

## Magis Core Designated Ethics Supporting Information for Faculty on Moral Theories and Principles

## Learning Objective 5P2

Students will apply fundamental moral theories and principles, such as consequentialism, deontology, and/or virtue theory in a chosen academic discipline, profession, or sphere of ethical responsibility.

Theory of Ethics and Representative Exponents	Basic Structure and Principles	Noteworthy Features	Applications within Sample Disciplines
<p><b>Virtue Ethics</b></p> <p>Historical Exponents: Aristotle, Stoics, Aquinas</p> <p>Contemporary Exponents: Philippa Foot, Rosalind Hursthouse, Alasdair MacIntyre, James Keenan, S.J., Stanley Hauerwas</p>	<p>Virtues and vices are typically conceived of as character traits that human beings habituate themselves to acquire by practice and the application of prudence or some other form of intelligence.</p> <p>The list of virtues typically includes justice, courage, temperance, and generosity. Some theorists also include such traits as trust, kindness, and perseverance.</p> <p>Theological virtues include faith, hope, and charity.</p> <p>Naturalist conceptions of virtue ethics ask us to include on the list of virtues those states that would allow either the individual human being, or communities of human beings to flourish.</p>	<p>Virtue ethics is well suited to role ethics, since those fulfilling a professional role can develop the virtues needed for that particular role.</p> <p>It is harder to appeal to virtue ethics than other ethical theories to resolve moral problems, although Rosalind Hursthouse demonstrates that it is possible.</p>	<p><u>Business</u>: The virtue of respectfulness requires open-mindedness, civility, and consideration of co-workers in a firm. The virtue of justice requires rendering a person his or her due, such as a just and living wage, promoting the common good, and not putting profit above human dignity.</p> <p><u>Education</u>: When considering whether learning analytics should be available to students (e.g., should a student see how his/her evaluations stand in relation to others in the class or across time), teachers and administrators must draw on principles of kindness, fairness, respect, and hope. Will the individuals in the community flourish more if students have this information (conveyed to them clearly, transparently, and well contextualized), or will it demoralize or break trust with the community?</p> <p><u>Military Science</u>: Soldiers should learn that <i>soldier</i> is an ethically important role requiring the development of martial virtues (courage, loyalty, temperance), but these martial virtues must be</p>

			<p>partnered with attention to the humanity of all persons; this combination of traits best serves the common good.</p> <p><u>Journalism</u>: Journalists should draw on their qualities of temperance and justice to refuse all gifts from interested (or potentially interested) parties. These virtues enable journalists to maintain adequate objectivity of perspective and fairness to both readers and the subjects of discussion and this behavior serves as a model of virtuous integrity for others in the community.</p> <p><u>Natural Science</u>: The virtues of humility and justice guide scientists to appreciation of natural environments and their preservation for future generations.</p> <p><u>Nursing</u>: The virtues of kindness and honesty require health care professionals to recognize patients' vulnerability, dignity, and capacity to make their own choices and to treat them accordingly.</p>
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<p><b>Deontology</b></p> <p>Historical Exponents: Samuel Clarke, Immanuel Kant</p> <p>Contemporary Exponents: Alan Donagan, T.M. Scanlon, Frances Kamm, New Natural Law Theory (John Finnis, Germain Grisez)</p>	<p>Deontological theories are typically founded on the concept of duty or rights. What makes an action wrong is that it violates a duty or a right. What makes an action right is that it fulfills a duty or upholds a right. The good human being is one who consistently fulfills duties or upholds rights, or one who is habituated to do so.</p> <p>Kant’s Categorical Imperative is the most famous example of a deontological principle. In one version of the Categorical Imperative, Kant asks us never to act in such a way that we treat humanity as a mere means, but always to treat humanity as an end.</p>	<p>It is easier to apply deontological theories to resolve moral problems. However, cases in which rights conflict are difficult to resolve.</p> <p>Chief criticisms of deontology: It often leaves agents without guidance on <i>how</i> to apply rules/principles. In some systems, rules/principles can conflict with each other.</p>	<p><u>Business</u>: Business owners and supervisors must not engage in practices incompatible with human dignity, such as inhumane working conditions or conditions that fail to meet recognized safety standards, corporal punishment, or coercion of workers to vote in prescribed ways.</p> <p><u>Education</u>: When considering whether learning analytics should be available to students (e.g., should a student see how his/her evaluations stand in relation to others in the class or across time), teachers and administrators must consider students’ rights to accurate evaluations of their progress (which may require seeing their success in comparison with others’).</p> <p><u>Military Science</u>: Farmers and doctors are not fitting objects of aggression in warfare because they have not adopted activities of hostility toward the enemy.</p> <p><u>Journalism</u>: Journalists should refuse all gifts from interested (or potentially interested) parties in order to maintain adequate objectivity of perspective and fairness to both readers and the subjects of discussion, since that is what those parties deserve from journalists.</p> <p><u>Natural Science</u>: Scientists may not perform scientific experiments on humans (e.g., prisoners)</p>

			<p>without their informed consent; and even with their consent they may not perform experiments that aim at dehumanizing subjects (e.g., the CIA MK-ULTRA experiments).</p> <p><u>Nursing</u>: In order not to act in paternalistic ways but to respect patient autonomy, the nurse will not steer the patient to any particular decision but will leave any ethical decision up to the patient.</p>
<b>Theory of Ethics and Representative Exponents</b>	<b>Basic Structure and Principles</b>	<b>Noteworthy Features</b>	<b>Applications within Sample Disciplines</b>
<p><b>Consequentialism (including utilitarianism)</b></p> <p>Historical Exponents: Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, G.E. Moore</p> <p>Contemporary Exponents: Peter Singer, Peter Railton</p>	<p>Consequentialist theories take as their foundation the good state of affairs. Actions are right insofar as they produce these good states of affairs.</p> <p>Utilitarianism, the most prominent form of consequentialism, holds that what is intrinsically good is happiness (understood as pleasure or desire satisfaction). Therefore, actions are right insofar as they produce pleasure or satisfy desires.</p>	<p>Utilitarianism is divided into multiple types, most prominently</p> <p>(a) Act utilitarianism (actions are right to the extent they actually maximize happiness)</p> <p>(b) Rule utilitarianism (actions are right insofar as they follow those rules and policies designed to maximize happiness)</p> <p>Chief criticism of consequentialism in general: Consequentialism makes the controversial assumption that only the goodness or badness of consequences matter (and gives no inherent</p>	<p><u>Business</u>: Engaging in fair trade produces (or doesn't produce) the best consequences (e.g., lifting coffee producers out of poverty or channeling money to coffee producers at the expense of other poor) and is therefore required (or prohibited).</p> <p><u>Education</u>: When considering whether learning analytics should be available to students (e.g., should a student see how his/her evaluations stand in relation to others in the class or across time), teachers and administrators must consider the effects on individual students and class dynamics. Will there be a greater balance of happiness over unhappiness (if some students are affirmed and others make progress because they recognize their deficiencies), or will the reverse be the case?</p> <p><u>Military Science</u>: In order to minimize harm over the long run, the armed forces may undertake such activities as carpet bombing (unless the backlash</p>

		<p>weight to other factors such as justice or integrity).</p> <p>Chief criticism of utilitarian consequentialism: Utilitarianism makes pleasure or desire satisfaction the only intrinsic good (while others think that friendship, intelligent understanding, and ethical virtue are intrinsically good).</p>	<p>creates as much harm as refraining from carpet bombing).</p> <p><u>Journalism</u>: Journalists should refuse all gifts from interested (or potentially interested) parties in order to maintain adequate objectivity of perspective and fairness to both readers and the subjects of discussion, since doing so will promote the best consequences (in particular, a culture of trust that enables people to recognize and share truths).</p> <p><u>Natural Science</u>: Scientists must place the welfare of the general population (social, economic, political, and environmental impacts) ahead of their responsibilities to private interests.</p> <p><u>Nursing</u>: In order to bring about the best consequences, the nurse will generally steer the patient toward decisions that will maximize happiness.</p>
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