OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Natural Law

Religion and Ethics

Discuss whether an account of human purpose gives Natural Law a decisive advantage over rival ethical theories.

1,506 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

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Argument plan

Discuss whether an account of human purpose gives Natural Law a decisive advantage over rival ethical theories.

Thesis: Telos gives natural law its indispensable direction by locating morality within rational human flourishing, but it is not the strongest basis when that means a usable decision procedure: practical reason, basic goods, virtue and proportionate judgement determine what the end requires in disputed cases.

1. Aristotelian and Thomist telos unifies moral choices around objective human flourishing.

Counter-argument: A fixed human function is philosophically disputed and can confuse natural tendencies with obligations.

Interim judgement: Telos is a strong orientation only when a defensible account of rational human nature supports it.

2. Primary and secondary precepts translate the human end into public guidance.

Counter-argument: Precepts conflict, require specification and can become biologically reductive.

Interim judgement: Practical reason, rather than telos alone, supplies the decisive movement from general goods to action.

3. Finnis preserves natural law by identifying basic goods as reasons for action.

Counter-argument: His irreducible goods lack a simple hierarchy and weaken the claim that one telos decides every case.

Interim judgement: Finnis improves natural law but confirms that plural goods and practical reason are stronger immediate bases.

4. Virtue and double effect make teleological flourishing sensitive to intention and complex circumstances.

Counter-argument: Intention can be redescribed and proportionality can conceal consequentialist judgement.

Interim judgement: The theory works best as a structured practice of prudent judgement, not an algorithm generated by telos.