

Utilitarianism.

Scarre's (1996, Ch1) *Utilitarianism*, breaks down utilitarian theories into five tenets:

1. *Welfarism: goodness consists in well-being.*¹
2. *Consequentialism: an action X is morally right only in virtue of X having good consequences.*
3. *Aggregativism: It's possible to sum the amount of goodness in the lives of individuals to determine the overall goodness of the lives of the group.*
4. *Maximalism: If X produces more aggregate good than any of its alternatives, you must do X.*
5. *Universalism: A person has no special moral obligations to some people but not others.*²

You'll be split into five groups (one for each tenet) and address the following questions:

Q1. What seems plausible about the tenet (i.e. why should someone believe it?)

Q2. Raise an objection to the tenet. How could the utilitarian respond?

Q3. Make up your own moral theory that rejects the tenet and maintains every other tenet of utilitarian theories.

¹ Group 1 – Start by assuming hedonism, then consider a variation on utilitarianism that makes other claims about well-being.

² In Bentham's time, Universalism was an objection to more parochial moral theories (e.g. only having obligations to other Christians). But utilitarianism is still universalist in the sense that from the moral point of view, your friends and loved ones don't (morally) matter more than other sentient beings.