Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Manitoba, 2010)

“Is Sufficientarianism Sufficient? Prospects for the Sufficiency Threshold”

Department of Philosophy

Tuesday, August 18, 2015
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Scott Woodcock, Department of Philosophy, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Colin Macleod, Department of Philosophy, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Patricia Cochran, Faculty of Law, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Tatiana Gounko, Department of Education Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
The central doctrine of sufficientarianism is that there is a certain threshold below which people are said to be objectively "badly-off," and that providing benefits to people who fall into this category has a special moral urgency. A big part of sufficientarianism's success as a theory, then, relies on the ability to define the threshold in a manner that is non-arbitrary and that justifies a large difference in moral consideration between people who are on opposite sides of the threshold. This thesis examines some attempts to define such a threshold, and eventually concludes that no such threshold is available to us. However, while sufficientarianism may not work as a theory, sufficiency thresholds remain useful due to their practical ability to give useful instruction to policy makers in order to assist in resource distribution and the promotion of social justice.