

**PHIL 318 Test 2 Directions and Questions**  
Fall 2009

**General points:** Our second exam concerns everything assigned from *The Commanding Heights* and Margonelli's *Oil on the Brain*. You will answer four essay questions in all, and each question should be answered in the form of a clear, well-written, and well-organized essay of around one double-spaced page. Exam 2 is due at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, November 2.

The way this will work is that you'll need to put all of your essays into one single document. You'll upload that document through the SafeAssign feature on Blackboard. (The icon for it is on the main "course content" page that you see right when you log in.) When you click on SafeAssign, you'll see a link for Test #1. Click on that and follow the instructions.

**Other points:**

- Remember that this is a formal writing assignment, so keep two important things in mind:
  - (1) I'll be grading on the quality of the writing itself, in addition to looking for content-related matters. Essays not meeting the minimum standards for grammar, mechanics, and usage will receive abysmally low grades. Proofread carefully.
  - (2) I don't mind if you use secondary sources if necessary, but you had better cite them, and cite them using an acceptable formatting style. If I have to charge you with plagiarism, my standard sanction is a failing grade for the entire course.  
  
"How do I cite *The Commanding Heights* and *Oil on the Brain*?" you ask. For the documentary, cite it by disc/episode (I, II, or III) and by chapter or segment (there are about 20 of those on each disc). For *Oil on the Brain*, cite it by page number (and chapter too, if you like). Include a works cited page listing everything cited. Use a correct format for it.
- What goes into the grading? I'll be looking at these items:
  - Grammar, mechanics, and usage, as well as the overall style and quality of the writing
  - Clarity and organization
  - The content of your essay
    - Answer the question at hand, and answer it completely.
    - If asked to do so, employ the relevant ethical theories properly. (This is crucial. If you're asked to use utilitarianism to answer some ethical question, and you don't use utilitarianism to do it, I won't have any choice but to penalize the essay really nastily.
    - Include appropriate attention to detail in your discussion and arguments.
    - Defend any controversial assumptions if necessary.
    - Be rational and critically-minded.
- How should this be formatted? Put your exam together like this:
  - Have your name, the course (PHIL 318), your section (02, 03, or 04) and the date at the top of page 1.
  - You should wind up with four distinct essays, corresponding to the four questions you choose to answer. Organize everything in a coherent way, so that your answers appear in the order they appear below, with some kind of heading for each one that tells me which question you're answering, etc.
  - Double-space the text and use a commonly used font with a reasonable font size (for example, no fancy script fonts or anything bigger than 12-point font).

Available test questions are on p. 2 below.

**Test questions:**

**Part I: The Commanding Heights.** Answer two of the following three questions.

- (1) Defend your view on the following question: Who should control the commanding heights of the economy? Be very aware that this is an ethical question, and use either a utilitarian or a deontological view in defending your answer. Be sure to include specific details as to the nature of your view—who controls the commanding heights, how much, with what kind of regulation (if any), and so on. Be sure also to *defend your view very carefully and precisely* too, ideally including some appropriate material from *The Commanding Heights* to do it.
- (2) Consider this ethical question: Is “shock therapy” an acceptable way to implement market reforms in countries like Chile, Bolivia, and Poland? Answer the question using a *deontological* ethical theory.
- (3) Consider this ethical question: Was it right to implement the NAFTA agreement on free trade? Defend your answer using a *rights-based* ethical theory.

**Part II: Oil on the Brain.** Answer two of the following four questions (as in part I).

- (1) How would Milton Friedman’s view handle this question: Should “pro-rationing” of oil extraction be legally required?
- (2) Answer this question using a *utilitarian* ethical theory: Should American companies buy oil from countries where the political system is one that is far from the best? Such countries might not have representative democracy, a just system of law, or equitable treatment for all of its citizens, or it might be corrupt in some way or other. Should U.S. companies buy oil from places like that?
- (3) Would it be right for China’s government to offer sizable financial rewards to companies that win competitions to develop personal vehicles that are ultra fuel-efficient, electric, etc.? Use any theory you want to defend your answer, as long as it isn’t Friedman’s.
- (4) Here is an ethical question about how we should drive: Should we be “hypermiling”? Whether you’ve ever heard of that or not, go read this: “Beating the EPA: The whys and how of hypermiling” at <http://www.cleanmpg.com/forums/showthread.php?t=1510>. (One section describes the details of the current EPA mileage tests, and you’re safe if you skim the technical parts of that. One abbreviation might not be defined: ‘FE’ stands for ‘fuel economy.’) You must consider specific details of the article in your answer, and use *either* a utilitarian approach or a deontological one to answer the question.