



UCDAVIS

ECS 88 – Winter 2026
[Week 4]

HEDONISM

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Cyrenaics Maximizing
(indulgence / short-term)

Epicureans Stable State
(moderation / long-term)

Mill Qualitatively Ranking
(low vs. high / experiential)

Subjective
(belief)

Pleasure

Extrinsic **Goodness**
(value)

Intrinsic

Aristotle Happiness
(soul in harmony with virtue)

Objective
(belief)

Moderation
(Natural Necessity)

Why Vote?

Stability

Ends

Virtue

Choice

Means

Activity
(Rational)

Action

Present pleasure is the **end**; future pleasure is uncertain.

The wise man will not renounce pleasures
but will use them *without being their slave.*

Cyrenaics
[Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers II.88, II.93]

Pleasure is *the beginning and the end* of the blessed life.

Of pleasures some are *natural* and *necessary*, some natural but not necessary, and some neither natural nor necessary.

Nothing is enough to one for whom what is enough is little.

Epicurus

[Letter to Menoeceus, 128; 127]
[Sententiae Vaticanae, VS 68]

Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all, or almost all, who have experience of both give a decided preference — *irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it* — that is the more desirable pleasure.

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied;
better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.

John Stuart Mill
[Utilitarianism, Ch. 2]

*Pleasure completes the activity,
as the bloom of youth does those in the prime of life.*

Not every pleasure is *choice-worthy*;
but the best activities have their proper pleasures.

Happiness, then, is *an activity of soul in accordance with virtue*,
and if there be more than one virtue,
in accordance with the best and most complete.

Happiness is something final and self-sufficient, and the end of all that we do.

Aristotle
[Nicomachean Ethics X.4; VII.14; I.7; I.7]