

Edexcel A2 Implications 6RS04: Ethics

A workbook and study guide

Unit 4: Implications – Ethics

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D. Jamieson: 'Method and moral theory' – Worksheet

Explain the key points of the following paragraphs.

Introduction	
The nature of moral theories <i>The dominant conception</i>	
<i>The anti-theorists</i>	

<i>Reconciling theory and practice</i>	
The methods of theorizing <i>Foundationalism</i>	
<i>Coherentism</i>	

<i>Other questions of method</i>	
The role of examples	

What is the conclusion that Jamieson reaches? Is it balanced and fair and supported by evidence?

Which aspects of Jamieson's arguments are facts and which are his opinions OR the opinions of others?

Facts	e.g. 'Foundationalism is... the view that systems of belief are justified in virtue of the logical relations...'	What evidence supports these facts?	What evidence may be used to counter these facts?

Opinions	e.g. 'Nor is it obvious that foundationalism must serve the cause of moral progress.'	What support may be given to Jamieson's opinions?	What challenges may be made to these opinions?
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What other material from my AS and A2 studies (including all subjects) can I use in my answer to support and/or oppose Jamieson's interpretation?

Which scholars and quotations can I utilise in my answer that are not directly alluded to in this passage?

Is there anything I can use from the Bible and/or other religious texts?

Which claims/observations of Jamieson's do I support, and why?

Which claims of Jamieson's do I challenge, and why?

If Jamieson's observations are right, then what are the implications for the following?:

(i) Believers and non-believers in God

(ii) The study of moral philosophy

(iii) Daily moral decision-making

Is it possible for Jamieson's interpretation to be wrong? If so, what are the implications for the following?:

(i) Believers and non-believers in God

(ii) The study of moral philosophy

(iii) Daily moral decision-making

What do you think is the strongest aspect of Jamieson's interpretation? What is the weakest?

Taking everything into account, do you agree or disagree with the conclusions drawn at different stages of Jamieson's article? Give your reasons.

H. LaFollette: 'Personal relationships' – Worksheet

Identify the key points of the following sections:

Morality and personal relationships: Do they conflict?	
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The interplay of morality and personal relationships

What is LaFollette's conclusion to the problem he has been attempting to resolve?

Which aspects of LaFollette's arguments are facts and which are his opinions?

Facts	e.g. 'Parents...have special assigned roles.'	What evidence supports these facts?	What evidence may be used to counter these facts?

Opinions	e.g. 'Morality and personal relationships appear to conflict.'	What evidence supports these opinions?	What evidence may be used to counter these opinions

Which aspects of Rachels' arguments are facts and which are opinions?

Facts		What evidence supports these facts?	What evidence may be used to counter these facts

Opinions		What evidence supports these opinions?	What evidence may be used to counter these opinions

What aspects of my A-level Religious Studies course can I use in my answer to support and/or oppose LaFollette's views?

What scholars' views and quotations can I use?

How would the following ethical theories address the different positions considered by LaFollette?

LaFollette	Utilitarianism/ Situation Ethics	Deontology	Natural Moral Law
<p>'Morality should attempt to diminish, if not eradicate, the undesirable effects of luck.' (paragraph 4, page 143)</p>			
<p>'Morality requires ...we must treat all humans alike unless there is some general and morally relevant difference.' (paragraph 1, page 142)</p>			
<p>'All spouses ... should treat their intimates better than they treat others.' (paragraph 4, page 142)</p>			

<p>‘Someone reared by uncaring parents...will simply not know how to look after or promote the interests of either intimates or strangers.’ (paragraph 7, page 144)</p>			
<p>‘No-one knows how to consider the interests of others unless they have been in an intimate relationship.’ (paragraph 7, page 144)</p>			
<p>‘People cannot be just or moral in a vacuum.’ (paragraph 3, page 145)</p>			

Which claims of LaFollette can I support, and why?

Which claims of LaFollette can I oppose, and why?

If LaFollette's conclusions are right, then what are the implications for the following?:

(i) People in general

(ii) Religious believers

What are the implications if LaFollette's conclusions are wrong?

What do you think is the strongest aspect of LaFollette's argument? What is the weakest?

What are the most convincing ethical theories that you have found from your studies that (a) support and (b) oppose LaFollette's views?

Overall, do you agree or disagree with LaFollette? Give your reasons.

J. Schneewind: 'Modern moral philosophy' – Worksheet

Explain the key points of the following paragraphs.

Introduction	
Toward autonomy	

<p>Autonomy and theory: pro and con</p>	
<p>New directions</p>	

What is the conclusion that Schneewind reaches? Is it balanced and fair and supported by evidence?

Which aspects of Schneewind's arguments are facts and which are his opinions OR the opinions of others?

Facts	e.g. 'Ancient Western philosophical thought about how to live centred on the question of the highest good...'	What evidence supports these facts?	What evidence may be used to counter these facts?

Opinions	e.g. 'The moral law, <i>Kant holds</i> , is not a requirement to do good to others.'	What support may be given to these opinions?	What challenges may be made to these opinions?
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What other material from my AS and A2 studies (including all subjects) can I use in my answer to support and/ or oppose Schneewind's interpretation?

Which scholars and quotations can I utilise in my answer that are not directly alluded to in this passage?

Is there anything I can use from the Bible and/or other religious texts?

Which claims/observations of Schneewind's do I support, and why?

Which claims/observations of Schneewind's do I challenge, and why?

If Schneewind's observations are right, then what are the implications for the following?:

(i) Believers and non-believers in God

(ii) The study of moral philosophy

(iii) Daily moral decision-making

Is it possible for Schneewind's interpretation to be wrong? If so, what are the implications for the following?:

(i) Believers and non-believers in God?

(ii) The study of moral philosophy

(iii) Daily moral decision-making

What do you think is the strongest aspect of Schneewind's interpretation? What is the weakest?

Taking everything into account, do you agree or disagree with the conclusions drawn at different stages of Schneewind's article? Give your reasons.

End-of-unit quick quiz

Try to answer these questions without looking at the passages.

Jamieson

1. Clarify the difference between questions *about* moral theory and questions *in* moral theory.
2. Explain the 'dominant conception' regarding moral theories
3. What are the **implications** of Anscombe's view that the aspects of the dominant conception are 'untenable without the notion of a law giver'?
4. How does **Schneewind** explain the implications of this rejection of divine command morality?
5. Clarify why it may be claimed that 'there can be no moral authority in pluralistic, liberal societies'. Do you agree? What are the implications of this claim?
6. Do you agree that 'women have different patterns of moral response than men'? What are the implications of this view?
7. Clarify what Jamieson means by 'role reversal tests' (p136). How does an understanding of Lafollette's argument help here?

8. Do you agree that 'moral theorising goes on as part of our ordinary moral practices'?
9. Clarify (i) foundationalism and (ii) coherentism.
10. Explain the difference between 'imaginary examples' and 'hypothetical examples' in ethics. Which do you find more useful and why?

Lafollette

1. Explain the difference between partial and impartial morality.
2. Which ethical theories, if any, distinguish between these approaches in their application?
3. For what reasons may it be desirable to 'treat all humans (creatures?) alike unless there is some general and morally relevant reason which justifies a difference in treatment'?
4. Do you agree that 'universal love is a higher ideal than family loyalty? What are the implications of this view?
5. Do you think it is 'wrong and undesirable' to claim that the demands of morality are superior to personal relationships?

6. In what way does Rachels reduce personal relationships to a set of obligations? What are the implications of this view?
7. Is it necessary to justify saving a loved one from drowning rather than a stranger? In what way is this an example of foundationalism?
8. Clarify the ways in which morality and personal relationships may be supportive.
9. What evidence may there be that we need to grow up in personal relationships to develop morality?
10. Do you agree that 'partiality which regularly disregards strangers while heaping trivial benefits on intimates is not justified'? What examples has LaFollette previously given to support this view? What are the implications of disagreeing with this view?

Schneewind

1. What does Schneewind identify as the characteristic approach(es) of ancient Western philosophical thought regarding morality?
2. Why do you think that moral philosophers are now primarily interested in 'issues concerning public morality'?
3. What are the implications of using natural law as the foundation for morality?

4. Why was Pierre Bayle's proposal that atheists could form a decent society shocking? Would it be a shocking claim today? Why/why not?
5. Clarify the ideas that virtue requires us to work for the good of others?
6. What are the implications of moral behaviour being influenced by the approval/disapproval of others?
7. How does Kant's approach to morality related to his moral argument for the existence of God?
8. Is utilitarianism common sense morality? Why/why not?
9. Where may sceptical doubts about the existence of an eternal universally binding morality lead the moralist's thinking?
10. Do you think that it is possible to assess the issues in modern ethics outlined in the penultimate paragraph without using ethical theory?