

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2021/22 1st semester
PHIL 3833 Consequentialism and its critics
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Time: Thursday 10:30-13:15
Teaching Mode: Face to face
Venue: LSK 212

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:** 1.25 hours each week.
- 2. In Class Discussion and Presentation:** 1.25 hours each week, Students are required to discuss and present reading material assigned.

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Discussion and Presentation	In class Discussion and Presentation	30%
Mid-term Paper	Short essay	25%
Term Paper	Long Essay	45%

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Details of course website:

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

Topics & schedule:

Week	Date	Discussion	Lecture
1	Sept 9		Introduction: From Consequentialism to Utilitarianism
2	Sept 16	J.S.Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i> , ch.2	Consequentialism and Deontology
3	Sept 23	Philip Pettit, "Consequentialism and Respect for Persons"	Act and Rule Consequentialism
4	Sept 30	J. J. C. Smart, "Extreme and Restricted Utilitarianism", & Brad Hooker, <i>Ideal code, Real World</i> , ch.4 (selection)	Subjective and Objective Consequentialism
5	Oct 7	Frank Jackson, "Decision-theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection."	Motive and Virtue Consequentialism
6	<u>Oct 14*</u>	Robert. M. Adams, "Motive Utilitarianism"	Hedonistic and Pluralistic Consequentialism
7	Oct 21	Amartya Sen, "Plural Utility"	Kantian Consequentialism
8	Oct 28	David Cummiskey, "Kantian Consequentialism"	Critics: Aggregation
9	Nov 4	Alastair Norcross, "Comparing Harms: Headaches and Human Lives."	Critics: Agent-relativity and Agent-neutrality
10	Nov 11	Thomas Nagel, <i>The view from nowhere</i> , ch.9	Critics: Options and Constraints
11	Nov 18	Samuel Scheffler, "Prerogatives without Restrictions"	Critics: Demandingness
12	Nov 25	Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"	Critics: Moral Alienation and Integrity
13	Dec 2	Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism" (selection)	Conclusion

Recommended learning resources:

Brandt, Richard. (1979). <i>A Theory of the Good and the Right</i> , New York: Oxford University Press.
Broome, John. (1991). <i>Weighing Goods</i> , Oxford: Basil Blackwell
Cummiskey, David (1996). <i>Kantian Consequentialism</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
Darwall, Stephen. (ed.). (2003). <i>Consequentialism</i> , Oxford: Blackwell.
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.
Heyd, David. (1982). <i>Supererogation: Its Status in Ethical Theory</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Hooker, Brad. (2000). *Ideal code, Real World: A Rule-consequentialist Theory of Morality*. 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).
- Korsgaard, Christine. (1996). *The Sources of Normativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, David. (1965). *Forms and Limits of Utilitarianism*, Oxford: Clarendon 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 Vol.1*. 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.

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	
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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.