Ethics

Below, I have divided the material of the semester into three sections: Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas & Others. Each of these sections has 4 questions in it. I will select 2 of the questions from each section, and you will pick 1 from each to write on. That means you will write 3 essays in total, and that the questions that will appear on the exam will be chosen from those in this guide. I’m expecting that you will write about½ to 1 page for each of your 3 answers. Best of luck in your preparations. Section I: Plato1. Socrates always aimed at finding good definitions of things. What makes for a good definition? Give an example of a bad definition and of a good definition, andexplain.2. In the Republic, Socrates identified the parts of the soul. What were these parts? How does justice relate to these parts?3. What is virtue, and how does it relate to function? Give examples of different types of things, and explain what their virtues would be.4. One of our readings from the Republic included a story about someone finding a magical ring (the “ring of Gyges”). What does this story say about justice and injustice, and how should we respond to it? Section II: Aristotle1. Explain what happiness is and what virtue is. What is the connection between happiness and virtue? How do we achieve virtue? 2. Explain the virtues of courage and temperance -- what are they, what makes them different from each other, and what are their associated vices? 3. Explain the different types of justice, and provide examples of each. What makes justice different from virtues like courage and temperance? 4. For Aristotle, why do we study ethics? How does ethics differ from subjects like mathematics or physics? Does studying ethics make us good? Section III: Aquinas & Others1. (Aquinas) How does Aquinas distinguish between perfect and imperfect happiness? How can we achieve perfect happiness? 2. (Mill) what is the Utilitarian view of happiness? What makes an action right or wrong, for a Utilitarian? 3. (Kant) Explain the notion of a “good will” in Kant. What makes an action wrong, in his view? Is happiness the goal of life? 4. (Aquinas) what is the Natural Law? How do human laws relate to the natural law?