2.1 Optional themes and the prescribed text

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 27 marks**

KEY WORDS consequentialism • fourfold read

Optional themes and the prescribed text

Objective

Run the ethics three-way debate, apply the epistemology toolkit (Gettier, rationalism vs empiricism), and read a prescribed text with the fourfold read – context, claims, arguments, critique (optional themes; prescribed text).

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

Themes + text toolkit. Ethics: consequentialism (outcomes; utilitarianism), deontology (duty; the categorical imperative), virtue ethics (character; the phronimos), each with its signature burden. Epistemology: JTB and Gettier (the stopped clock; responses: no false lemmas, reliabilism, virtue); rationalism vs empiricism with Kant's synthesis. Aesthetics: the definition of art; disinterested pleasure. Religion: the three arguments; the problem of evil. Science: induction, falsification, paradigms, realism. Political: contract, liberty (negative/positive; Mill), justice (Rawls vs Nozick). Social: the social self; Marx; de Beauvoir. Text: fourfold read – context, claims, arguments, critique.

2 Practice

2.1 State consequentialism and its signature burden. [2]

2.2 State the categorical imperative's first formulation and one objection to it. [3]

2.3 Explain Gettier's problem with the stopped-clock case. [3]

2.4 Distinguish rationalism from empiricism in one sentence each. [2]

2.5 Name the four moves of the fourfold text read. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Ethics essay style.)* A city must either divert a runaway tram to kill one (trapped) person or let it kill five. Run the case through consequentialism and deontology, and evaluate which theory guides better here – noting each theory's burden. [6]

3.2 *(Epistemology style.)* "The stopped clock shows knowledge needs more than justification." Evaluate: does Gettier break justified true belief, and does reliabilism fix it? [5]

3.3 *(Text style.)* Apply the fourfold read to a text passage that argues: "I doubt everything; yet in doubting, I exist." [4]

Solutions

2.1 The right act maximises aggregate wellbeing (outcomes alone carry moral weight) (1); burden: the tyranny-of-the-majority cases – it seems to require sacrificing one for many wherever the arithmetic says so (1).

2.2 Act only on a maxim you could will to become a universal law (2); objection: duties conflict (the inquiring murderer – truthfulness against protecting life), and the imperative seems to license no exception (1).

2.3 JTB: knowledge is justified true belief (1). The stopped clock: you believe it is 7:00, it IS 7:00 (true), and the clock having always been reliable justifies you – yet the belief is true by luck (the clock stopped exactly 12 hours ago), so JTB holds but it is not knowledge (2).

2.4 Rationalism: some substantive knowledge is a priori – innate or grasped by reason alone (1); empiricism: all substantive knowledge derives from experience (1).

2.5 Context, claims, arguments, critique (2 – 1 for three).

3.1 Consequentialism: diverting kills one and saves five – the arithmetic is decisive; the theory guides cleanly here, and that is its recommendation (2). Deontology: the act of diverting uses the one as a means to the five's survival – a violation of the end-in-itself formulation – so deontology (on the strong reading) forbids diverting; it guides, but to the counter-intuitive result (2). Evaluate: the case reveals each burden precisely: consequentialism's tyranny arithmetic (it would sacrifice one wherever five gain) and deontology's rigour (letting five die to keep hands clean). Virtue ethics as the third way: the phronimos would likely divert – but for character-reasons, not arithmetic – showing the debate's shape. Judgement: consequentialism guides better in rescue cases, deontology guards the boundaries; guidance and justification pull apart, which is the finding (2).

3.2 Gettier breaks JTB: the case satisfies all three conditions (belief, truth, justification) yet fails to be knowledge because the connection between justification and truth is luck (2). Reliabilism: knowledge is true belief formed by a RELIABLE process – a stopped clock is not a reliable time-teller, so the case is diagnosed correctly (2). Evaluate: reliabilism handles Gettier but inherits its own burden – reliability is graded and context-dependent (how reliable must the process be? – the lottery: highly reliable, yet not knowledge), so the definition may still be incomplete (1).

3.3 Context: a foundational project – defeating skepticism to found knowledge (Meditation I's question, whichever text carries it) (1). Claim: my existence is certain while I doubt (1). Argument: from doubting (thinking), a doubter must exist – doubting is an activity requiring a subject (1). Critique: the inference is immediate but presupposes an "I" as substance – the doubt questioned the self, and the reply assumes it; alternatively, the premise (there is thinking) settles less than the conclusion (I exist as a res cogitans) claims (1).

Local review guidance: each theory gets its OWN reading before the weighing; (R1) evaluate the fix, not just the diagnosis; the critique targets the argument's assumption, not its fame. Authored guidance.