Kantianism

- Good will: the desire to do the right thing

- Immanuel Kant: Only thing in the world good without qualification is a good will.

- Reason should cultivate desire to do right thing.
**Categorical Imperative**

*(1st Formulation)*

Act only from moral rules that you can at the same time will to be universal moral laws.

**Illustration of 1st Formulation**

- Question: Can a person in dire straits make a promise with the intention of breaking it later?

- Proposed rule: “I may make promises with the intention of later breaking them.”

- The person in trouble wants his promise to be believed so he can get what he needs.

- Universalize rule: Everyone may make & break promises

- Everyone breaking promises would make promises unbelievable, contradicting desire to have promise believed

- The rule is flawed. The answer is “No.”
**Categorical Imperative**

(2nd Formulation)

Act so that you treat both yourself and other people as ends in themselves and never only as a means to an end.

This is usually an easier formulation to work with than the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative.

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**Utilitarianism**

- Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
- An action is good if it benefits someone
- An action is bad if it harms someone
- Utility: tendency of an object to produce happiness or prevent unhappiness for an individual or a community
- Happiness = advantage = benefit = good = pleasure
- Unhappiness = disadvantage = cost = evil = pain
Principle of Utility
(Greatest Happiness Principle)

An action is right (or wrong) to the extent that it increases (or decreases) the total happiness of the affected parties.

Act Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism
  - Morality of an action has nothing to do with intent
  - Focuses on the consequences
  - A consequentialist theory

- Act utilitarianism
  - Add up change in happiness of all affected beings
  - Sum > 0, action is good
  - Sum < 0, action is bad
**Rule Utilitarianism**

- We ought to adopt moral rules which, if followed by everyone, will lead to the greatest increase in total happiness.

- Act utilitarianism applies Principle of Utility to individual actions.

- Rule utilitarianism applies Principle of Utility to moral rules.

**Social Contract Theory**

- Thomas Hobbes
  - We implicitly accept a social contract
    - Establishment of moral rules to govern relations among citizens
    - Government capable of enforcing these rules

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
  - In ideal society, no one above rules
  - That prevents society from enacting bad rules
James Rachel’s Definition

“Morality consists in the set of rules, governing how people are to treat one another, that rational people will agree to accept, for their mutual benefit, on the condition that others follow those rules as well.”

Kinds of Rights

• Negative right: A right that another can guarantee by leaving you alone

• Positive right: A right obligating others to do something on your behalf

• Absolute right: A right guaranteed without exception

• Limited right: A right that may be restricted based on the circumstances
**John Rawls’s Principles of Justice**

- Each person may claim a “fully adequate” number of basic rights and liberties, so long as these claims are consistent with everyone else having a claim to the same rights and liberties.

- Any social and economic inequalities must
  - Be associated with positions that everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to achieve
  - Be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle)

**Case for Social Contract Theory**

- Framed in language of rights

- Explains why people act in self-interest without common agreement

- Provides clear analysis of certain citizen/government problems

  ➢ Workable ethical theory
Case Against Social Contract Theory

• No one signed contract

• Some actions have multiple characterizations

• Conflicting rights problem

• May unjustly treat people who cannot uphold contract

Morality of Breaking the Law

• Social contract theory perspective

• Kantian perspective

• Rule utilitarian perspective

• Act utilitarian perspective
Morality of Breaking the Law

• Social contract theory perspective
• Kantian perspective
• Rule utilitarian perspective
• Act utilitarian perspective

See? Piracy is a serious problem.
Yeah, but have you heard about that new movie? It's so inconvenient!

What are they supposed to do? They have to protect it somehow.
That's what they say, anyway. They blow it way out of proportion.

So you're not going to buy it?
Shit yeah, I'm gonna play it.

I'm just not gonna buy it.