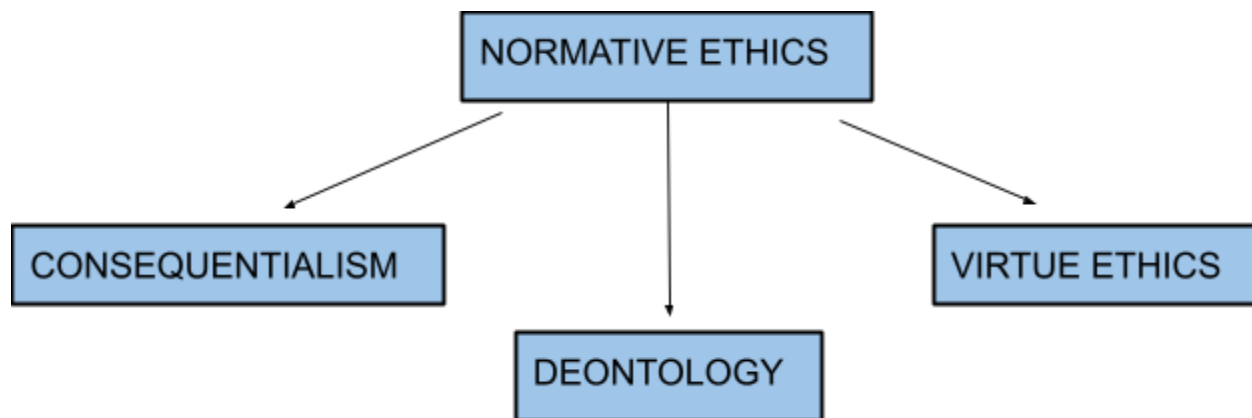


Philosophy for Speech & Debate:
Introduction to philosophy and utilitarianism

What is philosophy? A starting point.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY

Most philosophical arguments you will encounter are considered normative ethics. Normative ethics is defined as that part of moral philosophy, or ethics, concerned with criteria of what is morally right and wrong. Simply put, it is the study of ethical actions. Normative ethics can be categorized into three categories.



Consequentialism: the doctrine that the morality of an action is to be judged solely by its consequences.

Examples: utilitarianism, egoism

Deontology: the morality of an action should be based on whether that action itself is right or wrong under a series of rules, rather than based on the consequences of the action.

Examples: Kant's categorical imperative, Rawls's Veil of ignorance

Virtue ethics: ethical theories which emphasize virtues of mind, character and sense of honesty.

The main pillars of normative ethics, deciding what is right and wrong are best described through the philosophers and their philosophies they have developed on what is morally right.

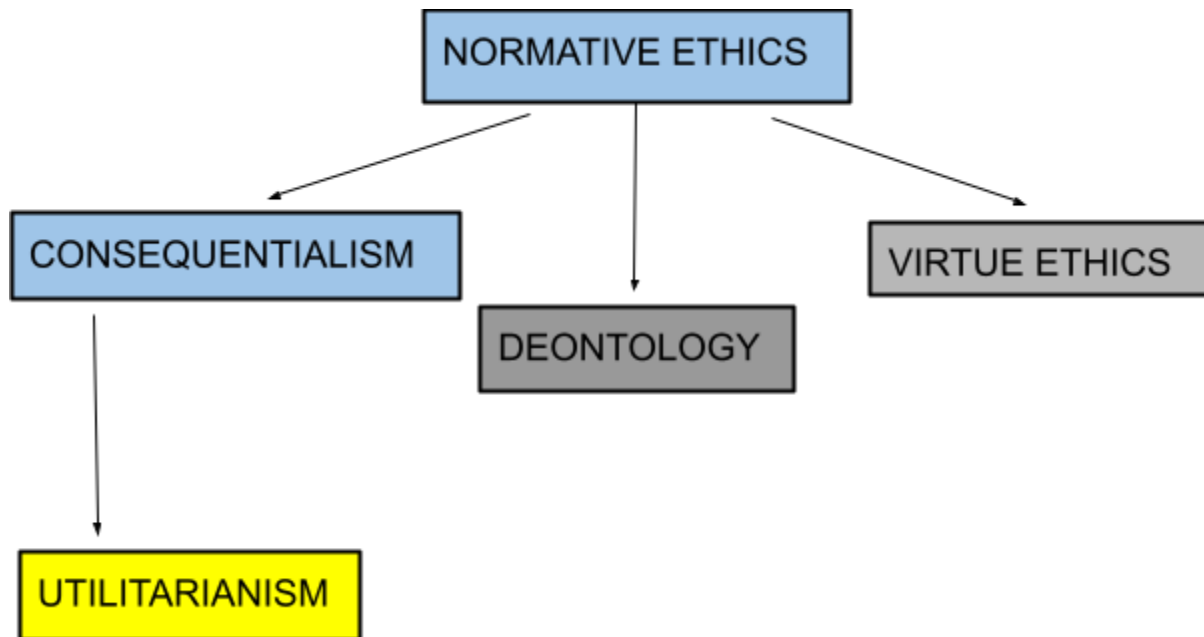
UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism: the doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority.

Commonly heard as "The greatest good for the greatest number."

Utilitarianism is one of the most powerful and persuasive approaches to normative ethics ([Driver, 14](#)). It focuses on the utility of the act, and producing the best outcome for the largest number of people. Utilitarianism falls under consequentialism in the approaches to normative ethics. Common philosophers quoted are Jeremy Bentham & John Stewart Mills.

Utilitarianism explained, click [here](#) to watch me!



Activities Everything submitted will be compiled into a team drive for future use. Please send via google docs to geyerk@fargoschools.org

Activity 1-Utilitarianism in our culture

Instructions: In the popular television show Star Trek, the lead character Spock said the famous quotation “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one”. Utilitarianism has shown up in our favorite movies, shows, and songs. To better understand utilitarianism, find 5 moments, from different movies, shows, books, or songs that you enjoy. Type it out with a brief description of how that quotation, plot, event etc. is an example of an utilitarianism approach to problem solving. Your description can be any length, but should accurately link the moment to utilitarianism.

Example: Star Trek, Spock

“The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.”

Activity 2 - Team memes

Instructions: Memes and gifs have become an integral part of our popular culture. They have transcended from social media, and have found themselves in commercials, news, and even in the classroom. Memes are capable of conveying a message in a short gif or photo to a large audience. While memes may be a bright spot when we scroll through our social media feeds, their creation can be a bit more challenging than meets the eye. Can you create a meme?

Create a meme, by using an image or gif of your choosing to convey what utilitarianism to future debaters. Your meme should be school appropriate, however, that doesn’t mean it cannot be funny, unique, or silly! Create up to 5 memes that best explain the elements of utilitarianism. Focus on different elements of the philosophy. If you are stuck on ideas, consider going back to activity one, and draw inspiration from there.

Activity 3-Cutting cards

Philosophies like utilitarianism have stood the test of time. However, more than one philosopher is responsible for the works we research and study. The most popular in the debate community are Jeremy Bentham, John Stewart Mills, and Peter Singer. Each philosopher has different ways of viewing utilitarianism, and these differences can matter in rounds.

Instructions: Research applicable works of literature on the listed utilitarianist. Cut, at minimum, 2 cards for each philosopher, 1 supporting utilitarianism and a philosophy and 1 that critiques it. Remember to use proper debate cutting techniques!