Ethics Questions – Chapter 2

This set of questions is worth 20 points (4 points per question, with 3 points for the document, 1 for the verbal discussion).

Each member of the group should read chapter 2. Then as a group, answer the questions:

1. What is an ethical theory? Why is it important to have one?
2. Describe some issues with relativism (both subjective and cultural) and ethical egoism. Do NOT just copy sentences verbatim from the text. The goal: assume someone asks “Why isn’t [relativism/egoism] a good way to make ethical decisions?” Provide a concise answer to that question (one you might actually remember. Note that a concise answer will not incorporate all the points made in the textbook… it’s up to your group to determine which argument(s) are most compelling and state them in your own words).
3. Consider Kantianism, Act Utilitarianism, Rule Utilitarianism, and Social Contract Theory. Which theory or theories do the team members find most compelling? The goal: assume someone asks “How do you make ethical decisions?” Provide a concise answer to that question (or answers, if there’s a clear difference among team members). Note that your answer should incorporate ideas from these viable theories, but it is NOT necessary for your answer to state which framework you would follow (would you really answer someone with “I follow the Kantian framework … “ - probably not!) BUT, in the verbal discussion with the advisor you should be prepared to indicate which framework(s) you found most compelling.
4. Answer question 40 from the textbook.
5. Answer question 41 from the textbook.

You should discuss and answer these questions AS A GROUP. Two requirements:

a) Write up your answers. Your document should list each question and then provide a brief answer that summarizes your discussion. This report will likely be about 1-1/2 to 2 pages, depending on formatting (i.e., we’re not looking for a long document. Concise answers are good, as long as they address the question).
b) Bring your document (hard copy) and be prepared to do an informal “report” to your advisor as part of your weekly meeting. It should be clear from this verbal report that ALL members participated.

Time estimate: You should probably allow about two hours to read the material (a bit more or less depending on your reading speed, of course). You should schedule at least an hour for the group discussion and another hour to prepare the document.
Is being concise important? Yes. For example, on job interviews:

http://www.goodjobinterviewtips.com/answer.htm

Here’s some practice writing concise sentences (also click on the link for concise sentences):

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/wordy_quiz.htm

Or more reasons why it’s important: