Week 3: Deontology
January 25, 2023
Harry Truman and Elizabeth Anscombe
• Thinking in contrast to thinking in terms of consequences
• Recap Utilitarianism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilitarianism</th>
<th>Kantianism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Consequentialist</td>
<td>• Deontological</td>
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<td>• The consequences are most important.</td>
<td>• The motive is what matters, not the consequences.</td>
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<td>• Pleasure over Pain; calculation of “utility” is mathematical.</td>
<td>• The Categorical Imperative reigns supreme.</td>
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Deontological ethics or deontology (from Greek word, *deon*, "obligation, duty") is the normative ethical position that judges the morality of an action based on rules. It is sometimes described as "duty-" or "obligation-" or "rule-" based ethics, because rules "bind you to your duty."
Deontologists

- An act is right if, and only if, it conforms to the relevant moral obligation; and it is wrong if, and only if, it violates the relevant moral obligation.

- They argue that the consequences of an action are irrelevant to moral evaluation.

- They emphasize that the value of an action lies in motive, especially motives of obligation.
Kant’s Moral Theory

• Historical Background
  ▪ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

• Kantianism is based on the writing of philosopher Kant.

• He believed that people should be guided by universal moral laws. For these laws to apply to all rational humans, they must be based on reason.

• Kant said that the only thing that is good without qualification is a good will.
Kant’s Moral Theory

- Two concepts in Kant’s moral theory
  - Good will
  - Duty
Humans are special
Kant’s Moral Theory

- Two principles
  - The **Hypothetical Imperative**
  - The **Categorical Imperative**
Hypothetical Imperative

- It defines the means taken to achieve an end
- These imperatives command conditionally on your having a relevant desire.

- “If I want to obtain $e$, then I must obtain means $m$.”
  - E.g. “If I want to buy a house, then I must work hard to make enough money for a down payment.”
  - “I must study to pass this exam.”
Why categorical imperative?

- Human beings are imperfect creatures and hence need rules imposed upon.
- These rules enjoin us to do or not to do something thus we conceive them as necessitating our action.
Categorical Imperative: Two Formulations
In Short... summarizing Kant’s Moral Theory
In Short... summarizing Kant’s Moral Theory
An Example: Lying
Many of Kant’s contemporaries thought that his insistence on absolute rules was strange
The Case For and Against Kantianism