

FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Respond to one of the following in 1700 words (approximately five pages). Papers are due by 3pm on Monday, 24 April. Please turn your paper in to the box under my name on the left-hand wall of the Philosophy Department office, 202 Stuart. Late papers will be accepted for any reason without question, though there is a penalty of one-eighth of a grade *per* day. If you are turning in your paper late, please note when you are doing so and ask the secretary to initialize it. Good luck!

1. Describe Peter Singer's argument in "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." That is, tell the reader what conclusion Singer seeks to establish and how he argues for it. Then, describe what strikes you as the best reason for doubting that Singer's argument succeeds. How might Singer respond to this objection? Finally, offer your resolution of the problem: explain why you think that Singer's response either succeeds or fails.
2. Singer proposes two versions of his moral principle and argues that his conclusions would follow from either one. How do the two versions of the principle differ and why does Singer believe that his argument would work with either one of them? Give what strikes you as the best reason for doubting that either version of the principle would work in his argument. How might Singer respond to the objection? What do you think: is the objection a good one or not?
3. Cohen agrees with Singer that we are required to give aid to relieve famine but he disagrees with Singer about the extent of our responsibility for famine victims. Explain what Cohen believes about our responsibility to provide famine aid. Give what you regard as his best argument for his position. What do you consider the best argument that Singer could make in reply? Give your assessment: what responses are required of us when famines or similar calamities strike others?
4. Mill held that some pleasures are qualitatively better than others: what does that mean? How did he think the higher quality pleasures could be identified? Is there a distinction between higher and lower pleasures, such as he characterizes it? Explain what you take to be the best reason for doubting Mill's position. What is the best way for Mill to defend himself? What is the correct answer, in your opinion?