Fundamentals –Year 12 Ethics

Key knowledge by the end of Year 12

NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES: RELIGIOUS APPROACHES:
NATURAL LAW:
Aquinas' natural law including:
o _telos_ - origins of the significant concept of telos in Aristotle and its religious development in the writing of Aquinas
o the four tiers of law - what they are and how they are related:
1. Eternal Law
2. Divine Law
3. Natural Law
4. Human Law
o the precepts - what they are and how they are related:
-the key precept (do good, avoid evil)
-five primary precepts
-secondary precepts
• whether or not natural law provides a helpful method of moral decision-making
• whether or not a judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on its success or failure in achieving its telos
• whether or not the universe as a whole is designed with a telos, or human nature has an orientation towards the good
• whether or not the doctrine of double effect can be used to justify an action, such as killing someone as an act of self-defence

SITUATION ETHICS
Fletcher's situation ethics, including:
o agape - origins of agape in the New Testament and its religious development in the writing of Fletcher
o the six propositions - what they are and how they give rise to the theory of situation ethics and its approach to moral decision-making.
o the four working principles - what they are and how they are intended to be applied
o conscience - what conscience is and what it is not according to Fletcher
• whether or not situation ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision-making
• whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, agape is best served
• whether Fletcher's understanding of agape is really religious or whether it means nothing more than wanting the best for the person involved in a given situation
• whether or not the rejection of absolute rules by situation ethics makes moral decision-making entirely individualistic and subjective

NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES:
KANTIAN ETHICS:
Kantian ethics, including:
o duty - origins of the concept of duty (acting morally according to the good regardless of consequences) in deontological and absolutist approaches to ethics

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o <u>the hypothetical imperative</u> - what it is (a command to act to achieve a desired result) and why it is not the imperative of morality

o <u>the categorical imperative and its three formulations</u> - what it is (a command to act that is good in itself regardless of consequences) and why it is the imperative of morality

o <u>the three postulates</u> - what they are and why in obeying a moral command they are being accepted

• whether or not Kantian ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision-making

• whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which duty is best served

• whether or not Kantian ethics is too abstract to be applicable to practical moral decision-making

• whether or not Kantian ethics is so reliant on reason that it unduly rejects the importance of other factors, such as sympathy, empathy and love in moral decision-making

UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism, including:

o <u>utility</u> - the use of the significant concept of utility in teleological and relativist approaches to ethics

o <u>the hedonic calculus</u> - what it is and its use as a measure of individual pleasure

o <u>act utilitarianism</u> - what it is and its use in promoting the greatest amount of good over evil, or pleasure over pain

o <u>rule utilitarianism</u> - what it is and its use in promoting the common good

• whether or not utilitarianism provides a helpful method of moral decision-making

• whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, utility is best served

• whether or not it is possible to measure good or pleasure and then reach a moral decision

APPLIED ETHICS:

EUTHANASIA:

Key ideas, including:

o <u>sanctity of life</u> - the religious origins of this concept

o <u>quality of life</u> - the secular origins of this significant concept

o <u>voluntary euthanasia</u> - what it is and its use in the case of incurable or terminal illness

o <u>non-voluntary euthanasia</u> - what it is and its use in the case of a patient who is in a persistent vegetative state

• the application of <u>natural law</u> and <u>situation ethics</u> to euthanasia

• whether or not the religious concept of sanctity of life has any meaning in twenty-first century medical ethics

• whether or not a person should or can have complete autonomy over their own life and decisions made about it

• whether or not there is a moral difference between medical intervention to end a patient's life and medical non-intervention to end a patient's life

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BUSINESS ETHICS

Key ideas, including:

o corporate social responsibility - what it is and its application to stakeholders, such as employees, customers, the local community, the country as whole and governments

o whistle-blowing - what it is and its application to the contract between employee and employer

o good ethics is good business - what it is and its application to shareholders and profit-making

o globalisation - what it is and its impact on stakeholders

• the application of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism to business ethics

• whether or not the concept of corporate social responsibility is nothing more than 'hypocritical window-dressing' covering the greed of a business intent on making profits

• whether or not human beings can flourish in the context of capitalism and consumerism

• whether globalisation encourages or discourages the pursuit of good ethics as the foundation of good business

SKILLS

KEY SKILLS DEVELOPED IN YEARS 12 AND 13

-critical analysis of key texts and philosophical views

-evaluation of different viewpoints

-analysis of philosophical outlooks

-essay writing skills

-advanced literacy skills including the use of technical language

-the use of quotes to support statements