Unit 1

Discussion

I believe happiness can be achieved from different means such as money, job, recognition, family, love and religion. Happiness varies among people depending on their desires and goals.

I think happiness can be obtained if a person finds what he needs in life. Getting a good job can bring happiness to someone who wants money. Similarly, a lonely person can find happiness in marriage.

My perception of happiness changed over the years because when I was a student, I thought good grades will bring me happiness. I associated happiness with the job only until I got one. I realized my criteria for happiness change every passing day. Things that make me happy sometimes don't make me happy at other times.

People differ in their interpretations of happiness because their desires vary. Someone searching for a job will relate happiness with career while an employed person may relate happiness to the promotion.

Happiness lies within people that means a person can be happy in every state if he learns to feel positive. One's state of mind defines happiness because at one time a simple thing can bring happiness to someone but at other time it doesn't.

There are drawbacks of finding happiness because people who search it will not find it.

Response

Nicole Zegner has attempted to explain happiness practically. I agree with her idea of pursuing happiness. To attain happiness one needs to find the meaning and means of happiness. I believe we all have actual experiences of happiness, so we need to think of the events that give us pleasure or satisfaction. In philosophy, happiness is something linked to a good life or one's wellbeing. People have experienced happiness as positive feelings.

Alesia Lewis has provided a detailed explanation of happiness. I agree with the point that happiness can be considered as the highest good. There are different modes of attaining happiness such as from money, career, family, and everything that leads to satisfaction. The best definition of happiness is the absence of negative feelings or dissatisfaction for a moment or entire life. I agree with Alesia that happiness comes from self because it is linked to people’s feelings and emotions.

Unit 2

Discussion

There are many times when my senses deceived me. The most dominant sense of humans is vision. This means what I see can override what I hear. I watched a video in which the man was saying ‘bah' ‘bah.' He repeated the word over and over again. Later on, he started saying ‘fah' ‘fah.' My eyes didn't notice him changing the word, so I continued to hear ‘bah' ‘bah.' This allowed me to see how my senses betrayed me.

I believe it is quite reasonable to rely on one’s senses because they can protect us from harms. Our sense of smell alerts us when something is burning so we can act in anticipation to prevent something bad from happening. Senses often fool us, but still, we can learn to use them for our best interest.

Senses often inform us when something is wrong so we must pay attention to that. Sometimes our senses can also betray us Descartes comparison to madman reveals that perceptions can be deceptive. Optical illusions are more powerful because sometimes we perceive things inaccurately. Most of the time our senses are accurate such as the smoke caused by burning cloth when someone forgets to turn off iron.

Response

Allen McKinstry provides brief interpretation if human instinct and how it works. I agree with the point that better decision-making is controlled by instincts. Instinct can be understood as inner behavior in response to certain events occurring in the surroundings. One's actions are controlled by thinking, so it is possible to overcome negative feelings or fears. I agree with Allen on the point that overthinking promoted negative emotions so people can learn the art of controlling thoughts.

Cindy Washington elaborates why one needs to rely on their senses. I agree with her views that relying on senses is important because it keeps us aware of ourselves. Senses can fool us when we are unable to make better use of them. Although our senses can fool us at times we can learn to use them for our advantage. If you hear a car coming behind you on the road you can just change direction.

Unit 3

Discussion

I think the precise definition of evil is to harm or inflict pain on others for personal gain. Evil is a selfish act that encourages anyone to think about personal pleasure irrespective of its consequences. I think it's not reasonable to believe that people commit evil in ignorance. If we start relying on this assumption than everyone will be free to commit evil.

 People who do wrong have a certain motive behind it such as self-interest, so it makes them responsible for their actions. I don't agree with Socrates philosophy that people do evil in ignorance. There are people who restrict themselves from harming others.

If people accept Socrates philosophy, they will be motivated to do evil. This will have adverse impacts on the justice system because according to Socrates we can't blame anyone for doing wrong. This will allow people to justify their wrongdoings by claiming that they did it unknowingly. People would be freer to break laws that will cause unrest.

Prison sentencing and the death penalty will also be influenced because the accused will say that he did crime in ignorance. The philosophy of Socrates is flawed because it acts more in favor of wrongdoers and criminals.

References

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Responses

I find the post of Ismaris Dones-Soto very interesting because he has attempted to discuss the concept of Socrates in detail. I agree that it is through one’s experience of life that we learn to define evil and its repercussions. Anyone can tell that evil is something bad and seen as an apparent flaw of humans. I also agree on the viewpoint of Socrates that ‘evil is ignorance’ because this will give the right of doing wrong to everyone.

I agree with Quanisha White's definition of evil. According to Socrates philosophy, no one does evil knowingly. He relates evil with ignorance and claims that no one would do wrong if they know its consequences. I agree that a person who is undergoing mental illness is never blamed for doing evil. People are inclined to believe that the act of evil is the result of his unstable mental state. However, I don't agree with her conclusion that Socrates fails to justify his points.

Unit 4

Discussion

* Do you agree that every event has an explanatory cause?

According to determinism every thing or an event leads to some outcome that is known as cause. This means every choice that we make is not the result of free will.

* How do you define human choice? How do you define human event? Are they different?

Human choice and human event have explanatory cause. However they are different because choices are made by humans but events come in life. All events do not have explanatory cause because they are product of society. Human choices may cause some events but not all so human choices are different from events.

* Do you agree that to have an explanatory cause is to not be free?

To be free indicates that one is not in a position of choosing among different options. Explanatory cause is not to be free because in many circumstances people are not free to take decisions.

* How do you define free?

I think free means a state where an individual enjoys the liberty of making choice without any pressure. People are less likely to be free in real world because there are social, economic and religious factors that bind them.

* Do you think that free will and determinism can coexist in any way?

I believe it is difficult to say that certain choices will produce some outcomes. Determinism had some predictability so it is lacked by free will. It is not deterministic because one has to consider different possibilities (Stanford, 2002).

* Is it possible to have external determinism and internal free will?

Relying on external determinism one would believe that there are factors that shape one’s life and limits freedom. Free will affects our future so it is possible to have external determinism and free will (Stanford, 2003).

Response

I agree with Ismaris Dones-Soto that human beings have some free will because they make most of their choices themselves. I accept the point that no one can force someone to do anything. So it is free will that allow people to make choices and take their own decisions. Another striking fact mentioned by Ismaris is of that people would be same and acted in same way if they lacked free will. We cannot reject the existence of free will.

I agree with Sunnie Reisewitz’s post that provides clear picture of free will and how it works. Free will cannot be denied because everyone of us enjoys it. I accept the fact that whatever happens to us is the product of our choices. It is upon us if we want to be good or bad. It is totally our decision of we want to care for others or not. I agree that devastations and miseries are the result of our decisions.

References

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Unit 5

Discussion

I agree with Kant's philosophy that lying is not permissible under any circumstances. He claims that lying is wrong in every situation because he is a defender of absolute prohibition. This ideology of Kant does not appeal to the categorical imperative. I agree with his assessment that one has a duty of not lying. He also states that it is important to fulfill the duty of not lying than the conflicting duty.

For example, if the doctor lies to the patient about his chances of survival, it will be wrong. He has a moral duty to speak the truth irrespective of the circumstances. He like other humans has a formal duty of staying true with the patient. He may think that the patient will enjoy if he assumes his survival, but this is wrong. The patient has a right to know the truth.

Similarly lying to a mother about the death of her son in war may prevent her from depression but this is morally wrong. It is a moral duty to tell her the truth. I agree with Kant's viewpoint because lying can be advantageous at the moment, but it causes more damage later. So lying is not permissible in any circumstances.

Response

I agree with Mathew Overby’s post because he accepts the philosophy of Kant that lying is wrong in all situations. He makes a good point that lies at the end leads to more trouble and is hurtful. It is better to avoid lying because temporary pleasure is useless. I also agree that it was possible to avoid criminal charge if the owner would have told the truth. This reveals that the truth can only provide a temporary escape.

I like the post of Ismaris because the discussion revolves around the themes of ethics and morality. I agree with the point that ethics or morality don't exist themselves; these are constructed by society. People who are living in the society have to follow these ethical norms. According to the social norms lying is always wrong because it never benefits anyone. I also agree that we cannot know what would the good reason for lying.

Reference

Carson, Thomas L. (2010). Lying and Deception: Theory and Practice. Oxford.