

MID-TERM EXAM STUDY GUIDE EPS 291

Topics

The highest good- eudaimonia- it is constitutive and sufficient

Candidates for the highest good- wealth, pleasure, honor/fame

Why the other candidates can't be the highest good

Wealth- it's the ultimate means

Pleasure- it can be bad

Honor-it lacks relationship, other people have to give it to you

Eudaimonia- a complete life, virtue; activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue in a complete life; active pursuit of uniquely human goods in concert with others in a complete life

Relationship between eudaimonia and pleasure- related and not related- pleasure is fleeting while eudaimonia is stable; one should get the most pleasure from eudaimonia; pleasure might come from something bad while eudaimonia never would; eudaimonia involves pleasure in virtue; eudaimonia therefore is not separate from pleasure; eudaimonia should be the most pleasant life (living well should be pleasurable)

Criteria for recognizing the ultimate human good

has ultimacy, sufficiency, desirability

Relationships between means and ends- all means have ends, means are strategies to get what we want, ends are what we want

Instrumental goals- means and goal can be separated, means can be discarded if not effective, worthwhile and necessary

Definition and consequences of instrumentalism- if we limit ourselves to instrumental goals it will be bad- exploitation, alienation, episodic life (living life from one goal to the next, no big purpose), futility (will never reach Eudaimonia)

Constitutive goals- can be a means to an end or an end in itself

The function argument- eyeball example, cannot tell if something is good or bad without knowing its function; the good for a human is living well as the kind of creature we are- social and reasoning (we need relationships and logical thinking); performing a human function with excellence defines a virtue; human goods are directly related to natural human functions; a successful science of human nature will tell us a lot about how to live a good human life

Uniquely or characteristically human goods- Eudaimonia; meaning, purpose, belonging, personal growth; the more an individual's life includes characteristic human goods, the more that life will tend to be eudaimonic

Relationship between goods and goals- goods are abstract/not possess-able, so we have goals; goods are what make up a eudaimonic life; goal orientations are ways of pursuing goals which are parts of goods

What evidence shows that humans are a social species?- evolution of sociality, we've lived in groups t/o history, evolution of sociality, transculturally, fail to thrive if alone- isolation= illness, dysphoria, and death; positive impact of social relationships and committed relationships

The “who” of goals- humans as political animals, and social species; goal directed activity and attachment

Individualism- is problematic; individual is seen as the primary social reality, individual’s autonomy is central, values are individual matters, relationships reduced to arenas for individual need fulfillment, it encourages egoism, it reduces interest in communal well-being because self interest and social interest likely to conflict

Individual goals- individual experience or achievement, goods of competition

Joint goals- can be individual but does not have to be

Shared goals- can only be held in common, no one can have more than anyone else; important because humans are social species; i.e. friendship and justice

The goal matrix

	Individual	Shared
Instrumental	Wealth, fame	Team victory, corporate profits
Constitutive	Wine connoisseur, scholar	Friendship, solidarity, democracy

Egoism versus altruism- should not make a contrast it is the wrong way to think about human nature; altruism- doing good in a selfless way

Virtue ethics and rules- the primary concern for virtue ethics is the kind of person one is, the way in which ones life shapes up as a whole; refers to overall quality of a person’s life and what it amounts to as a totality

Virtue and the virtues- virtue is performing a human function with excellence; virtues are used to attain the good, that is how virtuous action is separated from any other action

Definition of character- the capacity to act consistently, knowingly, wisely, and spontaneously in seeking uniquely human goods; character is central to virtue ethics because it refers to the overall state of an individual with regard to virtue; virtue provides an organized and integrative framework for understanding individual action, affect, motivation, and cognition

Unity of character- character strengths are unified, if you have one character strength you have all others; also character strengths are related

Five character types- virtuous, incontinent, continent, vicious, bestial

The devaluation of character- character is personality evaluated and personality is character devaluated; separating moral ideals from objective descriptions of personality

Does a virtue approach lead to a judgmental attitude? - no

Definition and characteristics of character strengths- a specific virtue; stable traits or habits, what makes it possible to pursue the good, always manifested in behavior, built on a clear knowledge, pursued willingly and spontaneously, learned through guidance and feedback, enacted through practical wisdom

Habits- entails consistency, habituate ourselves to the good

Reason- strengths entail knowledge, relationship not as strong though

Emotion- emotional alignment with action, spontaneous desire to act well, love of what is good

Emotional concordance- emotional reactions reflect the current state of one's character, showing either a well-developed or not character (continent vs incontinent, etc); an achievement

Character strengths, vices, and the mean- every virtue has two vices associated with it- excess or deficiency

Courage- cowardice or recklessness

Generosity- stinginess or extravagance

Loyalty- fickleness or blind allegiance

Honesty- deceitfulness or tactlessness

How are character strengths related to particular situations?

Situation	Strength
Risk	Courage
Communication, cooperation	Honesty
Indulgence	Temperance
Human frailty	Compassion
Giving and taking	Generosity
Advantage distribution	Justice
Fidelity	Loyalty
Human finitude	Reverence

The acquisition of virtue- performing actions similar to those of people who have that virtue, performing actions in a certain type of way (not by performing certain kinds of actions), acting well in a domain involves the avoidance of contrary extremes, there is momentum in action- to the extent someone acts in a certain way, the more he becomes disposed to act in that way, when someone regularly performs actions similar to those of people who have a virtue, and if he actually likes acting this way, we can be assured he has that virtue

Choice and character- virtue becomes habitual but it is still a matter of choice because making virtue second nature only occurs by repeatedly deciding to act in a desired way over a significant period of time

Schooling emotions- the process of character development involves schooling one's emotions so that they are consistent with acting well; alter thoughts and behaviors; the point is to heighten one's attachment to what is best and to increase the strength of one's attraction to what is good so one will naturally act virtuously

Community- has history, individual identity is partly constituted by community, traditions carry community history, commitment, identification, interdependence

Community and the good- individual and shared goals, individuals responsible to the community, live according to community morals, contribute to the shared good

Lifestyle enclave- modern version of communities, linked to leisure and consumption, no interdependence or practices or commitments, no history, provides support and affirmation

Individualism- individual is primary social reality, relationships are secondary; individual autonomy is central; values/preferences/meaning are matters of individual taste and judgment; portrays the principle human motivations as egoistic; self-interest as primary motivation and most rational source of behavior