Daniel Immerman

Intro to Moral Philosophy

Reading Questions for October 18

These questions cover a book chapter by Jeff McMahan titled "Just War" and then several background articles on the war in Syria: "Straightforward Answers to Basic Questions about Syria's War" by Max Fisher and "In Fight for Aleppo, Tangled Alliances in Syria Add to Chaos" by Ann Bernard. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

Background:

> This week, we're looking at the morality of war. Today, we'll look at just war theory, which is a famous theory about when wars are morally acceptable. We'll first look at the theory itself and then apply it to the case of Syria.

Questions:

1. In the first paragraph on page 669, McMahan introduces three theories: pacifism, political realism and a third view that he doesn't give a name to. What are the three theories? Which do you think is right and why?

2. Then McMahan starts talking about just war theory, which is an example of the third type of theory. He introduces a distinction between jus ad bellum and jus in bello on page 670. What is this distinction? Then on pages 670-6 he runs through the jus ad bellum requirements, explaining them and offering some criticisms. What are the requirements? What are his criticisms? Is he right and why?

3. On pages 676-7 McMahan talks about two jus in bello requirements, explaining them and offering some criticisms. What are the requirements? What are his criticisms? Is he right and why?

4. I've linked to two articles about the conflict in Syria. You don't have to read them fully; they're just there to provide background as you answer the following questions: recently our presidential and vice-presidential

candidates have disagreed about whether and how America should participate in the war in Syria. Does America participating in the fight in Syria meet the conditions for just war? Do you think it is morally acceptable for America to participate in the fight in Syria right now? Why?