

Contemporary Moral Issues (Phil 140)
Kerstein/Spring 2009
Paper I: Due March 6

Paper Topics

(Papers must be **2-3 pages** in double-spaced 12 pt. typescript. On the first page of your paper, please indicate the number of the topic you've chosen, your T.A.'s name and the time at which your discussion section meets, and the honor pledge.)

- 1] Summarize Singer's argument for the conclusion that the interests non-human animals have in avoiding suffering are to be taken into account and given the same weight as the interests human beings have in avoiding suffering. Make sure to explain how he supports each of the argument's steps. Then set out and explain criticisms of *two* of the steps in Singer's argument.
- 2] Mary Anne Warren claims that ". . . a woman's right to protect her health, happiness, freedom, and even her life, by terminating an unwanted pregnancy, will always override whatever right to life it may be appropriate to ascribe to a fetus, even a fully developed one." (306) Summarize and explain her argument for this claim. Then explain in detail an objection to this argument. How would Warren reply to this objection? Would this reply be effective? Why or why not?
- 3] Summarize and explain Marquis' argument for the conclusion that "abortion is, except possibly in rare cases, seriously immoral." Then explain in detail an objection to this argument. How would Marquis respond to this objection? Would his reply be effective? Why or why not?
- 4] Explain in detail how Thomson uses the Famous Violinist thought-experiment in order to show that abortion is sometimes morally permissible. Construct a detailed and plausible objection to the use she makes of this thought-experiment. How would Thomson respond to this objection? Would her reply be effective? Why or why not?

Paper Guidelines

- 1] Be sure to answer *each* of the questions posed in the paper topic. Don't allow yourself to plunge so deeply into one aspect of the topic that you fail to address the others.
- 2] Don't worry about writing an engaging or literary introduction. You don't have to get our attention or convince us that the topic is important. Just get right to the point.
- 3] You should have a clear conception of the role played by each paragraph in your paper. If, when you read your work, *you're* unsure how a particular paragraph contributes to your treatment of the paper topic, it's likely that we will be unsure as well. Please delete "wandering" paragraphs.
- 4] Please proofread your papers before you turn them in.
- 5] Please *defend* your interpretation of a thinker by citing passages that support it. But don't quote passage after passage. Instead, put the thinker's points into your own words and indicate the page on which she makes them.