

A Romp Through Ethics for Complete Beginners

**Session Seven:
Making up your Mind**

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Last week we:

- learned about consequentialism**
- considered whether there are counterexamples to utilitarianism**
- considered the many different interpretations of utilitarianism**
- reflected on whether there are different qualities of happiness**
- reflected on the distinction between ‘act’ and ‘rule’ utilitarianism**

We have now finished our romp...

...through the different moral theories...

...and this week we are going to compare and contrast them...

...to see which we like best

Let's first though have a run-through of all of them

Aristotle argued that...

...the right action is that which is performed by a virtuous person....

...a person who knows what is right, does what is right...

....and does what is right for the right reason

Hume argued that the right action is that...

...for which a true judge...

...one who adopts a stable and general perspective on the world...

...will feel approbation

Kant argues that the right action is that which...

... accords with the moral law...

**....and is performed out of reverence for that
law**

Finally Mill argues that the right action is that which...

...produces the greatest happiness of the greatest number

So let' s think about each one...

...and compare and contrast them with each other...

...but YOU are going to do this not me!

The objectives of this course were that at the end of it you would:

- be able to say whether any of the moral theories we have considered strikes you as the *right* one and if so why;**
- have some idea how the different theories might consistently be used together if more than one of them is considered to have a place in our moral thinking;**
- be able to articulate the most serious objection(s) to the views you have formulated for yourself;**

Can you do all these things? I hope so!

Where to go from here:

Further reading:

the other reading in the set text. At the end of each chapter you'll find even more suggestions for further reading.

Online courses

There are ten online courses in philosophy run by OUDCE. You can find them here:

<http://onlinecourses.conted.ox.ac.uk/subjects/philosophy.php>

Podcasts

If you have enjoyed this course you might enjoy listening to my podcasts You'll find them on the Oxford site of iTunesU along with all sorts of other podcasts made by Oxford philosophers, and other Oxford academics:

<http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>

Evening and Weekend Courses

OUDCE has many evening and weekend courses in philosophy, and in many other subjects. You might like to check out our website here:

<http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>

The Philosophical Society

OUDCE's thriving Philosophical Society currently has nearly 260 members. Membership currently costs £12 a year. If you can't get to Oxford as a member you can use the discussion forums on the society's website to discuss all sorts of issues with other members. You will find details of benefits and of how to apply for membership on the website: <http://oxfordphilsoc.org/>