

# Historical Brief of Ethical Systems

---

## Lesson 2

*"Conduct requires practice so that it becomes a habit."*

*Aristotle*

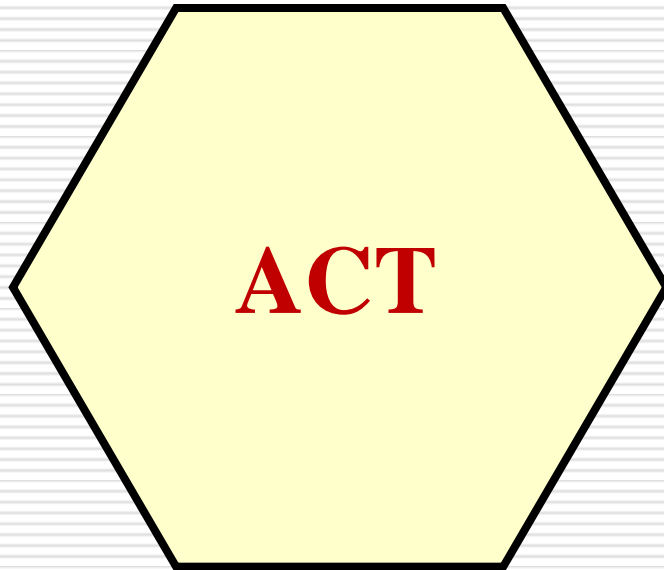


***A lecture series on ethics by Professor Bonnie Black***

# Profile of Two Types Of Ethical Systems

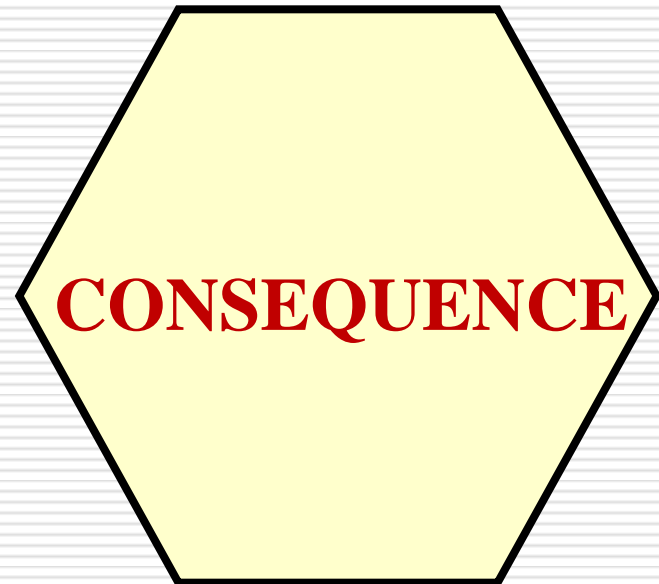
---

□ DEONTOLOGICAL



***Formalism***

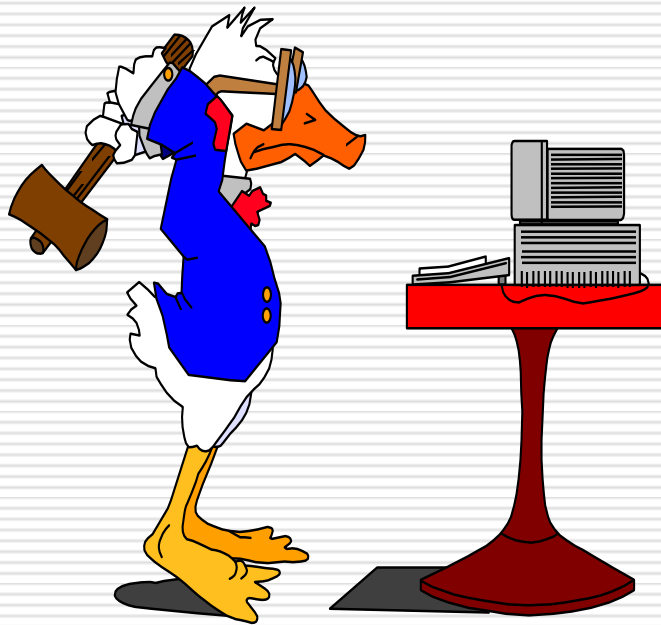
□ TELEOLOGICAL



***Utilitarianism***

# DEONTOLOGICAL

---



- ❑ Focuses on "ACT"
- ❑ Concerned with nature of act being judged NOT the consequences

Outcome can be bad but act is good.

**EXAMPLES!**

# EXAMPLES

---

- ❑ Help car accident victim and you paralyze him.
- ❑ You leave your child to save your drowning neighbor and your child gets hit and killed by a car.
- ❑ You assist an elderly woman being robbed and the suspect falls, hits his head and dies.

# Ethical Formalism

---

A Deontological Theory:

*Carrying out Obligation and Duty*



# Ethical Formalism

---

- By Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
- Focus on one's **duty** beyond written laws (intrinsic)
- Focus on **intent/ motive of act**
- Universal law applies to everyone
- Act only moral if free will exists
  - Otherwise act is "neutral"

# Kant Believed:

---

- ❑ If something is wrong, it is always wrong
- ❑ Can't control consequences so must act morally without regard for consequences
- ❑ Morality set by principles
- ❑ Absolutist view



# Criticism Of Kant's View

---



Didn't kill but family is dead.

- ☐ Morality is limited to duty
- ☐ How do we deal with conflicting duty?
  - Protect children vs. killing is wrong
- ☐ Motive and intent are more important than result
- ☐ No flexibility/exceptions
  - Is lying always bad?



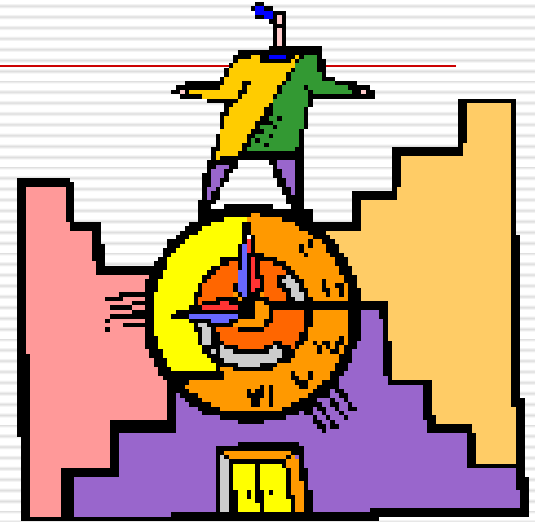
# TELEOLOGICAL

---

□ Focuses on  
“CONSEQUENCES”

- Act could be bad but consequence is good—results count

What are some examples?



# EXAMPLES

---



- ☐ Kill to save family.
- ☐ Sell drugs but send all of the money to family in Mexico.
- ☐ Have an abortion to save mother's life.
- ☐ Lie to spare feelings.
- ☐ Steal to buy medicine for child.

**CONSEQUENCES GOOD!**

# Utilitarianism

---

*A Teleological Theory:*

*Measuring Consequences*



Jeremy Bentham

# Utilitarianism

---

- ❑ Originated By Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)

- ❑ Contributes to the “good” of the majority

- ❑ Society prevails over individual



*Make world better!*

# EXAMPLES

---

**Benefits All**

- ❑ Assuming death penalty deters, eliminating appeal time even if a few innocent people get killed is moral!
- ❑ Assuming war in Iraq saves American lives, moral even if some people die.



# Problems with Utilitarianism

---

## Can't predict consequences

- Steal drugs but child dies.
- Officer doesn't ticket drunk father but he dies in car accident.

## Weigh consequences for self serving reasons

## Little concern for individual rights

- Blow up plane with virus.
- Bomb city to end war (Hiroshima).

End Justifies Means!

# Aristotle's Ethics Of Virtue

---



*Aristotle*

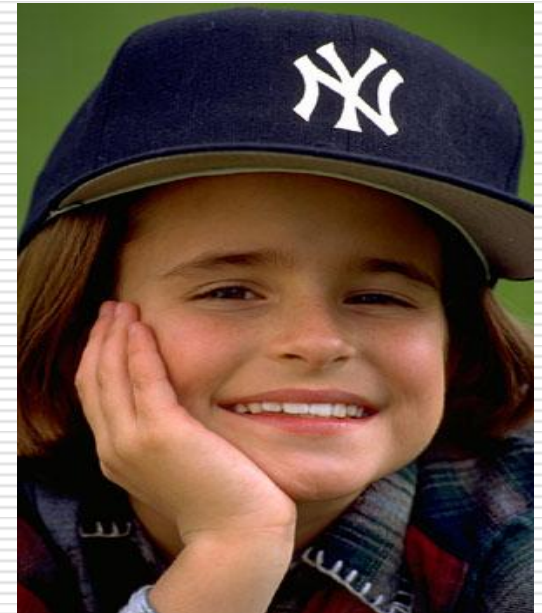
- ❑ What is a good person?
- ❑ Focuses on acting in a way to get a good result
- ❑ Ultimate good is happiness
- ❑ Focuses on individual (behaviors)

Happiness

# What is a Virtue?

---

- ❑ Aristotle called them **"Excellences"**
- ❑ Habit of making the right choice
- ❑ Overcome bad—temptations
- ❑ People learn to be good or bad

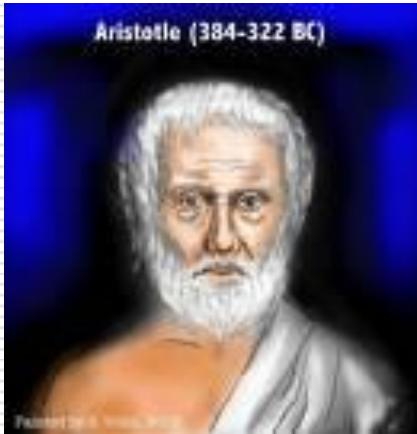




# Habit of Virtues

---

- Ethical conduct requires practice



*"We are what we repeatedly do."*

Aristotle

# Native American Folk Tale

---

An elder explained, *"Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time."* When asked which dog wins, the elder reflected and replied, ***"The one I feed the most."***

***The plan is simple, feed the good with positive reinforcement and a loving environment.***



***Source: Student paper, AJS 123***

---

# Do virtues make-up your character?



# ***Six Pillars of Character***

---

## ☐ **Trustworthiness**

- Honesty, Integrity, Reliability, Loyalty

## ☐ **Respect**

- Civility, Autonomy, Tolerance

## ☐ **Responsibility**

- Accountability, Pursuit of Excellence, Self-Restraint

## ☐ **Fairness**

- Process, Impartiality, Equity

## ☐ **Caring**

- Responsible for Others, Empathy

## ☐ **Citizenship**

- Civic Duty, Contribution

# A Picture Says It All

---



**Character images count! How are you presenting yourself on Face Book and My Space?**

# Think About It – What Would You Do?

---



## **Life Boat Dilemma**

1. 35 year old male, broken leg and hip
2. 80 year old male
3. 5 year old girl
4. 20 year old woman, mother of girl
5. you

**You have food and water for 4, for 5 days!**

---

# What are you?

---

## ☐ **Deontological**

- Can't kill, everyone lives
- Everyone dies

## ☐ **Teleological**

- Kill or commit suicide so others live longer
- Live longer if some die – could survive

# Comparing the Differences

---

## Formalism

### *Moral Duty*

- Principles
- Consequences of act irrelevant
- Act is wrong; it is wrong

## Utilitarianism

### *Good Consequences*

- Make world better place
- Greatest benefit to all
- Majority rules

## Virtue Ethics

### *Happiness*

- Good conduct-habits
- Driven by virtues
- Good can be learned



# Conclusion

---

- ☐ Why do you think most people are relativists rather than absolutists?
- ☐ Would you like your children to model your character? Are you proud of it?



*Lesson 2 Tool Box*

This lecture and associated materials are to be used for this class only. Permission from the instructor is required for any other use or duplication.