

PART I (Morning)

Discuss one (1) of the following questions. You will have approximately three hours to write your answer. Your essay should be comprehensive and detailed, but also well-focused and addressed to the question at hand.

1. An important strand of contemporary egalitarian thought, a strand that Elizabeth Anderson calls 'luck equality', argues that responsibility for disadvantage should constitute a *decisive* concern for egalitarian theory. Gerald Cohen, in particular, asserts that an acceptable egalitarian theory must assign central importance to the distinction between choices grounded in preferences that are acquired voluntarily and those which reflect the influence of habituation or other nonvoluntary processes. Matt Matravers, however, expresses the concern of many political philosophers when he observes that political philosophy will "be on hold for some time" if we must wait for a defensible account of genuine choice before addressing the basic questions of egalitarian justice. Other critics of luck equality, including Martha Nussbaum, Elizabeth Anderson, and Timothy Hinton, argue that responsibility for disadvantage constitutes an inappropriate focus for egalitarian theory. Discuss and evaluate this controversy. Your essay should discuss the work of at least one luck egalitarian (e.g. Ronald Dworkin, Gerald Cohen, Richard Arneson) and at least two critics (e.g. Elizabeth Anderson, Martha Nussbaum, Matt Matravers, Timothy Hinton).
2. Much of the contemporary literature on distributive justice focuses on the attempt to balance two moral imperatives: (i) life chances should not be determined by endowments of qualities distributed in a manner that is arbitrary from the moral point of view; and (ii) persons should only be compensated for inequalities in fortune for which it is not reasonable to hold them responsible. Various balances between these concerns have been urged. Rawls, for example, argues that the principles of justice that regulate the basic structure of society must be designed to mitigate or neutralize arbitrary influences on life chances; Dworkin argues that persons should be compensated for the effects of bad brute luck, but not of bad option luck; and Arneson argues that persons should not be compensated for inequalities in fortune that result from choices made after a person has been guaranteed equal opportunity for welfare. In a contrasting vein, Nozick argues that neither of these concerns should be central to an account of distributive justice. Discuss three or more thinkers who, in your opinion, best develop the case for or against the centrality of these concerns for an account of distributive justice. Examine the balance of considerations that each theorist cites to justify his/her approach. Which approach provides the firmest foundation for a conception of distributive justice?

PART II (Afternoon)

Discuss any two (2) of the following questions.

1. Compare and contrast the works of Fredrick Douglas and Booker T. Washington. In your comparison, you might consider the differences in their perceptions of liberty and what it takes to be free; how each proposes to solve social injustice; and why they had such different experiences after they were freed? Finally, it might be interesting to hear your thoughts on whether we should take each account on face value (i.e., are they real or softened?). Justify your response.
2. “Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.” Reinhold Niebuhr

Niebuhr read the Founders. How would the Founders evaluate Niebuhr? Be specific about which Founders you are discussing.

3. A literal egalitarian view of justice would require sighted people to share an eyeball with the blind, a kidney with those whose kidneys have failed, and so on. Assume in each case that the afflicted individuals did nothing to cause their afflictions and they are complete strangers to the donors. With regard to two philosophers, describe how theories of justice address this view. What considerations, if any, lead to supporting it, what considerations, if any, argue against it?
4. Rawls argues that an adequate theory of justice must aim to ensure that the distribution of social goods and opportunities is not determined by the distribution of natural endowments (such as talents and interests) or social endowments (such as wealth and social position). These endowments should not determine a person's life chances, Rawls argues, because they are distributed through a morally arbitrary natural lottery. Discuss and evaluate this argument. Does Rawls mean to suggest that the distribution of natural goods, such as talents, is itself unjust? If not, where is the injustice located? In Chapter 2, Rawls discusses three different interpretations of the very general principles of justice that he sets out earlier in the chapter. Discuss the way in which each of these interpretations (natural liberty, liberal equality, democratic equality) attempts to neutralize morally arbitrary influences on life chances.
5. Explain and evaluate Nozick's notion of a fundamental explanation. Does a fundamental explanation justify, or merely describe, the establishment of the institution it explains? Why might we be willing to accept a fundamental explanation as a justification? What is the most serious objection to the use of fundamental explanation as a complete and final justification for a social institution? How does Nozick use fundamental explanation: (i) to support his claim that the minimal state is justified; (ii) to justify his claim that Locke was wrong to think that legitimate political power must be grounded in express consent?
6. Explain and evaluate Rawls's use of the social contract method to construct and justify his theory. What considered judgments about justice does the social contract embody? How do different features of the original position embody different values? Has Rawls chosen the appropriate set of values and represented them in an adequate way? How much does the character/structure of the original position limit the kinds of principles that may be chosen (discuss the effects of

informational constraints on the motivation of the choosers; do not discuss the maximin argument)? Are the veil of ignorance's limitations on the information available to the parties appropriate or excessive?