

Essay Topic for CORE 1020 Ethics – Semester 2 2022

Background

In this Course you will become familiar with three different approaches to ethics. Deontological and utilitarian ethics are both decision-making protocols. The method of moral enquiry strongly advocated in this course is virtue ethics, which focuses on personal character rather than decision-making. All three approaches counter moral relativism, the view that there are no universal or absolute set of moral principles, such that each person, community, or society is ‘on their own’ when it comes to determining right from wrong. In this essay, you will consider how such theories play out in real-world circumstances.

Task

You are to defend one or other of the following propositions, *using your knowledge of moral theories and their implications* to make your case:

Proposition 1: Violent direct action is an acceptable form of civil disobedience in some circumstances.

OR

Proposition 2: Violent direct action is not an acceptable form of civil disobedience in any circumstances.

Note that you ought to defend your position using just one of the moral theories; either utilitarianism, *or* deontology, *or* virtue ethics.

Structure

You must structure your essay according to the guidelines provided in the Essay Marking Rubric on Blackboard, namely:

- Introduction (including ‘thesis statement’)
- Main argument (‘justification for the thesis’)
- Counterargument (‘primary objection’)
- Response to counterargument (‘reply to primary objection’)
- Conclusion

References and Referencing

You must reference all of your sources using either Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition or the referencing style of your own School, *including page numbers and a full Bibliography*.

Reference List

The following sources will assist you to develop your argument. They cover a range of theoretical perspectives and practical approaches to the topic. You must use **at least three of them**. In addition, you can use **two** of your own references. Note that these references must be scholarly references, primarily journal articles or academic books, and peer reviewed. You can find these references through the University’s Library website. As well, you may use any of the CORE 1020 learning materials provided in Blackboard. The reference for one of the course’s slideshows is, for example:

Lesson 7 Should Ethic be Based on Virtue? (2022). CORE 1020, University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle).

The in-text reference would be: (Lesson 7, CORE 1020, 2022)

- Bedau, Hugo A. "Civil Disobedience and Personal Responsibility for Injustice." *Monist* 54 no. 4 (1970): 517-35. <https://www-jstor-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/stable/27902195>. (<http://tinyurl.com/sp5lwq5>)
- Brownlee, Kimberly. "Civil Disobedience," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Fall 2017 edition. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-disobedience/>
- Cooke, Maeve. "Civil Obedience and Disobedience." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 42 no. 10 (2016): 995-1003. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453716659521>.
- King, Martin Luther. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *The Essential Documents of American History*, compiled by Norman P. Desmarais and James H. McGovern. https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/lsc-LA/Inquiry_into_Anti-Vilification_Protections/_Submissions/037_attach1_2020.01.15_-_Zakariah_Halabi_published.pdf
- LaBossiere, Barbara B. "When the Law is Not One's Own: A Case for Violent Civil Disobedience." *Public Affairs Quarterly* 19 no. 4 (2005): 317-30. <https://www-jstor-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/stable/40441420>. (<http://tinyurl.com/rsh9ea5>)
- Lang, Berel. "Civil Disobedience and Nonviolence: A Distinction with a Difference." *Ethics* 80 no. 2 (1970): 159-59. <https://www-jstor-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/stable/2379879>. (<http://tinyurl.com/uf2z5cs>)
- Lyons, David. "Moral Judgement, Historical Reality, and Civil Disobedience." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 27 no. 1 (1998): 31-49. <https://www-jstor-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/stable/2672840>.
- Morreall, John. "The Justifiability of Violent Civil Disobedience." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 6 no. 1 (1976): 35-47. <https://www-jstor-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/stable/40230600>
- Schaeffer, Chris. "The Limits of Civil Disobedience." *Res Publica* 16 no. 1 (2011): 123-24. <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1185&context=respublica>
- Smith, William. "The Ethics of (Un)Civil Resistance." *Ethics and International Affairs* 33 no. 3 (2019): 363-73. <https://doi-org.ipacez.nd.edu.au/10.1017/S0892679419000248>