

PHI 202 | Study questions 6

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Readings:

Kant, I. (1786/2012). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge University Press.

Unconditional value

- (a) What is the good will?
- (b) Kant argues that a *good will has unconditional value*. For instance, he claims, it is not conditional on and unaffected by the consequences of one's actions. What is Kant's argument? What example can be used to illustrate it?
- (c) Kant argues that things like happiness, intelligence, and courage do not have unconditional value. Why does he think that?
- (d) Kant argues that actions which *merely conform with duty* do not have unconditional value. In his argument, he distinguishes between three kinds of motivation for action which are all compatible with acting in conformity with duty. What are they?
- (e) What does Kant say about the actions of a naturally sympathetic person?

Acting from good will

- (a) Kant claims that humans freely choose their *maxims*. What are maxims? And what is their form?
- (b) Kant argues that acting from good will involves acting on a maxim that has the form of a *universal law*. Why does he think that?
- (c) From the claim that acting from good will involves acting on a maxim that has the form of a universal law, Kant derives *the Categorical Imperative*. What is the missing part of the argument?

"I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (4:402).

Morality and rationality

- (a) What is the relation between morality and rationality, according to Kant?
- (b) Kant distinguishes between *hypothetical* and *categorical imperatives*. What are they?

Applying the Categorical Imperative

- (a) What is the application procedure for the Categorical Imperative?
- (b) What does the Categorical Imperative tell us about the following actions: (i) false promising, (ii) free riding on public transport, (iii) pollution.
- (c) Does the Categorical Imperative tell us what we should do in every situation, or does it merely rule out some of the available actions as impermissible?