

Final Exam

Short Answers: *Answer 10 out of 15 questions. 2 points each.*

1. Explain the difference between the psychological and normative senses of the word “morality.” Give examples of each usage.
2. Define “moral sensibility” and “moral ideology” and give examples of each of these phenomena.
3. Describe the moral sense hypothesis articulated and defended by Hutcheson and Hume.
4. Define “moral cognition” and explain how moral cognition is supposed to differ from prudential calculation according to those who draw a distinction between these two forms of reasoning.
5. Explain the difference between psychological altruism and evolutionary altruism, give an example of a behavior or trait that is psychologically altruistic but not evolutionarily altruistic, and give an example of a behavior or trait that is evolutionarily altruistic but not psychologically altruistic.
6. Explain the moral/conventional distinction and describe one reason for thinking this distinction is not universally drawn.
7. Define the “authority independence” of a rule or norm and the evidence that young children distinguish authority dependent from authority independent rules or norms.
8. Articulate and explicate Darwin’s analysis of “conscience.”
9. Explain the difference between altruistic desires and moral principles.
10. Define “psychological egoism.”
11. Define ‘second-order volition’ and use an example to explain what distinguishes a second-order volition from a mere second-order desire.
12. Describe 3 out of the 5 kinds of norms Vincent, Ring and Andrews articulate. Give at least one example drawn from the studies they report of animals conforming to these three kinds of norm.
13. Define “moral subject,” and “moral agent,” and explain the difference between these concepts.
14. List four of Kohlberg’s six stages of moral development.
15. State the principle of alternate possibilities.

Mandatory Essay Questions: *Answer both questions (20 points each)*

1. Explain what a debunking argument is, what reliabilism is, and how one might try to debunk a person’s belief by showing it to have an unreliable source. Explain Joshua Greene’s neuroscientific attempt to debunk deontic moral views and the criticism of Greene’s argument articulated by Demaree-Cotton and Kahane. Is this criticism of Greene effective? According to Demaree-Cotton and Kahane which areas of the brain are operative when neurologically normal subjects make moral judgments? What are the functions neurologists assign to these areas of the brain? If you assume that Demaree-Cotton and Kahane are right about the proximate neurological causes of your moral judgments, does that increase your confidence in those judgments, decrease your confidence in their truth or leave your confidence unchanged? Explain and defend your answers.
2. Watson says,

What this difficulty shows is that the notion of orders of desires or volitions does not do the work that Frankfurt wants it to do. It does not tell us why or how a particular want can have, among all of a person's 'desires' the special property of being particularly his 'own'. There may be something to the notions of acts of identification and of decisive commitment, but these are in any case different notions from that of a second (or n-) order desire. And if these are the crucial notions, it is unclear why these acts of identification cannot be themselves of the first-order—that is, identification with or commitment to courses of action (rather than with or to desires)—in which case, no ascent is necessary, and the notion of higher-order volitions becomes superfluous or at least secondary.

What are Frankfurt's Humean views of free will and moral responsibility? Describe Watson's criticisms of Frankfurt's view of free will (i.e. the criticisms given in the passage above). Are Watson's criticisms of Frankfurt's view devastating? Why or why not? Describe Watson's own more Platonic view of free will. Is Watson's view superior to Frankfurt's? Is either view satisfying? Are there any barriers to the freedom of the will comparable to chains, cages and other obstacles to freedom of action? Do Frankfurt and Watson provide an accurate characterization of these "internal" obstacles to free choice and action? Explain your answers fully.

Choose Two Final Essays Question: Answer 2 of these 3 (20 points each)

1. Describe Frankfurt's reasons for thinking that one can be held morally responsible for an action even if one could not have acted otherwise than one actually acted. Is Frankfurt's argument against the "principle of alternative possibilities" convincing? Why or why not?
2. Describe the moral sense hypothesis advanced by Hutcheson and Hume. Describe the analysis of conscience defended by Darwin. Discuss the evidence of animal morality described by Vincent, Ring and Andrews. Does the evidence of animal morality support the claims that humans have a biologically evolved, species typical moral sense? How much variation exists between the moral codes of different people? How much similarity exists between these codes? Is the similarity best explained by biological commonalities? Are the differences best explained by environmental, historical or cultural differences? Support your answers with information drawn from the course readings and lecture notes.
3. Describe Stich's skepticism about the "naturalness" of the distinction between moral norms and non-moral conventions. Do you agree that this distinction is drawn differently by different people or different communities? Does that undermine your confidence in drawing the distinction as you now draw it? Must we make substantive moral assumptions (or value judgments) to distinguish moral norms from mere conventions? If so, does this undercut the scientific status of the distinction? Why or why not?