

Philosophy 160 – Ethical Theory

Winter 2024, MWF 1:00-1:50; RWAC 0426

Prof. Saba Bazargan-Forward

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to develop a mastery of Consequentialist theories of ethics. Consequentialism is an ethical theory that asserts that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined solely by the goodness or badness of its consequences. Consequentialist theories focus on the idea that the “end justifies the means”. In this course we will: analyze various types of Consequentialism, criticize such theories, and in doing so consider alternatives to Consequentialism.

Grading

Tests – There will be an in-class, closed-book, closed-note test every Friday. (There are three exceptions: on Jan. 12, Jan. 19, and Feb. 23 the tests will be take-home; the prompts will be made available that day on Canvas and you will submit your tests on there. There will be no class on those days). In every instance the test will be a single short-answer essay question. Each test will be worth 10% of your final grade. There will be no additional final examination for this class. Each test will cover the material presented that week.

Excuses – There will be no ‘make-up’ test. I will grant exemptions only in the case of serious emergencies provided suitable evidence is provided afterwards, and for religious observances provided I am informed beforehand.

Class Format – All classes will be live and in person, except for class on Jan 17, which will be held live on Zoom. This session will *not* be recorded.

GRADING SCALE

100-94	A
<94-90	A-
<90-87	B+
<87-84	B
<84-80	B-
<80-77	C+
<77-74	C
<74-70	C-
<70-61	D
<61-0	F

Readings

All readings for this class are available on the class’s Canvas page.

Contact

When you email me, be sure to include your full name and your student ID. Please email me only from your official UCSD email address; otherwise it might be misidentified as spam. Office hours are Wednesdays from 12-12:50 in RWAC 0458, and by appointment.

Psychological Services

CAPS is an indispensable resource for student life at UCSD. They provide free, confidential, psychological counseling and crisis services for registered UCSD students. CAPS is providing alternate ways of meeting, including video consultations. For more information, please visit [here](#), or contact 858.534.3755.

Academic Integrity

Any suspected violations of academic integrity will be turned over to the Dean of Judicial Affairs. Details on what counts as cheating can be found here: academicintegrity.ucsd.edu. Consult the site or me if you have questions. I will submit all papers to Turnitin, which will determine whether the author has plagiarized from other papers or from Internet sources.

Special Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations due to a disability should provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please arrange to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations can be arranged. For further info, see: disabilities.ucsd.edu

Readings & Topics

We will cover the following topics and readings in the order presented below. We will spend as much time as necessary to master each of the readings.

Introduction: Consequentialism

- (no readings)

Utilitarianism and its Critics

- Bernard Williams – selections from *Utilitarianism: For & Against*
- John Rawls – selections from *A Theory of Justice*

Honoring versus Promoting Values

- Philip Pettit – ‘Consequentialism’
- Jennie Louise – ‘Relativity of Value and the Consequentialist Umbrella’

Agent-Centered Constraints and Deontology

- Robert Nozick – selections from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*
- Samuel Scheffler – selections from *The Rejection of Consequentialism*
- Thomas Nagel – selections from *The View from Nowhere*
- Stephen Darwall – ‘Agent-Centered Restrictions from the Inside Out’

Self-Effacing Consequentialism

- Peter Railton – ‘Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality’
- Derek Parfit – selection from *Reasons and Persons*

Consequentialism and Rights

- T.M. Scanlon – ‘Rights, Goals, and Fairness’
- Thomas Nagel – ‘The Value of Inviolability’

Other Forms of Consequentialism

- Michael Slote – ‘Satisficing Consequentialism’
- Philip Pettit – ‘Satisficing Consequentialism’ (response)