Chapter 8: Intro to Virtue Ethics - Plato
1. How is moral praiseworthiness or blameworthiness assigned in virtue ethics?
2. What are some examples of African virtues? Why were these qualities thought to be virtuous?
3. What are some examples of Indigenous American virtues? Why were these qualities thought to be virtuous?
4. Describe the good and meaningful life according to Plato. For Plato, what is most important: individual autonomy, family life or membership as a citizen of one’s city-state? Why did Plato hold that value as the most important to a meaningful life?
5. What was the charge the Athenians brought against Socrates? Did he apologize for doing what they accused him of doing? Explain Socrates’ argument that the unexamined life is not worth living.
6. In the Apology, why does Socrates maintain that he must drink the hemlock rather than recanting, escaping or accepting exile?
7. Explain Socrates’ statement that it is better to live well than to merely live. What is meant by living well according to Socrates?
8. Explain Plato’s theory that the person who acts viciously does so out of ignorance or illness.
9. Explain Plato’s concept of the tripartite soul. Describe the proper balance between these elements according to Plato. Explain the charioteer metaphor Plato uses to support this argument.
10. How does the well balanced person compare to the well balanced society?
11. Who were the “philosopher kings” and how were they selected?
12. What are some examples of Platonic virtues that the philosopher kings were to exhibit at the highest level? Why were these qualities thought to be virtuous?
13. How may Plato be an influence on Christianity?

Chapter 9: Aristotle & Virtue Ethics.
14. How does Aristotle’s view of metaphysics affect his views on ethics?
15. Explain Aristotle’s teleological world view. What does he argue is the telos for humans? Is this different for men than women according to Aristotle?
16. What is the first definition of virtue we’re given by the author of our text on p.435?
17. What is the relationship between being virtuous, fulfilling one’s purpose, doing something with excellence and being morally good according to Aristotle?

18. Explain the two different forms of Aristotelian virtue. Aristotle also defined virtue as “reason excellently applied.” Explain the two different kinds of reasoning necessary for virtuous action according to Aristotle.

19. What is the “golden mean” and how do we find it?

20. Why is it impossible to be too virtuous according to Aristotle?

21. How does one come to have a virtuous character according to Aristotle; does a single act define the nature of one’s character?

22. Give a list of the key Aristotelian virtues and describe the corresponding vices of deficiency and excess.

23. Given that courage is a key virtue for Aristotle, how does one know when and how to act courageously? What is the role of intuition, reasoning and good habit in acquiring a good character?

24. Why is pride called the “crowning virtue?”

25. Was Aristotle an ethical relativist? Explain your answer.

26. How does Aristotle define happiness (eudemonia) and what is the relationship between happiness and virtue?

27. Discuss Aristotle’s influence on Aquinas.

28. Discuss the four objections to Greek virtue theory presented in our text.

Chapter 11 & Additional Readings: Confucian Ethics

29. Discuss the difference between a virtue ethic and a role ethic.

30. How is te defined in Confucianism?

31. What is a junzi (man of virtue)? How does the tao/dao relate to this concept of the junzi?

32. Explain the meaning and importance of jen.

33. Explain li and yi in Confucian ethics.

34. Why is li empty without jen?

35. How do people become superior for Confucius?

36. What vices should we guard against especially?

37. Where does goodness in character come from for Confucius? Where does it come from for Mencius? What causes us to lose our goodness according to Mencius? How do we get it back?

38. How does suffering and hardship affect our moral character according to Mencius? Can someone who has always had it easy ever develop true virtue?

39. According to Mencius, what is our most important duty? Why this one above other duties?

40. Why is one’s family so critical to the development of one’s moral character?
41. Why do the elderly deserve our respect according to Lin Yutang?
42. Would you think that Lin Yutang would argue that we still have this duty to our parents if they failed to love us or abused us?
43. What is the Chinese symbol of ultimate earthly happiness? What role does luck play in securing this happiness?
44. Explain Jane English’s position regarding our obligations to our parents.

Chapter 10: Sartre (pp493-500) & Nietzsche (pp.495-96 & Additional Readings)
45. How does existentialism get its name?
46. Why did Sartre claim that “Life is absurd?”
47. Why must we be radically free and why does this realization bring on a kind of anguish?
48. How does Sartre argue that we can live authentically? Why must we never give up this living in anguish – living on the edge?
49. What is “bad faith” and how can we avoid it?
50. Why did Sartre maintain that we are condemned to be free and that we are who we have chosen to become?
51. Explain the relationship between emotions/passions and morality for Nietzsche.
52. Explain what drives define the herd/slaves.
53. What specific values or qualities are defined as good by the herd? Why are these values seen as good?
54. What drives the “superior man” or Ubermensch? How are moral values defined for this sort of person? Why does Nietzsche refer to this model as “the noble man?” What are the qualities of this superior person?
55. Does the Ubermensch have any obligation to the herd?
56. Why must the Ubermensch move “beyond good and evil” and reject conventional Christian morality?
57. Why would Nietzsche have most likely disapproved of what the Nazis got out of his philosophy?

Buddhist Ethics
58. Explain the 4 noble truths.
59. Explain what is meant by dukkha (suffering). Why is it universal?
60. Explain the concept of interdependent arising. How would most Buddhists probably regard this passage from John Donne’s famous Meditation XVII:
“...No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee....”
61. What is the relationship between *prajna* (wisdom) and *karuna* (compassion)?

62. Explain why compassion is at the heart of Buddhist ethics.

63. What role does sangha (community) play in Buddhist ethics?

64. Why is the practice of compassion emphasized especially? What is the difference between having compassion and acting with compassion?

**Chapter 12 & Additional Readings: Gender & Ethics/The Ethic of Care**

65. Briefly explain the key accomplishments of the first, second and third wave feminists.

66. Who was Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz and why is she significant to feminist theory?

67. Who was Mary Wollstonecraft and why is she significant to feminist theory?

68. Explain briefly classical, difference and radical feminism.

69. What did Simone de Beauvoir mean when she argued that women must shed their identity as “the second sex?” What would be required for a woman to have an authentic life?

70. Carol Gilligan argues for a different model of moral maturation than her professor, Lawrence Kohlberg. Explain the differences.

71. What is the Heinz dilemma? What is Jake’s response? What is Amy’s response? Explain how the method of compromise and accommodation would differ from an autonomous appeal to rational principles in resolving moral problems.

72. What is the goal of the Ethic of Care?

73. Do Ethic of Care theorists such as Manning & Gilligan support the impartial objective criterion of Kant? In other words, should we always make moral decisions without regard to our personal relationships with others involved or how we feel about those who may be affected by our decisions?

74. What are the conditions that obligate us to care for others according to Manning? Might we be obligated to care even if no relationship is present?

75. Explain the 4 major elements of the ethic of care: Moral Attention, Sympathetic Understanding, Relationship Awareness and Harmony.

76. How does one decide what to do under the Ethic of Care? What role does one’s moral imagination play in determining the right choices?

77. Is care given only as a reciprocal obligation according to Rita Manning? In other words, must we care just for those who have cared for us?

78. How does one prevent “caring burnout?” What is a network of care?

79. How is the Ethic of Care similar to a virtue ethic, a deontology and a consequentialist system? In what ways does the Ethic of Care depart from all of the above?

80. Discuss some challenges to the Ethic of Care.