

Instructions: Choose any *two* of the following four questions. Read the questions carefully and answer all parts for full credit. Support your general claims with specific facts, details, and references from the readings and class discussions. Good luck.

1. “In the Christian debate over abortion, one sees replayed the absolutist/utilitarian/narrative divide that characterizes the Christian debate concerning ethical issues of violence and warfare. Many of the same rules and approaches from the discourse on violence are merely re-applied to this new context--a context about which, unlike violence, the Bible is explicitly silent.”

By means of a discussion of Germaine Grisez (“Abortion: Ethical Arguments”), Joseph Fletcher (“Abortion,” “Indicators of Humanhood”), and Stanley Hauerwas (“Why Abortion is a Religious Issue”), comment on this quotation.

2. “Simply put, metaphysical assumptions shape morality. No where is this clearer than in the debate concerning euthanasia. Here, each ethicist’s practical position is clearly, and almost purely, a product of his starting assumptions about the nature of humans and the cosmos.”

Starting with Phillip Lesco’s “Euthanasia: A Buddhist Perspective” and then continuing on to David Smith “On Letting Some Babies Die” and Joseph Fletcher’s “Infanticide/Euthanasia” and “Indicators of Humanhood,” discuss how each author’s practical prescriptions on euthanasia are a product of his “cosmology”—i.e., his metaphysical assumptions about the nature of humans and the cosmos. (Hint: begin your discussion of each author by discussing his metaphysical assumptions).

3. The editors of *Biblical Worldview*, a conservative Christian publication, argue that it is “the clear teaching of Scripture” that homosexuality is abominated by God. They claim that those who argue to the contrary willfully “make the clear unclear” (*Biblical Worldview*, August 1994).

Discuss the editors’ position by (1) explaining the “traditional” biblical opinion of homosexuality using the arguments and biblical passages cited by Norman Geisler; and (2) discussing the challenge posed to this traditional position by means of an explanation of the arguments of Robert Gordis (“Homosexuality and the Homosexual”), Charles Curran (“Homosexuality and Moral Theology”), and Thomas McFaul (“Homosexuality”). Be specific.

4. Choose any *one* of the following three ethical approaches: absolutism, utilitarianism, or the narrative approach. For the theory that you select, and using specific course authors and arguments, trace the approach’s position as it is evidenced on any *three* of the following issues: poverty, abortion, euthanasia, cloning, and sexuality. (Note: Do *not* select the same issue that you wrote on in question 2, 3, or 4. Do refer to the arguments of specific authors)

Now, in light of your selected approach's stance on these three topics, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the ethical theory.

4. "One of the central debates among authors who study religious ethics is whether religion shapes society, as Weber claims, or society shapes religion, as argued by Marx."

First, comment on this quotation by contrasting the arguments of Michael Novak ("Capitalism and Christianity") and Koshi Shinohara ("Religion and Economic Development in Japan"). Now, choose two of the following authors and discuss how each might comment on the issue raised by the quotation (you might need to think about this a moment): Charles Curran ("Homosexuality and Moral Theology"), Thomas Hanks ("Why People Are Poor"), Timothy Renick ("A Cabbit in Sheep's Clothing"), and Rachel Biale ("Abortion and the Jewish Law").