finnis' Natural Law is
acceptable in contemporary society.

- The extent to which Hoose's Proportionism promotes immoral behaviour.
- Whether Finnis and/or Hoose provide a basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers.
- The strengths and weaknesses of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Hoose's Proportionism.
- The effectiveness of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Hoose's Proportionism in dealing with ethical issues.
- The extent to which Finnis' Natural Law is a better ethic than Hoose's Proportionism or vice versa

F: Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's

Proportionism: application of the theory:

The application of Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's Proportionism to both of the issues listed below:

1. Immigration
2. capital punishment

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionism:

As a hybrid of Natural Law, a deontological / teleological ethic;

Hoose's proportionist maxim ('it is never right to go against a principle unless there is a proportionate reason which would justify it'); distinction between an evil moral act (an immoral act) and a pre-moral/ontic evil act (a bad act that in itself is not immoral); distinction between a right act (an act that follows the moral rule) and a good act (an act that is not a right act, but creates the lesser of two evils); common good and need for authority; Proportionality based on a

D: John Finnis' development of Natural Law:

Development of the **seven basic human goods** (life, knowledge, friendship, play, aesthetic experience, practical reasonableness and religion); distinction between theoretical / practical reason; **Nine Requirements of Practical Reason** (view life as a whole, prioritise certain goods over others, basic goods apply equally to all, do not become obsessed with a particular project, use effort to improve, plan your actions to do the most good, never harm a basic good, foster common good in the community and act in your own conscience and authority); the common good and the need for authority.

A: St Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law - laws and precepts as the basis of morality:

Aquinas' four levels of law (eternal, divine, natural and human); Natural Law derived from rational thought; based on a belief in a divine creator (the highest good as being the rational understanding of God's final purpose). Natural Law as a form of moral absolutism and a theory which has both deontological and teleological aspects. The five primary precepts (preservation of life, ordered society, worship of God, education and reproduction of the human species) as derived from rational thought and based on the premise of 'doing good and avoiding evil'; the secondary precepts which derive from the primary precepts; the importance of keeping the precepts in order to establish a right relationship with God and gain eternal life with God in heaven.

Theme 2: Natural Law

B. Aquinas' Natural Law - the role of virtues and goods in supporting moral behaviour:

The need for humans to be more God-like by developing the three revealed virtues (faith, hope and charity) and four cardinal virtues (fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice). Aquinas' definition of different types of acts and goods: internal acts (the intention of the moral agent when carrying out an action) and external acts (the actions of a moral agent); real goods (correctly reasoned goods that help the moral agent achieve their telos) and apparent goods (wrongly reasoned goods that don't help the moral agent achieve their God given purpose).

C: Aquinas' Natural Law - application of the theory:

The application of Aquinas' Natural Law to both of the issues listed below:

1. abortion
2. voluntary euthanasia

Scholars:

St. Thomas Aquinas
Sigmund Freud
Carl Jung
Charles Darwin

Future synoptic links

Teleological, design, naturalism, religious language/ Bible as source of wisdom in Christianity/ Theodicy/ fundamentalist philosophy/problem of evil & suffering/theodicies

Theme 3

Prior synoptic links

Teleological, design, naturalism, religious language/ Bible as source of wisdom in Christianity/ Theodicy/ fundamentalist philosophy/problem of evil & suffering/theodicies

Issues for analysis: some of which are:

- The degree to which agape is the only intrinsic good.
- Whether Fletcher's Situation Ethics promotes immoral behaviour.
- The extent to which Situation Ethics promotes justice.
- The effectiveness of Situation Ethics in dealing with ethical issues.
- Whether agape should replace religious rules.
- The extent to which Situation Ethics provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers.
- The extent to which Act and/or Rule Utilitarianism works in contemporary society.
- The extent to which Rule Utilitarianism provides a better basis for making moral decisions than Act Utilitarianism.
- Whether Utilitarianism promotes immoral behaviour/promotes justice.
- The extent to which Utilitarianism provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers.

F: Bentham's Act Utilitarianism and Mill's Rule Utilitarianism - application of the theory:

The application of Bentham's Act Utilitarianism and Mill's Rule Utilitarianism to both of the issues listed below:

1. animal experimentation for medical research
2. the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent

E. John Stuart Mill's development of Utilitarianism: types of pleasure, the harm principle and the use of rules: Mill's idea that not all pleasure is the same: 'higher pleasures' (intellectual) are superior to 'lower pleasures' (basic physical pleasure); the 'Harm Principle': the actions of individuals should be limited to prevent harm to other individuals; not all actions need to be morally assessed as actions are morally right if they conform to a historical rule that has demonstrated that it fulfils the principle of utility (now known as 'Rule' Utilitarianism). Mill's Utilitarianism as a teleological/deontological hybrid.

D: Classical Utilitarianism - Jeremy Bentham's Act Utilitarianism: happiness as the basis of morality:

Bentham's theory of 'utility' or 'usefulness';

ultimate aim is to pursue pleasure and avoid pain;
principle of utility ('the greatest happiness for the greatest number').

The hedonic calculus as a means of measuring pleasure in each unique moral situation; by considering seven factors: intensity, duration, certainty, remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent.

A: Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics - his rejection of other forms of ethics and his acceptance of agape as the basis of morality:

Fletcher's rejection of other approaches within ethics: legalism, antinomianism and the role of conscience; Fletcher's rationale for using the religious concept of 'agape' (selfless love) as the 'middle way' between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism; The biblical evidence used to support this approach: the teachings of Jesus (Luke 10:25:37) and St Paul (1 Corinthians 13). Situation Ethics as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory

Theme 3: Teleological Ethics

B: Fletcher's Situation Ethics - the principles as a means of assessing morality:

The basic principle of Situation Ethics (following the concept of agape); the four working principles (pragmatism, relativism, positivism and personalism); The six fundamental principles (love is the only good, love is the ruling norm of Christianity, love equals justice, love for all, loving ends justify the means and love decides situationally).

C: Fletcher's Situation Ethics - application of theory:

The application of Fletcher's Situation Ethics to both of the issues listed below:

1. homosexual relationships
2. polyamorous relationships

Scholars

Joseph Fletcher
Jeremy Bentham
John Stuart Mill

Future synoptic links

Theodicy/fundamentalist morality (Phil Yr2)/ key moral principles in Christianity/

Theme 4

Prior synoptic links:

Theodicy/fundamentalist morality (Phil Yr2)/ key moral principles in Christianity/

Issues for analysis:

A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination.

- The extent to which God predestines humanity.
 - The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will.
 - Strengths and weaknesses of Hard and/or Soft Determinism.
 - Whether moral responsibility is an illusion.
 - The extent to which pre-destination influences our understanding of God
- How convincing are religious views on free will.
- The extent to which an individual has free choice.
 - The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.
 - The extent to which free moral agents should follow a normative ethic.
 - The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant.
 - The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination

F: The implications of libertarianism and free will:

The implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.

The implications of free will on religious belief: the link between God and evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles

E: Concepts of libertarianism:

Philosophical (Jean Paul Sartre: man is not free not to be free, waiter illustration),

Scientific (Angela Sirigu: free floating DNA in the brain allows for free will), psychological (Carl Rogers: humanist approach, self-actualisation).

D: Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of:

Pelagius: The role of original sin, humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will, free will as used to follow God's laws, the role of grace in salvation.

Arminius: Denial of predestination, the effect of original sin on free will, God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will, the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace, the election of believers being conditional on faith

A: Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to the teachings of:

St Augustine:

Doctrine of Original Sin: role of concupiscence, humanity as "a lump of sin" (massa peccati), an essentially 'free' human nature (liberum abitrium), the loss of human liberty (libertas) to our sinful nature, God's grace and atonement for the elect / saints.

John Calvin:

Doctrine of Election: the absolute power of God, the corrupted nature of humans, the Elect and the Reprobates, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.

B: Concepts of determinism:

Hard determinism: philosophical (John Locke - free will is an illusion, man in bedroom illustration), scientific (biological determinism - human behaviour is controlled by an individual's genes), psychological (Ivan Pavlov - classical conditioning).

Soft determinism: Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes), A.J. Ayer (caused acts v forced acts).

C: The implications of predestination / determinism:

The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.

The implications of predestination on religious belief: the link between God and evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.

Scholars:

St. Augustine
John Calvin
Thomas Hobbes
A.J. Ayer
Pelagius
Arminius
Jean Paul Sartre
Angela Sirigu
Carl Rogers

Theme 4: Free Will and Determinism

Future synoptic links

Theme 1 Christianity/Theme 4 rise of secularism/ comparing Jesus and the moral activity of the Church/the fact and problem of suffering (theodicy) in relation to the view of suffering in Utilitarianism/ Atheism/ Utilitarian statements of morality as representing (or not) a cognitive approach.