

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2018/19 2nd semester
PHIL 3833 Consequentialism and its critics
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Time: Monday 13:30-16:15
Venue: ELB 202

Course overview:

This course aims to be a comprehensive introduction to Consequentialism. It will introduce and critically examine the major theories in Consequentialism, such as Act and rule Consequentialism, Motive and Virtue Consequentialism, and Kantian Consequentialism. The second part of the course will focus on the current critics on Consequentialism, some of the following topics will be discussed: Aggregation, Agent-relativity and Agent-neutrality, Demandingness, and Integrity.

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic concepts and major theories in Consequentialism.
- Understand the strengths and weakness of Consequentialism.
- Demonstrate familiarity with major arguments in the current philosophical debates over Consequentialism and its critics
- Acquire skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about the debate on Consequentialism and normative ethics in general.
- Enhance the ability of logical reasoning and argumentation by discussing ethical issues related to Consequentialism

Learning activities and workload:

- 1. Lecture:** 3 hours each week.
- 2. In Class Discussion and Presentation:** Students are required to discuss and present reading material assigned

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Discussion and Presentation	In class Discussion and Presentation	25%
Mid-term Paper	Short essay	25%
Term Paper	Long Essay	50%

Details of course website:

Lecture notes and information on assignments will be posted on the Blackboard Learn website.

Topics & schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture	Discussion
1	7 Jan	Introduction: From Utilitarianism to Consequentialism	Philip Pettit, "Consequentialism"
2	14 Jan	Consequentialism and Deontology	J.S.Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch.2
3	21 Jan	Act and rule Consequentialism	Samuel Freeman, "Utilitarianism, Deontology, and the Priority of Right"
4	28 Jan	Subjective and Objective Consequentialism	Brad Hooker, <i>Ideal code, Real World</i> , ch.4
5	4 Feb	<i>Lunar new year holiday</i>	
6	11 Feb	Motive and Virtue Consequentialism	Frank Jackson, "Decision-theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection."
7	18 Feb	Hedonistic and Pluralistic Consequentialism	Robert. M. Adams, "motive utilitarianism"
8	25 Feb	Kantian Consequentialism	Amartya Sen, "Utilitarianism and Welfarism"
9	4 Mar	Critics: Aggregation	David Cummiskey, "Kantian Consequentialism"
10	11 Mar	Critics: Agent-relativity and Agent-neutrality	Alastair Norcross, "Comparing Harms: Headaches and Human Lives."
11	18 Mar	Critics: Options and Constraints	Thomas Nagel, <i>The view from nowhere</i> , ch.9
12	25 Mar	Critics: Demandingness	Samuel Scheffler, "Prerogatives without restrictions"
13	1 Apr	<i>Reading Week</i>	
14	8 Apr	Critics: Moral Alienation and Integrity	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
15	15 Apr	Conclusion	Bernard Williams, "a critique of utilitarianism"

Recommended learning resources:

Cummiskey, David (1996). <i>Kantian Consequentialism</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
Frankena, W. K. (1963). <i>Ethics</i> . Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
Frey, R.G. (Eds.) (1984). <i>Utility and Rights</i> . Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Griffin, James. (1986). <i>Well-being: Its Meaning, Measurement, and Moral Importance</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Hare, R. M. (1981). <i>Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point</i> . Oxford: Clarendon.
Herman, Barbara. (1993). <i>The Practice of Moral Judgment</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Heyd, David. (1982). <i>Supererogation: Its Status in Ethical Theory</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.
Hooker, Brad. (2000). <i>Ideal code, Real World: A Rule-consequentialist Theory of Morality</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Kagan, Shelly. (1989). *The Limits of Morality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kagan, Shelly. (1998). *Normative Ethics*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. (1953). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (Paton, H. J. Trans.). London: Hutchison. (Original work published 1785).
- Kant, Immanuel. (1956). *Critique of Practical Reason*. (Beck, L.W. Trans.). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing. (Original work published 1788).
- Kant, Immanuel. (1965). *The Metaphysics of Morals*. (Ladd, J. Trans.). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing. (Original work published 1798).
- Korsgaard, Christine. (1996). *The Sources of Normativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackie, J. L. (1977). *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. Penguin: Harmondsworth.
- Mill, J. S. (1998). *Utilitarianism*. (ed. by Crisp, Roger.). New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1861).
- Moore, G. E. (1903). *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mulgan, Tim. (2001). *The Demands of Consequentialism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Nagel, Thomas (1986). *The View from Nowhere*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nozick, Robert. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. New York : Basic Books.
- Parfit, Derek. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Parfit, Derek. (2011). *On What Matters*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rawls, John. (1999). *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ross, W. D. (1930). *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Scanlon, T. M (1998). *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Sidgwick, Henry. (1907). *The Methods of Ethics* (7th ed.). Macmillan: London.
- Scheffler, Samuel (1994). *The Rejection of Consequentialism: A Philosophical Investigation of the Considerations Underlying Rival Moral Conceptions: Revised Edition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Smart, J. J. C & Williams, B. (1973). *Utilitarianism: For and Against*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, Bernard. (1985). *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Wood, Allen. (2008). *Kantian Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grade Description for Essays

	Argument	Theory Analysis	Writing Style
[Excellent] A (85-92) Or [Very Good] A- (80-84)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You provide a detailed and specific thesis statement that clearly describes the main claim(s) you will be arguing for and indicates how and what you plan to say adds something to the discussion, rather than mostly repeating the material we have read. - You defend your claims in a well-developed way by giving and explaining your reasons for your position. - You identify likely objections, present them charitably and respond to them effectively. - You carefully explain the theoretical and/or practical implications of your argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You provide an accurate account of the relevant parts of the theory. - You illuminate the relationship between the theory's conclusion(s) and its arguments. - You quote relevant key passages with proper citations. - You define key terms, and explain their role and how they relate to each other. - You discuss what the thinker would probably have said about an issue by drawing on what he/she did say about other related matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You choose your words carefully. The language is precise rather than vague, natural rather than awkward, straightforward rather than ostentations. - Each piece of the essay is presented in a way that makes it clear to the reader how it is relevant to your thesis - Where appropriate, you use real or hypothetical examples to help illustrate abstract points.
[Good] B+ (76-79), B (72-75) or B-(68-71)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement is clear, but general and unambitious. - The reasons given to support claims are occasionally weak or too brief. Some claims in need of defense are merely asserted. - Some key objections are not considered, or the response is weak or too brief. - Theoretical and/or practical implications are not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are minor inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some small points are overlooked. - The theory's arguments for its conclusion(s) are described, but the relationship between them is not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise. - Use of quotations is sometimes missing or erratic or without proper citations. - Some key concepts are not defined, or are defined carelessly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The language is generally clear, but occasionally lacks precision or naturalness or desirable simplicity. - The relevance of small parts of the essay is not made clear. - Illustrative examples are used rarely or not at all.
[Fair] C+ (64-67) C (60-63) or C-(56-59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement is absent or insignificant or confused. - The reasons given to support claims are usually weak or too brief. Many claims in need of defense are merely asserted. - Objections are not considered, or they are only a straw-man version, or the response is ineffective. - Implications are not identified, or they are asserted without explanation. - The argument is likely to contain contradictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are significant inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some major points are overlooked. - The theory's conclusion(s) are described without reference to its argument. - Use of quotations is missing or erratic or without proper citations. - Key concepts are not defined, or are defined incorrectly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The language is often unclear, due to being vague or awkward or ostentatious. - The relevance of significant parts of the essay is not made clear. - Illustrative examples are used incorrectly or not at all.
[Pass] D+ (53-55) D (50-52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student demonstrates an awareness of what an argument is, and tries to make one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student grasps at least the main features of some of the theory's most important points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The language is intelligible more often than not.

Grade Descriptors for Tutorial Performance

Attendance: Note that marks cannot be given for mere attendance, but marks may be deducted for absences.

[Excellent] A (85-92) Or [Very Good] (80-84)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- You concisely explain the relevant material in a way that clarifies how the various pieces are meant to fit together.- You raise and clearly explain your own insightful questions of interpretation about the material.- You raise and clearly explain your own challenging yet fair objections to the material.- You construct charitable replies on the author's behalf to your points, and provide your own rejoinders.- You carefully discuss the significant of your points and their theoretical or practical implications.- In discussion, you demonstrate a willingness to share newly formed ideas, and you effectively begin to develop ideas on the spot through constructive yet critical interaction with others.
[Good] B+ (76-79), B (72-75) or B-(68-71)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explanation of material contains minor errors, or is correct but adds little or nothing.- Questions/objections are relevant, but obvious.- Author's reply is absent or oversimplified.- Implications are not discussed or are only briefly explained.- Good effort at discussion, but hesitant to take risks and has difficulty developing ideas on the spot.
[Fair] C+ (64-67) C (60-63) or C-(56-59)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explanation of material contains significant errors and oversights.- Questions/objections are often confused or unclear.- Author's reply is absent or mistaken.- Implications are not discussed or are confused or unclear.- Little or no effort at discussion.
[Pass] D+ (53-55) D (50-52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- You attend and show a reasonable interest in the discussion and a willingness to participate minimally if called upon.

Feedback for evaluation:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with lecturer.
2. Students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

Contact:

Lecturer	
Name:	Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Office Location:	KHB 414
Consultation Hours	Thur 10:30-12:00
Telephone:	3943-1519
Email:	samsonkpn@cuhk.edu.hk

Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.