**Example question: How convincing is utilitarianism? [25 marks]**

1. Intro: Utilitarianism is an unconvincing moral theory as it is both an impractical way of making moral decision and also has a flawed conception of ‘the good’ because is discounts the importance of intentions.
2. Explain Bentham’s utilitarianism. Felicific calculus etc.
3. Wrong to say that pleasure is the only good. E.g. pleasure machine
4. Mill – Higher & Lower pleasures and how this solves the pleasure machine thought experiment
5. However, people don’t reliably pursue higher pleasures. Although Mill can explain this, saying that just a higher pleasure is the one that is preferred, not necessarily pursued. But this does not solve Nozick’s experience machine because we could program in ‘higher pleasures’. Perhaps there are ways of solving that, e.g. change to preference util. instead of hedonistic but it would still face the problem of calculation.
6. Explain the problem of calculation
7. Rule utilitarianism solves this
8. However this results in worship of the rule rather than promoting greatest happiness
9. Mill – secondary principles & just because it’s hard to work out doesn’t mean that it’s wrong
10. Conclusion – utilitarianism doesn’t include intentions which are crucial to morality. Give example

**Example question: How convincing is Kant’s deontological ethics? [25 marks]**

1. Intro: Ultimately Kant’s moral theory fails because he is too focused on rationality and therefore misses the moral significance of other things, particularly human emotion, motives and consequences.
2. Explain Kant’s theory and the meanings of the terms deontological, ‘the good will’, his first formulation (inc. the two tests: contradiction in conception and contradiction in will)
3. Objection: It seems there are things which could be universalized but are not moral. E.g. the maxim: ‘black people should be enslaved by white people’. This is clearly immoral but there seems to be no logical contradiction implied by the formulation of this maxim. It seems therefore that Kant’s conception of the good must be flawed.
4. Kant can however explain why slavery is wrong: the second formulation.
5. Objection continued: there are other things which are universalizable but not moral e.g. ‘to steal from large shops when there are 6 letters in my name’. Kant says we have to be honest about our maxim, in this case, the maxim is: ‘to steal when you want to’, this clearly leads to contradiction in conception. Perhaps he is right here.
6. Objection: conflicts between duties
7. Kant’s reply. This never happens, if you think it has, you have misunderstood what at least one duty requires of us.
8. Objection: Kant misses what is important in morality when he insists we should act out of duty. E.g. visiting a friend in hospital because you care about them seems to have more moral character than, because it is your duty.
9. Kant can respond that we are allowed to be motivated by personal feelings but this should not decide what we do, duty should. Objection continued: again this seems to miss the moral importance of partiality: doing something because we love them **and** because it is our duty is one motive too many.
10. Objection: Kant doesn’t consider consequences as morally important but they clearly are. It seems obvious that we have moral responsibilities not to mistreat animals. However, this is not due to their capacity for reason but their capacity for suffering. This demonstrates that morality ought to be based in the minimizing of suffering and, in turn, the maximization of happiness. This applies equally in humans. Murder is wrong because of the suffering caused, not because of some abstract logical inconsistency.
11. Therefore Kant is wrong to focus on reason as the foundation of morality. As shown, morality is more complex than this and needs to include reference to the moral significance of the wellbeing of conscious creatures and their relationships with one another.

**Example question: How convincing is Aristotle’s virtue ethics? [25 marks]**

1. Intro: Aristotle’s theory fails as it fails to give any meaningful guidance on how to act and, even more damagingly, employs circular reasoning when defining the fundamental terms of a virtuous act and a virtuous person
2. Explain virtue ethics: instead of focusing on what is morally right to do it looks at what it is to be a good person. Function argument. Eudaimonia, focus on reason. Skill analogy.
3. Objection: Aristotle’s theory doesn’t give us guidance on how to act: conflicting virtues
4. Aristotle’s response: explain practical wisdom
   * it is impossible for virtues to conflict because with practical reason we know what virtues the situation demands and therefore can avoid conflict.
5. Objection: Still unconvincing because this is not always the case for example loyalty to a friend could require dishonesty to another person to remain trusted by your friend. What should I do?!
6. Objection that it Aristotle provides not guidance continued: sometimes you can have too much of a virtue, e.g. being too honest and upsetting people, or be too courageous and end up being rash.
7. Aristotle’s response: doctrine of the mean
8. Objection: doctrine of the mean isn’t much help, it still doesn’t give us any real guidance on how to act. E.g. How do I know the right amount of honesty/courageous in a situation?
9. Aristotle: practical wisdom again.
10. Objection: Practical wisdom is a concept with real problems: “If I have practical wisdom, I know what to do; if I don’t, simply knowing that I should do what the virtuous person would do doesn’t help!”
11. Objection: Not only does Aristotle’s theory not give us meaningful guidance on how to act, his theory is underpinned by a failure to define the key terms of ‘virtuous act’ and ‘virtuous person’ because he uses circular logic when doing so: problem of circularity
    * Possible reply: This analysis is too simple: A virtuous person is not defined merely as someone who is disposed to do virtuous actions. A virtuous person has the virtues – concerned with eudaimonia, passions and pleasure
    * Objection repeated: We can’t *tell* whether an act is virtuous without knowing whether a virtuous person would do it. And we can’t tell whether someone is virtuous without seeing whether they do virtuous acts.

**Example question: How convincing are anti-realist accounts of meta-ethics? [25 marks]**

1. Anti-realist accounts are unconvincing because they cannot account for moral progress or our ability to engage in moral reasoning and Mill gives us a good reason to believe in objective moral properties.

2. Define anti-realism

3. Explain distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism. Verification principle against cognitivism.

4. Explain emotivism as anti-realist, non-cognitive theory.

5. Objection: cannot account for moral reasoning as there is no disagreement

6. Explain prescriptivism and the advantage it has over emotivism which is that it can account for moral reasoning: making sure it is consistent with other prescriptions

7. Objection: cannot account for moral progress. Therefore, non-cognitivism fails.

8. Objection to moral anti-realism: we also have good reason to believe that moral values are real and objection: Mill’s ‘proof’ of utilitarianism

9: Anti-realist reply: this commits fallacy of equivocation AND Mill’s conclusion that desirable = happiness cannot be verified.

10: Response to reply: Mill doesn’t equivocate, he says what people desire is good EVIDENCE for what is desirable, not =. Also, verification principle renders itself meaningless so no use.