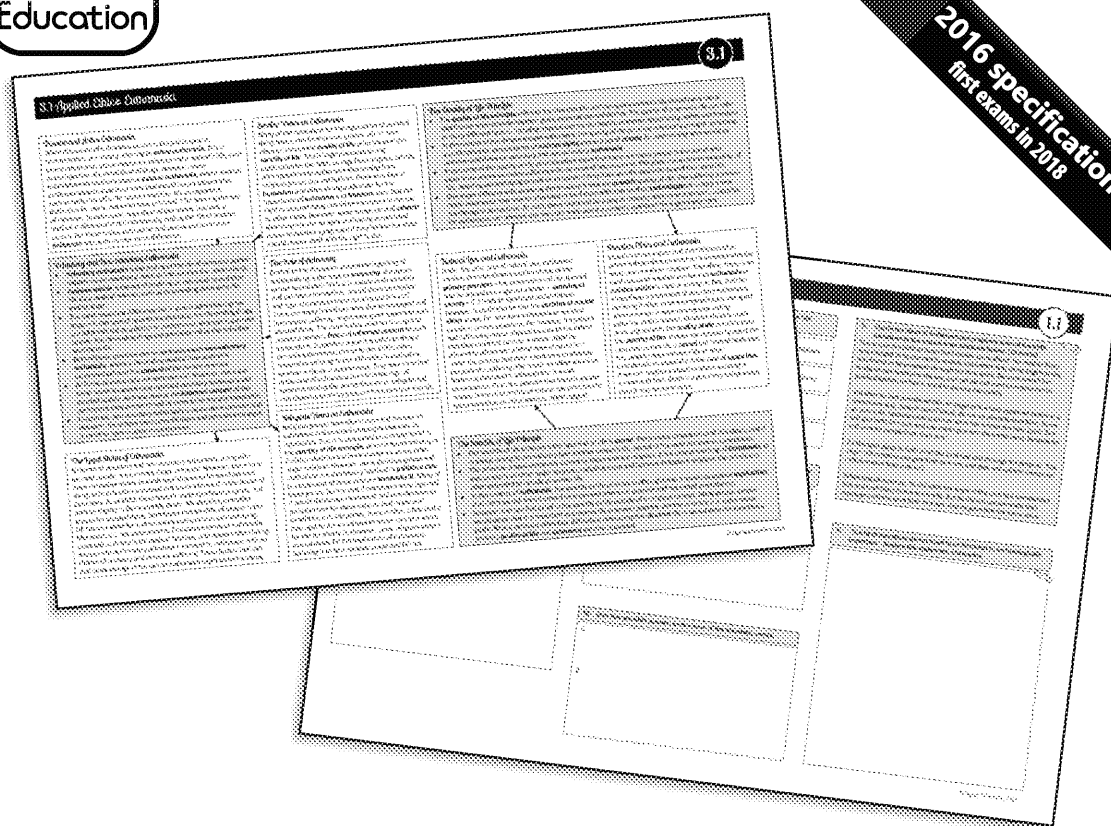




**2016 specification
first exams in 2018**

Topic on a Page

for A Level Year 1 OCR

Component 2: Religion and Ethics

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource covers the A Level Year 1 OCR Religious Studies specification for **Component 2: Religion and Ethics** with the following content:

1 Normative Ethical Theories: Religious Approaches

- 1.1 Natural Law
- 1.2 Situation Ethics

2 Normative Ethical Theories

- 2.1 Kantian Ethics
- 2.2 Utilitarianism

3 Applied Ethics

- 3.1 Euthanasia
- 3.2 Business Ethics

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The resource is split into the following sections:

1. **Three A3 topic summary sheets** labelled: **1** to **3**
These sheets are intended as a summary of the key material in each topic focusing on the main points rather than the detail, so that all important areas are covered without going into too much depth.
2. **Six A3 subtopic summary sheets** labelled **1.1** to **3.2** covering every subtopic. This presents information on the topic revision sheets, but with additional detail to provide more depth for further insight.
3. **Six A3 subtopic activity sheets** labelled **1.1** to **3.2**. Each of these sheets covers one subtopic and provides write-on activities for students to complete. Answers can generally be found in the A3 subtopic sheets themselves, but are also provided in a separate answer document (see section 5). Exam-style questions, modelled on those found in the A Level exam, are marked by a pencil icon:  Boxes are provided for notes on these, though students should write full answers on additional paper.
4. **A4 answer pages**. These pages provide more detailed answers to the questions on the A3 subtopic activity sheets; in particular, the long-answer questions. Student-friendly, OCR-style mark schemes are also provided for the exam-style questions.

The A3 summary and activity sheets can be given to students to learn in lessons or at home.

As a whole, the resource can be used to help students to consolidate knowledge at the end of a topic/subtopic, or to revise before a test or an exam. Different styles and layouts are used to make the information interesting and to help the students engage with the information in a productive way.

January 2024

Aquinas and Natural Law

- Natural law is a deontological system of normative ethics that states that the right action adheres to specific laws or duties.
- For proponents of natural law, the moral law can be derived from intrinsic values inherent to human nature and reason.
- Aristotle is often seen as providing the foundation for systems of natural law, holding that a correct ethical system could be drawn from understanding the **telos** or purpose of human life, which he believed to be **eudaimonia** or flourishing.
- Aquinas took up Aristotle's ideas and combined them with Christian teachings about God. He believed that morality could be derived from different sources – the Bible and reason.
- It is this latter aspect from which Aquinas derived his own systematisation of natural law. He argued that human reason and freedom were God-given and could illuminate the right action in any given moral dilemma.

The Four Tiers of Law

- The Four Tiers of Law are Aquinas' way of explaining how natural law interacts with the moral teachings given by God in revelation. For the principles Aquinas seeks to establish are merely interpretation of human behaviour but intended to be representative of those that God set down to humanity.
- Of these four tiers, natural law is most closely related to **divine law**. Both consist of the same moral principles, but natural law is derived from the use of human reason whereas divine law is given directly by God through revelation.

Natural Law

1.1

The Four Working Principles

Fletcher expanded the groundwork of situation ethics to include four working principles that aim to illuminate the middle ground the system occupies between legalism and antinomianism. These are:

- Pragmatism:** Moral demands should be practical and achieve the intended outcome or result, which is love – a focus on experience rather than theory.
- Relativism:** All situations should be assessed on their own merits, demonstrating love, rather than through following moral laws which use the word 'never' or 'always'.
- Positivism:** Being able to say that 'God is love' on the basis of faith, not reason or human experience. The moral agent has to decide, through their faith in God, that love is the most important thing of all.
- Personalism:** Demands that the needs and importance of individuals are considered first, not the demands of moral laws.

Joseph Fletcher and Situation Ethics

- Fletcher was a Christian thinker who, during the mid-20th century political and cultural decade of the 1950s, began to believe that traditional Christian ethics, which he saw as overly legalistic and absolutist, required significant revision.
- Fletcher did not think that legalism or living without moral codes (antinomianism) were attractive ways of living. Situation ethics, Fletcher's proposed idea, is positioned in the middle of the two.
- For unlike the antinomian, Fletcher believed people must have some principle or concept to appeal to when making an ethical decision. He proposed **agape** love to be the end Christians should pursue.
- However, Fletcher also argued that a moral end and the principles derived from it cannot be so absolute and inflexible as to require a decision which flies in the face of common sense.
- Thus, situation ethics holds that in a moral dilemma Christians should choose the action which demonstrates the most **agape** love. Although in many situations this might follow certain rules of thumb, there might also be extreme situations where a loving action is one that breaks these rules.
- Accordingly, situation ethics is both **teleological** and **consequentialist**, for the rightness is both dependent on the consequences of an action and whether it pursues a given **telos** or end.

Situation Ethics

1.2

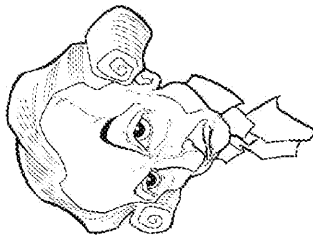
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Kantian Ethics and the Concept of Duty

- Kant argues that ethics should be governable by **reason**. If a moral principle or an action is the right one, it should be **comprehensible** by any rational agent. **Universally** apply.
- Thus, Kant proposes that doing the **right** is simply doing one's **duty**. Here, duty means an obligation to act according to the ethical principles one can derive from reasoning on the world, regardless of consequence.
- Kantian ethics is thus **deontological** and **abstract**: it is concerned with universal rules which apply to all times, to all people, in all places.
- What Kant aims to discover is the **right method** to generate these universal duties or rules. If such a method exists, then it is possible to understand what is right or wrong by applying the application of reason.



2.1

Kantian Ethics

The Categorical Imperative

Kant argues that duties are imperatives – they tell us what we ought to do. A **categorical imperative** imposes no conditions on this ought. It takes the form 'one ought to do x'. Kant thought this kind of imperative was revealing of one's duties, for a universal rule is one that should be performed **unconditionally**, regardless of one's circumstances or inclinations – and

The Three Postulates: Free Will, Immortality and God

- Kant argues that in order for his system of ethics to be meaningful, it must be underwritten by three postulates. A **postulate** is something which serves as a fundamental basis for reasoning or belief.
- Simply put, Kant doesn't believe his system of ethics can get off the ground unless three things exist: **free will, immortality and God**. But why is this the case?
- For free will, Kant argues that moral agents must genuinely have **autonomy** over their actions. If not, how can any individual be responsible for rationally pursuing one action over another? Without free will, the categorical imperative falls apart.
- For immortality, Kant contends that human beings cannot achieve **moral perfection** in their lifetimes. But an ought to do something implies one *can* do it. Thus, an afterlife is necessary if one ought to (and can) pursue moral perfection.
- For God, Kant argues that the **summum bonum** is necessary in order that human beings have ample reason to adhere to the categorical imperative. Yet, this highest good requires some external origin, a **God**, in order that it genuinely exist.

The Principle of Utility

- Jeremy Bentham claimed that humans are ruled by pain and pleasure. From this he developed the ethical theory of **utilitarianism**. This holds that the most ethical thing to do is the one that best fulfils the **principle of utility** – creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
- The utilitarian thus aims to calculate the amount of happiness or unhappiness produced by any action. This provides guidance as to the goodness or the badness of said action.
- Although early utilitarians such as Bentham and Mill favoured happiness as the measure, more modern utilitarians have suggested other measures, such as ideals or even **preferences**.
- Utilitarians thus sometimes **relatively** accept a number of different ends or purposes to moral action, so long as the right action is judged according to its fulfilment of these ends.
- It is possible to also characterise utilitarianism as a series of **hypothetical imperatives**: 'if one wants to achieve x, one ought to do y'.

Utilitarianism

2.2

Old Utilitarianism vs Rule Utilitarianism

- Bentham argued for **act utilitarianism**. This holds that for any action, it is right so long as it maximises happiness (or good) and minimises pain (or evil).
- However, John Stuart Mill took a different view. He argued for **rule utilitarianism**, believing that it was too much of a burden to ask people to constantly calculate the happiness and unhappiness produced by their actions.
- Rule utilitarianism argues that the right action is the one that conforms to a set of rules that, if routinely or universally obeyed, would lead to the greatest happiness (or the least unhappiness).
- One main advantage of rule utilitarianism for Mill was a much more simplified ethical system that maintained the moral aim of utilitarian ethics while making it easier to accommodate within everyday life and the legal system.
- However, there is still an added complexity of when it might be acceptable to violate a rule. Mill himself argued that there were certain **extreme** circumstances where it was necessary to revert to a kind of act utilitarianism. However, this raises the problem about what such circumstances are and how often they occur.

The 'Hedonic Calculus'

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Voluntary and Non-voluntary Euthanasia

- **Voluntary euthanasia** is the ending of the life of someone at their request via an intentional medical intervention (i.e. medication).
- **Assisted suicide** is the act of enabling someone to end their life via a medical manner, such as by providing them with life-ending drugs.
- The most important difference lies in who is administering the drugs – in the case of voluntary euthanasia, the life-ending drugs are administered by a doctor or professional, whereas in assisted suicide, the life-ending drugs are administered by the individual wishing to die.
- Both of these practices can be contrasted with **non-voluntary euthanasia**, where a life-ending medical intervention is performed without the **consent** of the person involved.
- All forms of euthanasia are controversial. However, there are some countries which have legalised voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide. As these involve the **informed consent** of the participant, they are perceived by some to be morally acceptable.
- In contrast, non-voluntary euthanasia is much more controversial. However, there have been some thinkers and ethicists who argue it could be right in some circumstances.

The Quality of Life Principle

- The **quality of life principle** refers to the idea that the well-being of a person's life should carry moral significance when considering their goals, expectations and desires. The quality of a person's life can refer to many different factors, including physical and mental health, economic opportunity, safety and freedom.
- In the context of the debate around euthanasia, the quality of life principle is typically brought up both as a justification for certain forms of assisted dying and as a

Whistle-blowing

- Whistle-blowing is a term used to describe the actions of an individual who **publicly** discloses the **immoral** or **unlawful** activities of a business or an organisation.
- There have been many famous whistle-blowers throughout history. An important recent example is Edward Snowden, who leaked a large number of documents that detailed the extensive surveillance and intelligence operations of the US government over its citizens.
- Although countries often profess to have legal protections for whistle-blowers, whistle-blowing is a dangerous endeavour, with many whistle-blowers facing political or economic **persecution**. Many are accordingly praised for risking their welfare to bring to light information that is in the **public interest**.
- However, others are critical of whistle-blowers, arguing that they should seek change through **private** channels. Leaking information may in some cases also put people at risk, especially if the material is sensitive or classified.

Euthanasia

3.1

The Sanctity of Life Principle

- The sanctity of life principle is the idea that all life is **sacred**. The primary consequence of this idea is that it is always wrong to prematurely take another person's life, except in the most extreme circumstances.

Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility

- Business ethics concerns how moral principles and judgements apply to **commercial** areas of humanity activity. In particular, it asks what responsibilities **businesses** and **corporations** have as entities towards the wider world and what is the appropriate character of these responsibilities.
- **Stakeholders** have long been argued to have specific responsibilities to their **shareholders** – individuals who are financially invested in them. Often these responsibilities are simplified to the belief that a business is **contractually** obliged to produce profit for these shareholders.
- However, many believe that businesses also have ethical responsibilities towards **stakeholders**. These are individuals who are not financially invested in a business but who hold some kind of economical or social stake in its operations. **Employees** are a classic example of **stakeholders**; their income and day-to-day welfare is dependent on the decisions made by a business.
- This has led to the idea of **corporate social responsibility**, the view that businesses have social, ethical and financial responsibilities to these **stakeholders**. A business is particularly large, these stakeholders may be vast and varied, especially if the operations of a business have a significant impact on **society**, **culture** and/or the **environment**.

Business Ethics

3.2

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Aquinas and Natural Law

- Natural law is a deontological system of normative ethics that states that the right action adheres to specific laws or duties.
- For proponents of natural law, these laws can be derived from intrinsic values inherent to human nature.
- Aristotle is often seen as providing the foundation for systems of natural law, holding that a correct ethical system could be drawn from understanding the **telos** or purpose of human life, which he believed to be **eudaimonia** or flourishing.
- Aquinas took up Aristotle's ideas and combined them with Christian teachings about God. He believed that morality could be derived from two different sources – the Bible – and reason.
- It is this latter aspect from which Aquinas developed his own systematisation of natural law. He argued that human reason and freedom were God-given and could illuminate the right action in any given moral dilemma.

Aquinas, Reason and the Fall

Aquinas' natural law was radical in a number of ways. First, it moves beyond the system of ethics known as **divine command theory**, which posits that what is good is simply what God commands. Instead, it holds that there are more complex and nuanced ways of deriving moral principles from God's creation, not just his words. This is important as Aquinas holds a much less strict interpretation of the Fall. Human reason is not so corrupted that it cannot be trusted. Instead, it is a gift given by God in order that human beings may understand their purpose and what is right or wrong.

Eternal Law

Eternal law consists of God's divine wisdom and is effectively identical to the **mind of God** himself. The contents of the eternal law cannot be known to human beings, only that it exists.

The Properties and Problems of Natural Law

Natural moral law is both **legalistic** and **absolutist**. Absolutism holds that moral laws or principles are **universal** – they apply in all places, at all times, and for all people. On the other hand, legalism can be understood as saying that when it comes to morality, we should make our decisions based on previously established laws, rather than individual judgement.

Many other systems of normative ethics have similar properties. But natural law is distinctive in proposing that moral principles should be based around a specific **telos**. This is controversial for a number of reasons. First, we can ask whether the universe is – or whether human beings are – designed with a specific purpose, or oriented towards what is good at all. Second, even if this purpose does exist, is natural law capable of deriving useful moral judgements about what is good or bad based on such a purpose? It may be that this kind of derivation is not possible or applicable to complex moral dilemmas.

The Four Tiers of Law

- The four tiers of law are Aquinas' way of explaining how natural law interacts with the moral teachings given by God in revelation. For the principles Aquinas seeks to establish are not merely interpretation of human behaviour but intended to be representative of those laws God set down to humanity.
- Of these four tiers, natural law is most closely related to **divine law**. Both consist of the same moral principles, but natural law is derived from the use of human reason whereas divine law is given directly by God through revelation.

Eternal Law

Divine Law

Natural Law

Natural Law and Moral Decision-making

The **Catholic Church** continues to uphold the importance of natural law, arguing that it is not only **immutable** and **permanent** but that it reveals the basic principles by which human beings should live their lives. Proponents of natural law strongly often point towards its **simplicity** and **comprehensibility**. Human beings can easily understand and implement the primary precepts in their lives, while applying them to specific contexts and dilemmas using secondary precepts. However, some Christian thinkers, such as Joseph Fletcher, have criticised natural law for being overly **legalistic** and **inflexible**. Others have questioned whether the universal principles really have a **telos** or **purpose**. If not, then it may not be possible to universally derive principles such as the primary precepts. Some modern Christian scholars have thus refined natural law, favouring a position known as **proportionality**. This holds that human beings ought to follow natural law principles except in situations where there is a **proportionate** reason to reject them and instead follow an alternative course.

The Precepts

Aquinas argues that there is a single **key precept** from which the others are derived: that human beings should **do good and avoid evil**. Out of this basic principle, he goes on to identify a **number of primary precepts**, rules that are generated from reasoning on natural human inclinations. Although Aquinas does not give a fixed number of primary precepts, they are commonly identified as being:

1. The preservation of human life
2. Reproduction
3. The education of children
4. The worship of God
5. The creation of an orderly, harmonious society

From these, Aquinas argues it is possible to develop more precise **secondary precepts**, which apply these general principles to specific contexts and situations.

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The Cultural Background to Situation Ethics

Fletcher's situation ethics was not created in a vacuum. The 1960s saw an upheaval in people's political and cultural views as new ideas emerged from civil rights, feminist and egalitarian movements around the world. New technologies also raised the possibility of safer and effective practices for abortion, euthanasia and other controversial forms of medical care. Part due to these changes that Fletcher came to believe that the traditional, legalistic view of ethics could not give good moral guidance in complex ethical dilemmas that stretched beyond the 'purview' of scripture. Moreover, at times biblical laws seemed to support actions that went against the kind of attitudes Jesus encouraged in the Gospels. The advantage of a new Christian ethical system is that it would help people understand not only how these attitudes should fit into their lives but how they should apply in the modern world. At the same time, critics of Fletcher often contended that such a system was too individualistic and subjective. Any action could potentially be argued to be the most loving depending on one's perspective!

Joseph Fletcher and Situation Ethics

- Fletcher was a Christian thinker who, during the turbulent 1960s, began to believe that traditional Christian ethics, which new laws as overly legalistic and absolutist, required significant revision.
- Fletcher did not think that legalism or living without any moral codes (antinomianism) were attractive ways of living. Situation ethics, Fletcher's proposed idea, is positioned in the middle of the two.
- For unlike the antinomian, Fletcher believed people must have some principle or concept to appeal to when making an ethical decision. He proposed **agape** love to be the end Christians should pursue.
- However, Fletcher also argued that a moral end and the principle derived from it cannot be so absolute and inflexible as to require a decision which flies in the face of common sense.
- Thus, situation ethics holds that in a moral dilemma Christians should choose the action which demonstrates the most **agape** love. Although in many situations, Christians might follow certain rules of thumb, there might also be extreme situations where a loving action is one that breaks these rules.
- Accordingly, situation ethics is both **teleological** and **consequentialist**, for the rightness is both dependent on the consequences of an action and whether it pursues a given **telos** or end.

The Bible and Agape Love

Agape is a Greek term often translated as **selfless** or **unconditional** love. It is a concept often used in Christian theology (from the New Testament) to refer to the kind of love God has for humankind and the

The Four Working Principles

Fletcher expanded the groundwork of situation ethics to include four working principles that aim to illuminate the middle ground the system occupies between legalism and antinomianism. The

Pragmatism: Moral demands should be practical and lead to the intended outcome or result, which is love – a focus on experience rather than theory.

Relativism: All situations should be assessed on how best they demonstrate love, rather than through following moral laws which use words like 'never' or 'always'.

Positivism: Being able to say that 'God is love' on the basis of religious reason or human experience. The moral agent has to decide, though, if their faith in God, that love is the most important thing of all.

Personalism: Demands that the needs and importance of people are considered first, not the demands of moral laws.

The Role of Conscience

For Fletcher, conscience is not a mere moral sense or intuition. Instead, it is a practical ability, the capacity for human beings to morally reason on difficult ethical situations and discover the right action. It is both intellectual and creative and should not be restricted by a dogmatic adherence to rules given to us throughout our lives. In this sense, Fletcher often stresses the importance of a person's ethical **maturity** in situation ethics. It is not enough to simply teach human beings about the importance of agape love. Rather, it is equally important to encourage the development of a functioning **conscience** that enables individuals to discover and understand the most loving choice in any given ethical dilemma. Thus, it is unsurprising that Fletcher presents lots of case studies as part of his work, each of which demonstrates how simple adherence to common ethical principles may fall short of giving good moral guidance.

Situation Ethics and Moral Decision-making
Fletcher envisioned situation ethics as a pragmatic and realistic guide to working through difficult moral decisions. Although its central end, agape love, is somewhat abstract, the working principles and propositions he gives present a way to apply this end in a concrete manner that is not too rigid or inflexible.

However, are these principles and propositions genuinely helpful? Although they are intended to help an individual understand what a loving action is, they do not give the same kind of straightforward advice in contrast to the traditional rules and principles in Christian ethics. Moreover, in requiring the moral agent to pick the most loving action, there is a strong **burden of calculation** placed on people seeking moral guidance. We are always required to figure out and predict the results of our actions, even if the circumstances of a dilemma prevent us from doing so!

Critics such as Peter Vardy have also claimed that the lack of clear guidance and the **subjectivity** of agape love mean that it is possible that very **immoral** acts could be justified under situation ethics. For instance, one might contend killing other human beings with severe disabilities is a loving act as it might ease their suffering, but such a decision could also be argued to be deeply unloving depending on one's perspective. What is equally problematic also is that Fletcher does not provide an easy way of resolving these conflicts, partly out of fear for making ethics too **legalistic**.

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Kantian Ethics and the Concept of Duty

- Kant argues that ethics should be governable by **reason**. If a moral principle or an action is the right one, it should be **comprehensible** by any rational agent and **universally** applicable.
- Thus, Kant proposes that doing the right thing is simply doing one's **duty**. Here, duty means an obligation that according to the ethical principles one can derive from reasoning 'on the world, regardless of consequence.
- Kantian ethics is thus **deontological** and **absolutist** – it is concerned with universal rules which apply at all times, to all people, in all places.
- What Kant aims to discover is the **right method** to generate these universal duties or rules. If such a method exists, then it is possible to understand what is right or wrong by a simple application of reason.

The Hypothetical Imperative

A **hypothetical imperative** is similar in form to a **categorical imperative**, but it places conditions on any *ought*. Simply put, it is a command to achieve a desired result. As such, hypothetical imperatives usually look like this: 'you ought to do x if you want to get y' or 'if one wants to achieve x, one ought to do y'. Hypothetical imperatives are thus **conditional** commands, and for Kant any *ought* that requires certain conditions be true cannot meet the requirements for a universal duty. We take utilitarianism as an example; it can be understood as a general hypothetical imperative: 'if one seeks the greatest happiness for the greatest number, one ought to do x'. However, the applicability of this imperative always depends on us accepting happiness as the right end; and so the utilitarian cannot claim their imperatives to be genuine universal duties (and therefore is not the imperative of morality). However, utilitarians might argue back that the goodness of an action is linked to such ends, not whether it fulfils a duty. It is the pursuit of a purpose that makes moral actions meaningful.

The Centrality of Reason

Kant's ethics was developed during the period of the **Enlightenment**, a time when philosophers saw reason as the most important guiding principle. Yet, Kant's desire to develop a rational ethics isn't necessarily justified. Why can't emotion, empathy or love play a role? When a wrong is done to us, it produces an **affective** response, and this response often indicates a moral harm, not just an emotional or physical one. If one subscribes to the idea that such responses are important, one might argue that morality is a series of **hypothetical imperatives**, not Kant's categorical imperative. It is thus possible to question whether Kant's vision of a reason-based ethics is correct altogether, or whether it may be misguided.

The Categorical Imperative

Kant argues that duties are imperatives – they tell us what we ought to do. A **categorical imperative** imposes no conditions on this *ought*; it takes the form 'one ought to do x'. Kant thought this kind of imperative was revealing of one's duties, for a universal rule is one that should be performed **unconditionally**, regardless of one's circumstances or inclinations – and that it is good in itself regardless of consequence. Kant thus offers three different forms of the categorical imperative, each designed to reveal what one ought to do.

The First Formulation: The Law of Nature

'Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law'. The core idea here is that one should work out whether a law can be universalised without contradiction.

The Second Formulation: The Humanity Formula

'So act as to treat humanity, both in your own person, and in the person of every other, *always at the same time as an end, never simply as a means*'. The core idea is that every rational agent deserves dignity and should not be treated merely as a means to an end.

The Third Formulation: The Kingdom of Ends

'Act according to the maxims of a member of a merely possible kingdom of ends legislating in it universally'. This means one should envision a society where all people share the same understanding of one's duties and treat each other as ends.

Perfect and 'Imperfect' Duties

Kant recognises that applying the categorical imperative can produce different kinds of duties. **Perfect duties** occur when the universalisation of a law produces obvious contradictions. In the case of stealing, for example, it is clear that universalisation of 'one ought to steal' produces a contradiction. Accordingly, one has a perfect duty to not steal, for a universalisation of such a law requires adherence to it at all times. However, **imperfect duties** occur when the universalisation of a law clearly involves **practical limitations**. For example, universalising the law 'one ought to help others' is clearly non-contradictory, yet it would be impossible to always help others, making it an imperfect duty.

'Practical' Union: Ethics Useful for 'Moral Decision-making'

The categorical imperative has been deeply scrutinised since Kant proposed it. Although it is arguably easy to generate important moral laws, such as 'do not murder', it is less clear whether it can always generate useful moral guidance. Often the laws produced are **negative** in form – 'do not x' – and those which are positive are generally imperfect duties, with no guidance where these should be applied in daily life. Critics have thus suggested that Kantian ethics is far too **abstract** and not helpful in practical moral decision-making.

Another problem is that the categorical imperative can also appear to generate too many or even immoral laws, so long as there is no obvious contradiction to their universalisation. For example, take the law 'one ought to bury one's dead a day at midday'. Although this appears to be absurd, there is nothing in the categorical imperative to suggest that this could not be universalised and so become a moral duty. On the other end, there might be times where it is **intuitive** for one to break a law such as 'do not steal' or 'do not lie' if the action involved might save another person's life. Kant never quite managed to grapple fully with this problem, often insisting that these perfect duties should still be adhered to, even if the consequences appeared bad.

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The Principle of Utility

- Jeremy Bentham claimed that humans are ruled by pain and pleasure. From this he developed the ethical theory of **utilitarianism**. This holds that the most ethical thing to do is the one that **maximises the principle of utility** – creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number.
- The utilitarian thus aims to calculate the **net** of happiness or unhappiness produced by any action. This provides guidance as to the goodness or the badness of said action.
- Although early utilitarians such as Bentham argued that utilitarianism was the measure, more modern utilitarians have argued that utilitarianism is based on such as ideals or even preferences.
- Utilitarians thus sometimes conceptually accept a number of different ends or purposes to moral action, so long as the **net** of an action is judged according to its fulfilment of these ends.
- It is possible to also characterise utilitarianism as a series of **hypothetical imperatives**: 'if one wants to achieve X, one ought to do Y'.

The Trolley Problem

One intuitive supporting argument for utilitarianism is the **weight** which it lets us grapple with complex ethical dilemmas with a relatively simple set of tools. A classic example is the thought experiment often called the **trolley problem**. First devised by Philippa Foot in the late 1960s, it asks whether a person should switch the direction of an oncoming train so that it runs over only one person instead of five people. Many people in fact do believe that this is the right action to take, and a utilitarian would argue it is because the happiness or welfare of the five people is likely greater than one. Numerous different versions of the trolley problem have since been devised, but there is still great debate as to whether these thought experiments are genuinely helpful. What if, for example, it's a friend or a partner who would be sacrificed to save five strangers? Does this not perhaps reveal that other factors are important beyond total happiness?

The Case For and Against Rule Utilitarianism

One of the key problems with rule utilitarianism is whether we should adopt a **strong or weak** stance towards rules. The strong stance argues that the rules

The Properties of Utilitarianism

Utilitarians are **consequentialists** as they believe the rightness or wrongness of an action should be judged by the consequences it produces. However, this means that utilitarianism is also **teleological**, for the principle of utility judges good according to whether a particular end (happiness) is fulfilled. What's crucial to grasp here is that the validity of utilitarianism rests not only on whether consequences genuinely matter but also on whether happiness is the correct end. Critics of utilitarianism may question whether it is correct to characterise morality as simply the calculation of consequences. Do not our moral intentions matter as well? Surely an action committed with the desire to do good is less blameworthy than one committed out of malice, even if the consequences are the same? Similarly, the critic can ask whether Bentham is correct in arguing that pain and pleasure are all human beings are concerned about. What about justice or virtue? There are numerous ways to undermine the foundations of utilitarianism, beyond exploring its ramifications for ethics as a whole.

Act Utilitarianism vs Rule Utilitarianism

- Bentham argued for **act utilitarianism**. This holds that for any action, it is right so long as it maximises happiness (or good) and minimises pain (or evil).
- However, John Stuart Mill took a different view. He argued for **rule utilitarianism**, believing that it was too much of a burden to ask people to constantly calculate the happiness and unhappiness produced by their actions.
- Rule utilitarianism argues that the right action is the one that conforms to a set of rules that, if routinely or universally obeyed, would lead to the greatest happiness and/or the least unhappiness.
- The main advantage of rule utilitarianism for Mill was a much more simplified ethical system that maintained the central aim of utilitarian ethics while making it easier to accommodate within everyday life and the legal system.
- However, there is still an added complexity of when it might be acceptable to violate a rule. Mill himself argued that there were certain **extreme** circumstances where it was necessary to revert to a kind of act utilitarianism. However, this raises the problem about what such circumstances are and how often they occur.

The Problems of Calculation

Does Utilitarianism Offer Effective Moral Guidance?

The basis of utilitarianism is at heart quite simple and intuitive. Mill's proof of the ethical system rests on the idea that human beings do value happiness, and this is not a radical idea for people on the whole. Similarly, utilitarianism does give an easy rule of thumb for calculating the right action in an ethical dilemma. Which of my actions will produce the most happiness? It's easy to grasp in principle, unlike many other ethical systems, but it does give rise to a significant number of problematic **ramifications**.

One major problem concerns the extent to which human beings are even able to calculate the consequences of their actions. Henry Sidgwick claimed that utilitarian ethics requires a **two-tier** system of morality. The first tier involves important members of society evaluating policy decisions using utilitarian ethics while the majority of people continue to live by **customary** ethics. Sidgwick's belief was that most people wouldn't be able to apply the principle of utility correctly, and even if they did, it might create contradictory results as people pursue pleasurable outcomes that negate the effects of others. On the other hand, if we deny this kind of ordering of society, it is possible that a **no-rest objection** can be raised against utilitarianism. For if human beings genuinely did follow the principle of utility, it is likely they would be required to perform drastic actions such as giving away much of their wealth and stopping any preferential treatment towards friends and family.

It is possible to see just the definitions of the principles of utilitarianism, but critics here argue that this is a tacit admission either that happiness isn't the only important ethical end or that consequences are not the only important factor in the rightness or wrongness of an action.

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Passive and Active Euthanasia

When discussion of euthanasia occurs in the public sphere, commentators are usually referring to **active euthanasia**. This is where intentional, active means are taken to end a patient's life, such as the injection of a lethal dose of drugs. However, many establishments routinely practise **passive euthanasia**, where medical professionals withdraw treatment that would keep a patient alive, such as switching off a life support machine. It is an important distinction for many, but some have criticised it for blurring the role of intention. In both cases, regardless of the means involved, a medical professional is still intentionally ending the life of another person. For these critics, both active and passive euthanasia are **deliberate** acts, with no real moral difference.

Voluntary and Non-voluntary Euthanasia

- **Voluntary euthanasia** is the ending of the life of some person at their request via an intentional medical intervention (i.e. medicalisation).
- **Assisted suicide** is the act of enabling an individual to end their life via a medical manner, such as by providing them with lethal ending drugs.
- The most important difference lies in who is administering the drugs – in the case of **voluntary euthanasia**, the life-ending drugs are administered by a doctor or professional, whereas in **assisted suicide**, the life-ending drugs are administered by the individual wishing to die.
- Both of these practices can be contrasted with **non-voluntary euthanasia**, where a life-ending medical intervention is performed without the **consent** of the person involved.
- All forms of euthanasia are controversial. However, there are some countries which have legalised voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide. As these involve the **informed consent** of the participant, they are perceived by some to be morally acceptable.
- In contrast, **non-voluntary euthanasia** is much more controversial. However, there have been some thinkers and ethicists who argue

Secular Views on Euthanasia

Many of the campaigns for the legalisation of assisted dying have come from secular groups, which have often prioritised the **quality of life** principle over the **sanctity of life**. This is largely because strong justification for the latter springs from religious beliefs, with opposition to euthanasia also coming from religious groups and institutions. Those who favour **humanism** also often strongly advocate for the importance of **autonomy** and **freedom**, such that the right to assisted dying should be equivalent in the law to other rights. However, some humanists and atheists also recognise the dangers in allowing unrestricted access to assisted dying, even if they believe the state should involve itself with the right to die.

The Role of Autonomy

Central to the discussion around the legalisation of assisted dying is the issue of **autonomy**. If a person wishes to end their life but is unable to do so safely and painlessly themselves, should there be physical and legal obstacles to them carrying out this act? There are many individuals who, due to prolonged and inescapable suffering, might have good reasons to seek assisted dying. The issue is thus whether it is right to respect a person's **free** and **informed consent** to such a procedure. Supporters argue it is unfair to deny a person's autonomous choice to die. Critics often respond by pointing to the difficulties in evaluating whether a choice is autonomous. They may claim that in the case of euthanasia the risk is too high of someone making the wrong decision or being forced into choosing to die by pressure from family or friends.

The Quality of Life Principle

- The **quality of life principle** refers to the idea that the well-being of a person's life should carry moral significance when considering their goals, expectations and desires. The quality of a person's life can refer to many different factors, including physical and mental health, economic opportunity, safety and freedom. In the context of the debate on euthanasia, the quality of life principle is typically brought up both as a justification for certain forms of **assisted dying** and as a set of criteria for determining who would be suitable candidates for **voluntary** and **non-voluntary euthanasia**.
- Proponents of the quality of life principle often argue that there are many people in the world who experience severe everyday suffering with no hope of improvement. This gives them little to no quality of life, meaning assisted dying should be an option if they have an informed wish to end their own life.
- One major difficulty with assessing the quality of life principle is how we **quantify** quality of life. The suffering a person might experience now may be alleviated in the future with new medical technologies or simply a new psychological perspective. As such, it might not be a way to robustly determine a person's suitability for euthanasia, nor whether any decision made about a person's quality of life is genuinely right.

Natural Law and Euthanasia

Under the principles of natural law, euthanasia involves the intentional violation of one of the **primary precepts** – the preservation of life. It could also be argued to be against another – **ordering of society** – if it leads to significant social distress. However, it could also be that the **doctrine of double effect** allows for voluntary euthanasia or assisted suicide in certain situations. For instance, if a patient had suffered grievous physical trauma to the extent that they could not survive, a doctor might be allowed to administer a lethal dose of painkillers, under the proviso that their intention is to alleviate the patient's suffering. The knock-on effect would be hastening their death, although this is a bad consequence. Thus, it is possible that there is greater nuance in the relationship of natural law principles to

Situation Ethics and Euthanasia

Situation ethics argues that the rightness of an action is dependent on whether it demonstrates the most love in a given situation. Therefore, there is no hard rule as to whether any form of **euthanasia** or **assisted suicide** is right or wrong. In fact, Fletcher himself was a proponent of voluntary euthanasia, believing it often to be a compassionate, loving act when a person is experiencing long-lasting suffering. In this respect, situation ethics is much more aligned with the **quality of life** principle than the **sanctity of life**. It does not necessarily reject the idea that human life is **sacred** but instead holds that this sanctity does not override all other considerations, especially in the case of **agape love**. If we can imagine a situation where assisting a person with their death is a genuinely loving action

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Whistle-blowing

- Whistle-blowing is a term used to describe the actions of an individual who publicly discloses the immoral or unlawful activities of a business or an organisation.
- There have been many famous whistle-blowers throughout history. An important recent example is Edward Snowden, who leaked a large number of documents that revealed the extensive surveillance and intelligence operations of the US government over its citizens.
- Although countries often profess to have legal protections for whistle-blowers, whistle-blowing is a dangerous endeavour, with many whistle-blowers facing political or economic persecution. Many are actually praised for risking their welfare to bring to light information that is in the public interest.
- However, others are critical of whistle-blowers, arguing that they should seek change through private channels. Leaking information may in some cases also put people at risk, especially if the material is sensitive or classified.

Is Good Ethics Good Business?

Some thinkers have argued that good business naturally involves good ethics. Socially responsible businesses may have a better image that attracts more customers, and they also may be able to better retain employees if they are believed to be concerned for the welfare of key stakeholders. Moreover, investment in the environment and other stakeholder concerns is arguably important for future profits and prevents excessive legalisation that might constrain a company's operations. However, others have criticised this idea for being naïve or wishful. It implies that the operations of business are always open for scrutiny, when the actions of whistle-blowers often show that businesses are willing to cover up or hide immoral or unlawful behaviour in pursuit of profit. Moreover, it ignores the political power businesses can wield to influence not only public opinion with advertising and PR, but also the

lawmaking process in their favour.

Can 'Human Beings' Flourish in a Capitalist, Consumerial Society?

Many supporters of capitalism claim that, in favouring private profit, it is the ideal society for promoting freedom. However, one problem emerges when thinking about the distinction between negative and positive liberty. The former concerns the freedom to do something without someone directly restricting or preventing it. The latter is the freedom to act according to your own choices and desires. Critics have often contended that capitalism, in promoting negative liberty, often restricts positive liberty. Its individualistic focus encourages exploitation of others, a problem remedied only by focusing on more collectivist forms of living that safeguard communities from the excesses of profiteering and consumerism.

Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility

- Business ethics concerns how moral principles and judgements apply to economic areas of humanity activity. In particular, it asks what responsibilities businesses and corporations have as entities towards the wider world and what is the appropriate character of these responsibilities.
- Businesses have long been argued to have specific responsibilities to their shareholders – individuals who are financially invested in them. Often these responsibilities are simplified to the belief that a business is contractually obliged to produce profit for these shareholders.
- However, many believe that businesses also have ethical responsibilities towards stakeholders. These are individuals who are not financially invested in a business but who hold some kind of economical or social stake in its operations. Employees are a classic example of stakeholders. Their income and day-to-day welfare is dependent on the decisions made by a business.
- This has led to the idea of corporate social responsibility: the view that businesses have social, ethical and financial responsibilities to these stakeholders. If a business is particularly large, these stakeholders may be vast and varied, especially if the operations of a business have a significant impact on society, culture and/or the environment.

Is CSR Just 'Hypocritical Window Dressing'?

Milton Friedman, a firm advocate of free market capitalism, argued that social responsibilities cannot really exist for businesses. They only have legal or contractual responsibility to generate profits. This means that any touting of CSR by a business is just a ploy to encourage profits in the long term. It's nothing more than public relations. Friedman did not believe this was a genuine problem, but it is the prospect that business ethics itself is a futile exercise under a capitalist system. Critics of Friedman have questioned his characterisation of a business or corporation. Although strictly legal entities, they are composed of human beings, who do themselves possess moral responsibilities, similar to any kind of government, society or culture.

Applying Kantian Ethics and Utilitarianism

Kantian ethics can prove useful in understanding business ethics through applying both the first and second formulations of the categorical imperative. For the first, it is clear that businesses should not adopt self-defeating principles. For example, a business that believes it should overexploit the environment for profit can't be acting in a way that passes the first formulation, for if every business acted that way, there would be no environment left! Similarly, the second formulation requires that businesses do not treat stakeholders as mere means to an end such as profit. They are instead required to recognise their autonomy, freedom and dignity in equal measure.

Utilitarianism is arguably more complicated. Measuring the pleasure or pain produced by the actions of a business is a difficult endeavour, especially if a wide variety of stakeholders are involved. Figures such as Milton Friedman would likely argue that free market capitalism, even though it prioritises profiteering, in the long run produces more pleasure than pain for people across the world in comparison to other political and economic systems. For any short-term negative impacts are offset by the benefits of new technology and innovation. However, others may well argue that utilitarianism requires businesses to better evaluate how they treat stakeholders. For instance, treating employees better is likely to lead to much greater total happiness than giving the boss an increased share of the profits. It may be then that utilitarianism would require the creation of a much more egalitarian workplace, not to mention a greater respect for the welfare of the environment and society as a whole.

Globalisation

- Globalisation is the process by which trade and commerce have increasingly become integrated across international

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1. Fill in the gaps. Use the words in the box below.

Early Development of
Natural Moral Law

telos | reason
primary | Aquinas
secondary

Aristotle formed the classical foundation which was based around

A _____ and **B** _____, Paul's letters

formed the biblical foundation. **C** _____ took up

Aristotle's idea of a final cause and combined it with Christian

teachings about God. He believed that morality could be derived

from two different sources – the Bible and **D** _____.

From these sources, he developed two processes for developing

the applied principles of natural law, the **E** _____ and

F _____ precepts.

2. Fill in the missing headings and definitions of the different forms of precepts as detailed by Aquinas.

The Key Precept

3. What is meant by the term 'human law', and how does this fit into natural moral law?

5. Give two arguments against the view that human beings have a specific telos.

4. What is meant by the term 'double effect', and how does this fit into natural moral law?

6. Assess the helpfulness of the primary precepts in moral decision-making. (40 marks)

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1. Which of the following words for love is important within Christian situation ethics? Write the correct letter in the box.

A Philia
B Eros
C Ludus
D Agape

2. Explain why the answer to question 1 is central to Fletcher's situation ethics.

- 4a. Give an example of when a situation ethicist might consider lying to be justified.

- 4b. Give an example of when a situation ethicist might consider murder to be justified.

5. Why does Fletcher argue that ethical systems should avoid legalism and antinomianism?

3. In your own words, fill in the explanations for Fletcher's four working principles. The first has been done for you.

Principlism: Moral demands should be met and achieve the intended

6. Give two arguments against the usefulness of the six propositions for moral decision-making.

7. 'Situation ethics is too subjective to give good moral guidance.' Discuss. (40 marks)

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1. What role does Immanuel Kant believe that reason plays within ethics?



3. What is the difference between a perfect duty and an imperfect duty?



5. Present two scenarios in which the consequences of actions appear to be morally relevant and explain why they pose a problem for Kantian ethics.



2. In your own words, briefly sum up the three forms of the categorical imperatives.

The First Form:



6. Assess the claim that the categorical imperative is too abstract to offer meaningful guidance in moral decision-making. (40 marks)

God

The Afterlife

4. Identify the missing postulate and explain why it is important in Kant's ethical system.

God

The Afterlife

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1. What is the principle at the heart of Bentham's utilitarianism?

5. Give two problems with calculation that affect the viability of utilitarianism as a system of ethics.

2. Explain how the hedonic calculus influences the decisions of a utilitarian.

3. What is the trolley problem, and why is it perceived as giving intuitive evidence for consequentialist ethical theories?

6. 'Pleasure and pain are not valid ends for a system of ethics. Discuss. (40 marks)

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1. Fill in the blanks below.

Voluntary euthanasia is the ending of someone at

their request via an **A** medical

intervention (i.e. medication).

B is the of

enabling an individual to end their life via a medical manner,

such as by providing them with life-ending drugs. The

differentiation lies in who is administering the drugs. In the

case of voluntary euthanasia, the life-ending drugs are

administered by a **C**, whereas in assisted

suicide, the life-ending drugs are administered by the

D wishing to **E**. Both

of these are currently **F** in the UK.

2. Below is a case study of a real-life event. Use your knowledge of the ethical theories to briefly describe how each of these schools of ethical thought would approach this case.

(a) *Tony Bland (1970–1993) was a young British man who sustained serious injuries during the 1989 Hillsborough disaster. He was in a persistent vegetative state for four years, before a UK court permitted the removal of artificial nutrition and treatment. This resulted in his death.*

Natural Law

Situation Ethics

3. Why do the sanctity of life and quality of life principles clash when considering the rightness or wrongness of euthanasia?

6. Assess the view that natural law provides no effective moral guidance on the issue of euthanasia. (40 marks)

2. Why is the concept of autonomy so important in debates

4. What is the difference between active euthanasia

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1. In your own words, define the important terms listed below.

Capitalism

Corporate Social Responsibility

Whistle-blowing

2. Explain how both Kantian ethics and utilitarianism might approach the Edward Snowden whistle-blowing case.

3. Why has corporate social responsibility been accused of being 'hypocritical window dressing' by some thinkers?

5. What is the distinction between negative and positive liberty, and why does it matter for business ethics?

4. Give two reasons why globalisation might undermine the rights and welfare of stakeholders.

6. 'Good business can never be good ethics'. Discuss. (40 marks)

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Answers

1.1 Normative Ethical Theories: Natural Law

1. A) telos D) reason
B) eudaimonia E) primary
C) Aquinas F) secondary
2. Students might write the following:
 - Primary precepts – fundamental principles of natural law which cannot be derived from secondary precepts.
 - Secondary precepts – rules which are developed from the primary precepts to specific real-world contexts.
3. Students might write the following:
Human law, in Aquinas' thought, refers to the rules and principles which govern human beings can or cannot legally do. As natural law is unchanging, human law changes with place and situation.
4. Students might write the following:
The doctrine of double effect holds that a foreseen bad consequence does not make an action morally wrong as that consequence is not intended and the overall result is good. A classic example is a doctor attacking an attacker in self-defence. Aquinas himself discussed this case and reasoned that it is permissible for an individual to kill in self-defence as long as that individual's intention is to preserve their own life away from another's.
5. Students might write the following:
 - i) Human beings have no clear purpose that can be derived from reasoning on the nature and activities of human beings indicate the opposite: that human beings have no single essence. It might even be that the existentialist mantra is right: 'Existence precedes essence'.
 - ii) Aquinas' idea of human beings having a telos rests on his beliefs in God. How can we propose moral ends that do not cohere with his system of natural law, precisely to give human beings an objective purpose. Whether it be utilitarianism or virtue ethics can have a telos without human beings themselves having a specific purpose.
6. Students might refer to the following ideas in their answers:
Assess the helpfulness of the primary precepts in moral decision-making.
'The primary precepts are helpful in moral decision making.'
 - One of the strengths of natural law theory is that it is objective – there is little scope for disagreement as the precepts are set and do not change depending on viewpoints. Actions are considered to be right or wrong with emphatic clarity. This means there is clear moral guidance given by principles.
 - However, there is a degree of flexibility to natural law, through modern developments such as Bernard Hoose's proportionalism. This means that the primary precepts can be applied to complex ethical dilemmas with room for discussion and nuance.
 - The primary precepts appeal to common aspects of human nature and so a command to preserve life is one that human beings can naturally understand. Counter-intuitive commands to do something that transgresses our common sense are harder to accept.
 - The doctrine of double effect gives good guidance on what to do when the primary precepts seem to conflict. It is not an issue if two precepts are in conflict.
'The primary precepts are not helpful in moral decision-making.'
 - The primary precepts are often vague. For instance, it is not clear what Aquinas means by 'maintaining a just and ordered society'. Any action which causes friction or conflict is seen to be against this primary precept, even if it intuitively appears good.
 - There are a number of primary precepts which are contentious. Human beings do not necessarily worship God. The religious focus of Aquinas' natural law may limit the moral guidance from the primary precepts.
 - The primary precepts do not help with complex moral decision-making. While they are useful in some circumstances, it relies on an intuitive moral assessment of the situation and draws on an understanding of good or bad not given by the principles of natural law.
 - Other systems of ethics, such as situation ethics, utilitarianism and Kantian ethics, offer more guidance given by their key principles. This shows that the primary precepts, while useful, aren't as comprehensive as their competitors nor are they able to help in many complex situations.

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1.2 Normative Ethical Theories: Situation Ethics

1. D) Agape
2. Agape is at the centre of Fletcher's situation ethics. He argued it was the central belief taught by Jesus during his ministry. In fact, Fletcher claimed that Jesus opposed the belief of his persecutors. This means that even if a moral decision appears to violate the law as long as it demonstrates love then it is morally good.
3. Students should define the terms similarly to the summary sheet, as listed below:
 - Pragmatism: Moral demands should be practical and achieve the intended purpose.
 - Relativism: All situations should be assessed on how best to demonstrate love.
 - Positivism: Being able to say that 'God is love' on the basis of faith, not reason. A moral agent has to decide, through their faith in God, that love is the most important principle.
 - Personalism: Demands that the needs and importance of people are considered over moral laws.
4. a. Students should give an example which fits the appropriate ideas of situation ethics. Detail a scenario in which a person lies to save the life of another. Such a scenario involves a choice between the right of lying.
- b. Students should give an example which fits the appropriate ideas of situation ethics. Detail a scenario involving the murder of a leader who plans to unjustly invade a country. An assassination could arguably be a loving act in the right context.
5. Fletcher argued that legalism was too restrictive. It did not allow people to use their reasoning to evaluate the right action in an ethical dilemma, nor did it allow for a response to difficult moral circumstances. However, Fletcher also argued that all people need a core set of moral principles to appeal to during moral decision-making. These principles are consistently right.
6. Students might write the following:
 - i) Agape love is too vague a concept to be useful in moral decision-making. Even if we have some insight into how love relates to justice and equality, this does not help if it should be quantified exactly in ethical dilemmas.
 - ii) The six propositions can occasionally be confusing in their application. For example, that feelings should not enter how we decide upon the demonstration of love. We do not understand how love relates to concepts such as friendship. There are many ways in which the six propositions hinder more than help moral decision-making.
7. Students may talk about the following ideas within their answers.

'Situation ethics is too subjective to give good moral guidance.' Discuss. (40 marks)

'Situation ethics can give good, objective moral guidance.'

 - The concept of agape love, although difficult to initially understand, can be useful in ethical dilemmas. Even if it is hard to give an exact definition or quantification, a moral agent can choose actions which are loving and unloving without too much difficulty.
 - Situation ethics is by its nature somewhat flexible. If there is no easy moral principle, it is always because the ethical system is too subjective but that the situation itself provides the guidance isn't always simple to discover.
 - Fletcher's four working principles and six propositions go a long way to help in practice. They help explain not only a good objective method for choosing the right action but also how the concept of agape love relates to other important ethical concepts such as justice and equality.
 - Situation ethics places a strong emphasis on conscience. Good moral guidance is not just about having good powers of logical reasoning as it is on the principles of situation ethics. It does not treat human beings as mere automata that follow legalistic rules.

'Situation ethics is too subjective and cannot give good moral guidance.'

 - The concept of agape love is too woolly and vague to offer good moral guidance. Almost any action can be reasoned to be loving by a moral agent if they adopt a subjective view. This means it is impossible to stop potential abuses of situation ethics by imposing objective principles.
 - The six propositions don't help to explain how agape love is related to other important ethical concepts such as friendship or romantic love. This means that situation ethics can potentially provide guidance that asks us to consider strangers above friends and relatives when making a decision. This is against the value of culture and community.
 - There is too strong a burden of calculation in situation ethics. No one can expect a moral agent to demonstrate love in a reasonable time frame without resorting to a legalistic approach. Fletcher rejects this.

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2.1 Normative Ethical Theories: Kantian Ethics

1. Kant believed that reason was central to ethics. A duty is not only discoverable by reason, reason is the only foundation for an ethics that is universal and absolute.
2. Students should be able to communicate the ideas from the course in their own words.
 - First Form: This is sometimes known as 'The Formula of the Universal Law'; moral agents should act only in ways that can be universalised as a coherent, non-contradictory law.
 - Second Form: This is known as 'The Humanity Formula'; it refers to how moral agents should be treated as ends, not mere means.
 - Third Form: This is known as 'The Kingdom of Ends Formula'; it refers to how moral agents should act in an ideal moral society, where everyone acts rationally and treats each other as ends.
3. Students might write the following:

A perfect duty is one that a moral agent is always obliged to obey, as its universalisation is binding at all times. An imperfect duty is one that a moral agent is only practically obliged to obey, as its universalisation is only right, as its universalisation does not produce a law that is binding at all times.
4. Students might write the following:

Free Will: Kant argued that for his system of ethics to be meaningful, moral agents must be able to make free moral choices. Without this possibility, it is not possible to hold moral agents responsible for their actions, meaning that they cannot possess real duties.
5. Students should give examples that appropriately fit the ideas of Kantian ethics. For example, an inquiring murderer. If it is acceptable to lie to save the life of another human being, then the categorical imperative is wrong and consequences do matter. Another example is the trolley problem. If it is acceptable to commit murder to save a greater number of lives, this also raises doubts about Kantian ethics.
6. Students may talk about the following ideas within their answers.

Assess the claim that the categorical imperative is too abstract to offer meaningful guidance in decision-making. (40 marks)

'The categorical imperative is too abstract to offer meaningful guidance.'

- The categorical imperative struggles to give meaningful moral guidance in complex situations. It is only good at providing broad principles that aren't always useful.
- The categorical imperative can easily generate trivial or meaningless rules for moral guidance. This is because the first formulation and the test of universality of action but an ideal, non-real world of moral agents.
- The categorical imperative fails to consider the importance of consequences. The inquiring murderer demonstrates that the material consequences of actions matter. The rightness of an action, not just whether it follows a particular rule set by the categorical imperative.

'The categorical imperative is not too abstract to offer meaningful guidance.'

- The different formulations of the categorical imperative each help explain how it is formulated and applied. Whether law can be universalised is not the only factor in determining if an action is right or wrong.
- The second formulation helps moral agents understand on a day-to-day basis what is right or wrong, as the command to treat people as ends is easily understood and helps identify intuitively immoral actions.
- The first and third formulations are useful in establishing key moral laws that, even if they appear too absolute, they are still meaningful and offer useful guidance in complex contexts.

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2.2 Normative Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism

1. The principle of utility – the idea that the right moral choice is the one which leads to the greatest number.
2. The hedonic calculus is a practical method by which Bentham believed a moral agent could determine how much happiness would be created by a choice. Therefore, it is key to understanding how Bentham would practically apply his ethical theory. The hedonic calculus itself is a list of questions that can be judged to determine how much happiness it would create quantitatively. (the strength of a pleasure), 'duration' (the length of the pleasure) and 'fecundity' (the likelihood of leading to more pleasures). Because the principle of utility could be viewed as being too subjective to apply, the hedonic calculus gives more structure to making such decisions.
3. The trolley problem is a thought experiment in which a moral agent is asked to choose between letting five individuals die in a train collision or intentionally switching the trolley to a different track and kill one person instead. Many consequentialists have claimed the reason we intuitively find the rightness of switching the trolley is because the consequences to an ethical agent naturally prefer to preserve the five over five people over one.

4. Students might write the following:

Act utilitarianism holds that the right action is the one which is decided on the basis of the greatest happiness or least unhappiness produced by individual acts. Rule utilitarianism holds that there are certain predetermined rules that, if routinely followed, would produce the greatest number of good consequences.

5. Students might write the following:

One problem of calculation is that it is often prohibitively difficult to quantify the happiness or unhappiness produced by an action, as these concepts are psychological qualities. For example, the happiness for one person might produce a lot of unhappiness for another.

Another problem of calculation is that it is difficult to predict the long-term consequences of an action. An action may have a complex set of consequences that cannot always be known by a moral agent. For example, that an action might produce great happiness, it is always possible that due to chance it might produce great unhappiness.

6. Students may talk about the following ideas within their answers.

'Pleasure and pain are not valid ends for a system of ethics.' Discuss. (40 marks)
'Pleasure and pain are valid ends for a system of ethics.'

- Bentham is right in saying that pleasure and pain, or happiness and unhappiness, are the natural ends of human behaviour. They are natural ends which all human beings recognise and which they ought to be sought, even if they don't produce the kinds of duties found in other ethical theories.
- Consequences are clearly important in moral decision-making. Thought experiments like the trolley problem show that human beings intuitively consider the total effects of the outcomes which produce the greatest amount of happiness.
- It is possible to calculate the amount of pleasure and pain produced by an action using the hedonic calculus. Even if such calculations aren't perfect, they are significantly accurate enough to guide moral action.
- Even if it is too difficult to use pleasure and pain as guides for individual actions, the utilitarian way of understanding how moral principles can be developed from the pursuit of the greatest happiness for the greatest number is still valid.

'Pleasure and pain are not valid ends for a system of ethics.'

- There are other much more suitable ends for a system of ethics. For consequentialism, the ends are more appropriate, whereas if pleasure and pain are not solely important then there are other more intuitive moral principles.
- Taking pleasure and pain to be the right moral ends produces a wide array of problems. For example, as a result of the prioritisation of those who experience pain or pleasure, the prioritisation of other important ethical concepts such as justice or virtue is lost.
- It is impossible to accurately quantify and measure pleasure and pain, meaning that it is impossible to determine what action is the right action from these moral ends. As a result, utilitarianism is not a valid ethical theory.

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3.1 Applied Ethics: Euthanasia

1. A) intentional D) individual
B) Assisted suicide E) die
C) doctor F) illegal
Accept any reasonable alternative wording.
2. The case of Tony Bland.
 - Natural Law: A natural law ethicist would likely disagree with the choice to resuscitate Bland.
 - Euthanasia is the practice of ending a life, which is the intentional violation of natural law – the preservation of life. Therefore, generally speaking, euthanasia is immoral within natural law. It is considered to subvert the order of society (as it subverts the natural role of a doctor (to save life rather than take it) as well as the position of choosing who lives and who dies. The doctrine of double effect might be used unless there was another medical reason to prolong his nutrition, or Mr Bland suffering to the point that passive euthanasia might be considered a better option.
 - Situation Ethics: Agape love is at the heart of situation ethics and, therefore, euthanasia and assisted suicide, the morality of such choices is situational. If his family might be considered to be so great that it would be considered a justifiable issue. Therefore, it could be considered to be justified under situation ethics.
3. Students might write the following:
Autonomy is often perceived to be important in debates around euthanasia as it is socially important to respect the rights of individuals as long as they do not harm others. In euthanasia, individuals in the UK do not possess this right, effectively denying their choice that, in the right circumstances, would not excessively harm others. More importantly, it separates the moral permissibility of voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. The distinction is predicated on the fact that it denies the autonomy of a human being, whereas the sanctity of life of the role of autonomy.
4. Students might write the following:
Active euthanasia is when deliberate steps are taken to directly end the life of a person, such as the administration of lethal drugs. Passive euthanasia is when indirect steps are taken to end a person, most commonly the withholding of treatment that would preserve their life.
5. Students might write the following:
The sanctity of life principle holds that life is sacred and preserved whenever possible. It holds that the well-being of a person should be an important factor in how they live. In the case of euthanasia, these can clash because if a person's quality of life or well-being where living produces very high levels of suffering with no possible improvement, then the conclusion that their life should not be preserved, a conclusion which clashes with the sanctity of life principle.
6. Students may talk about the following ideas within their answers.
Assess the view that natural law provides no effective moral guidance on the issue of euthanasia.
'Natural law provides effective moral guidance on euthanasia.'
 - The primary precepts offer clear moral guidance on the importance of the sanctity of life. These principles simply indicate that in most contexts euthanasia is wrong and that it is an invalid system of ethics.
 - The principle of double effect helps moral agents evaluate complex ethical dilemmas. It allows for more flexibility in how moral agents use natural law in modern medical contexts.
 - The distinction between active and passive euthanasia is given clearer boundaries by the principle of double effect. It is permissible to withdraw life-saving treatment where a better outcome is intended, but it is likely to always be impermissible to actively kill someone.
 'Natural law does not provide effective moral guidance on euthanasia.'
 - There is little room for the quality of life principle in natural law and this provides no effective moral guidance on euthanasia. Without it, one is unnecessarily anxious about the autonomy of patients and allowing for extended suffering against their wishes.
 - The principle of double effect is only useful in a very restricted set of circumstances. The application of the primary precepts. There are many cases, such as that of Mr Bland, where the sanctity of life should not be an automatic aim but equally balanced against a much greater aim.
 - Other ethical systems, such as situation ethics and utilitarianism, which are much better placed to offer effective moral guidance as they allow for a balance between the sanctity of life and quality of life. These demonstrate that natural law, in contrast, does not provide effective moral guidance.

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3.2 Applied Ethics: Business Ethics

1. Students might write the following:
 - Capitalism – A system of economics and politics which prioritises the production of goods and services by private enterprise in matters of trade and industry.
 - Corporate Social Responsibility – The view that businesses have social, ethical and legal responsibilities to their stakeholders.
 - Whistle-blowing – The actions of an individual who publicly discloses the illegal or unethical actions of a business or an organisation.
2. The case of Edward Snowden.
 - Kantian ethics – A Kantian ethicist may well agree that Edward Snowden's actions were morally wrong as he revealed that the US government was conducting surveillance on citizens for the sake of the means to an end. The security of the country was prioritised wholly over the rights of individuals, thus flouting the second formulation of the categorical imperative. Moreover, his actions did not fulfil the first formulation. There is nothing inherently contradictory about whistleblowers attempting to expose the immoral or unlawful practices of businesses.
 - Utilitarianism – A utilitarian might argue that against Snowden's actions depending on the amount of happiness produced. In this instance, it can be argued that greater happiness was produced by regaining privacy and the right to be left alone in the light of the revelations about the US government that Snowden's actions produced a lot of discontent and potentially put some lives at risk. It is also argued they produced more unhappiness than happiness, making Snowden's actions morally wrong.
3. Students might write the following:

Some thinkers, such as Friedman, have argued that businesses cannot have the same moral responsibilities as people because they are just legal or conceptual entities. The only real obligation of a business is to deliver profits to shareholders, and any attempt to talk about its moral responsibilities is a distraction. If this is the case, then talk of corporate social responsibility is merely a PR exercise.
4. Students might write the following:
 - Globalisation might undermine the rights and welfare of stakeholders as it cannot exact the same pressure on businesses, as they can always outsource operations to other countries. Accordingly, they might struggle more to pass on the benefits of globalisation to workers and citizens over the profits of businesses.
 - Globalisation might also undermine the rights and welfare of stakeholders as it allows powerful countries and multinational corporations to distort global markets. Workers and other stakeholders might find their opportunities increasingly undermined by the demands of the global economy.
5. Students might write the following:

What is the distinction between negative and positive liberty, and why does it matter?

Negative liberty interprets freedom as the ability to do something without someone preventing it. Conversely, positive liberty is the freedom to act according to your own interests. The problem that business ethics faces is balancing these two kinds of freedom. On the one hand, those who claim that to impose ethical responsibilities on businesses is to unfairly restrict their freedom, whereas others argue that if businesses aren't restricted this can lead to a lack of regard for the rights of stakeholders. At heart, what proves problematic is establishing how businesses can balance individual ends while allowing stakeholders to flourish in the pursuit of their own interests.
6. Students may talk about the following ideas within their answers.

'Good business can never be good ethics.' Discuss. (40 marks)

'Good business can be good ethics.'

 - Businesses and corporations aren't just legal entities but groups of human beings who can possess moral responsibilities but may be possessed of desires to do good. If business ends isn't at odds with ethics, so long as a business believes that internal business are willing to see their ethics reflected in their business dealings.
 - Businesses with a better ethical reputation are much more likely to attract new customers. Any business that acts unethically is likely to suffer some consequences, either through boycotting or through negative publicity. This indicates that, at least to some extent, good business can be good ethics.
 - Good business to some extent necessitates good ethics, as investment in the stock market and the economy is arguably important for future profits and prevents economic collapse of a company's operations.

'Good business can't be good ethics.'

 - As Friedman states, a business or corporation is a legal entity and can't possess moral responsibilities in the same way that human beings do. Instead, businesses only have the obligation to their shareholders. This means any ethical stance held by a business is merely a PR exercise. A business would abandon such a stance if it led to significantly decreased revenue.
 - Good business isn't necessarily good ethics because businesses do not routinely act in the best interests of the public. Unlawful or immoral behaviour can be covered up in pursuit of profit. The significant number of whistle-blowers throughout history.
 - Businesses regularly take advantage of market conditions to undermine stakeholders, whether it be through globalisation or exploiting the environment. The capitalist pursuit of profit inevitably means that a flourishing ethics can't naturally exist.

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OCR Component 2 Mark Scheme: 40-mark Question Levelled Grid

A Level A01

Level	Marks band	What type of answer
6	14–16	This answer is excellent because: • it answers the question with sophistication • points are relevant and well selected • all knowledge and understanding is correct and detailed, and • it is clear and has used specialist terminology precisely and • there is a large range of references to scholarly theories and
5	11–13	This answer is very good because: • it answers the question thoroughly • points are relevant and used properly • all knowledge and understanding shown is correct with detail • it is clear and has used specialist terminology consistently • there is a very good number of references to scholarly theories and
4	8–10	This answer is good because: • it answers the question • points are relevant and mostly used properly • most of the knowledge and understanding shown is correct • it is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly • there is a good number of references to scholarly theories and
3	5–7	This is a satisfactory answer because: • it mostly answers the question • most of the points are relevant • some correct knowledge and understanding is shown, but • it is quite clear and specialist terminology is used correctly • some scholarly theories and/or works are referred to
2	3–4	This is a basic answer because: • the question is answered in a general way • some relevant points are mentioned • some correct but limited knowledge and understanding is shown • some correct but limited specialist terminology is used • it is limited in referencing scholarly theories and/or works
1	1–2	This is a weak answer because: • most of the response does not answer the question • a lot of relevant content is missing • there is very little knowledge and understanding of the topic • specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned • there is little reference to scholarly theories and/or works
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit

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A Level A02

Level	Marks band	What type of answer
6	21–24	This is an excellent answer because: - the argument is effective and insightful - there is insightful critical analysis and evaluation - points are clear and positions are robustly justified - it is clear and has used specialist terminology precisely and - there is a large range of references to scholarly theories and/or Overall, this answer is well-reasoned, detailed, integrated and logical
5	17–20	This is a very good answer because: - the argument is clear and generally successful - the analysis and evaluation are clear - points are clear, stated and justified - it answers the question entirely - it is clear and has used specialist terminology consistently throughout - there is a very good number of references to scholarly theories and evaluation Overall, this answer is detailed, relevant, integrated and logically
4	13–16	This is a good answer because: - the argument is effective and clear - there is good analysis and evaluation - points are made clearly and contain adequate justification and - it answers the question - it is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly - there is a good number of references to scholarly theories and evaluation Overall, this answer is detailed with relevant material and a logical
3	9–12	This is a satisfactory answer because: - the argument is mostly successful - there is mostly successful analysis and evaluation - points are made with some justification but not fully - it mainly answers the question - it is quite clear and specialist terminology is used correctly - some scholarly theories and/or works are referred to for analysis Overall, this answer is mainly relevant and has some structure.
2	5–8	This is a basic answer because: - there is some evidence that an argument is being made - there is some analysis and evaluation, but this is limited - points are made but without enough justification - it doesn't answer the question fully - some correct but limited specialist terminology is used - it is limited in references to scholarly theories and/or works for Overall, this answer is mostly relevant with some structure.
1	1–4	This is a weak answer because: - there is little evidence of an argument being made - there is a lack of analysis and evaluation - points are made without any or enough justification - it does not answer the question - specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned - there is little reference to scholarly theories and/or works for Overall, this answer lacks structure and clarity.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit

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