

Learning Guide Unit 6

Reading Assignment

As you read and watch the learning resources, consider the following:

1. What is the significance of Kant's distinction between right and wrong actions based on universal laws? How does this concept align with the idea of treating individuals as ends in themselves?
 2. How does Kant's focus on rational autonomy impact his ethical theory? In what ways does rationality play a crucial role in determining moral obligations?
 3. Reflect on Kant's formulations of the categorical imperative. How do these formulations guide moral decision-making and ethical behavior based on principles of universality and respect for humanity?
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Read:

1. Matthews, G., & Hendricks, C. (2019). *Introduction to philosophy: Ethics*. Rebus Community.
<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/introduction-to-philosophy-ethics> Licensed under CC 4.0

- View the Online Book
- Read Chapter 6 - [Kantian Deontology](#)

The chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of Immanuel Kant's ethical philosophy, focusing on his famous notion of the categorical imperative. Central to Kant's ethical theory is the notion of treating individuals as ends in themselves rather than as mere means, underlining the intrinsic value and dignity of all rational beings. The three formulations of the categorical imperative discussed in the chapter elucidate Kant's foundational principles of moral reasoning. They call for the establishment of a harmonious 'kingdom of ends' where everyone respects one another. The chapter also addresses criticisms and implications of Kant's ethical framework, shedding light on the profound influence of his thought on contemporary Western ethics.

Additional Readings:

1. Minnicks, M. (2023, January 27). *Golden rule: Every religion has one*. Hub Pages. <https://discover.hubpages.com/religion-philosophy/Every-Religion-Has-A-Golden-Rule>

Many people have noted the close resemblance between Kant's categorical imperative and the Golden Rule, which holds that we should treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated. Other people are ends in themselves for Kant, just like us, so we should treat them as we ourselves would want to be treated. This article points out that the Golden Rule is found in all religions but stated in different ways. Might the Golden Rule transcend all cultures and be universal?

Watch:

1. McCombs School of Business. (2018, Dec 18). *Deontology | Ethics defined*. [Video]. YouTube.

This is a nice, simple overview of Kant's moral theory. It will help you get your feet wet before diving into the sea of technical terminology in the reading this week.

Deontology | Ethics Defined

