

0001 This is a course about Justice and we begin with a story
0002 suppose you're the driver of a trolley car,
0003 and your trolley car is hurdling down the track at sixty miles an hour
0004 and at the end of the track you notice five workers working on the track
0005 you tried to stop but you can't
0006 your brakes don't work
0007 you feel desperate because you know
0008 that if you crash into these five workers
0009 they will all die
0010 let's assume you know that for sure
0011 and so you feel helpless
0012 until you notice that there is
0013 off to the right
0014 a side track
0015 at the end of that track
0016 there's one worker
0017 working on track
0018 you're steering wheel works
0019 so you can
0020 turn the trolley car if you want to
0021 onto this side track
0022 killing the one
0023 but sparing the five.
0024 Here's our first question
0025 what's the right thing to do?
0026 What would you do?
0027 Let's take a poll,
0028 how many
0029 would turn the trolley car onto the side track?
0030 How many wouldn't?
0031 How many would go straight ahead
0032 keep your hands up, those of you who'd go straight ahead.
0033 A handful of people would, the vast majority would turn
0034 let's hear first
0035 now we need to begin to investigate the reasons why you think

0036 it's the right thing to do. Let's begin with those in the majority, who would turn
0037 to go onto side track?
0038 Why would you do it,
0039 what would be your reason?
0040 Who's willing to volunteer a reason?
0041 Go ahead, stand up.
0042 Because it can't be right to kill five people when you can only kill one person instead.
0043 it wouldn't be right to kill five
0044 if you could kill one person instead
0045 that's a good reason
0046 that's a good reason
0047 who else?
0048 does everybody agree with that
0049 reason? go ahead.
0050 Well I was thinking it was the same reason it was on
0051 9/11 we regard the people who flew the plane
0052 who flew the plane into the
0053 Pennsylvania field as heroes
0054 because they chose to kill the people on the plane
0055 and not kill more people
0056 in big buildings.
0057 So the principle there was the same on 9/11
0058 it's tragic circumstance,
0059 but better to kill one so that five can live
0060 is that the reason most of you have, those of you who would turn, yes?
0061 Let's hear now
0062 from
0063 those in the minority
0064 those who wouldn't turn.
0065 Well I think that same type of mentality that justifies genocide and totalitarianism
0066 in order to save one type of race you wipe out the other.
0067 so what would you do in this case? You would
0068 to avoid
0069 the horrors of genocide
0070 you would crash into the five and kill them?
0071 Presumably yes.
0072 okay who else?

0073 That's a brave answer, thank you.

0074 Let's consider another

0075 trolley car case

0076 and see

0077 whether

0078 those of you in the majority

0079 want to adhere to the principle,

0080 better that one should die so that five should live.

0081 This time you're not the driver of the trolley car, you're an onlooker

0082 standing on a bridge overlooking a trolley car track

0083 and down the track comes a trolley car

0084 at the end of the track are five workers

0085 the brakes don't work

0086 the trolley car is about to careen into the five and kill them

0087 and now

0088 you're not the driver

0089 you really feel helpless

0090 until you notice

0091 standing next to you

0092 leaning over

0093 the bridge

0094 is it very fat man.

0095 And you could

0096 give him a shove

0097 he would fall over the bridge

0098 onto the track

0099 right in the way of

0100 the trolley car

0101 he would die

0102 but he would spare the five.

0103 Now, how many would push

0104 the fat man over the bridge? Raise your hand.

0105 How many wouldn't?

0106 Most people wouldn't.

0107 Here's the obvious question,

0108 what became

0109 of the principle

0110 better to save five lives even if it means sacrificing one, what became of the principal
0111 that almost everyone endorsed
0112 in the first case
0113 I need to hear from someone who was in the majority in both
0114 cases is
0115 how do you explain the difference between the two?
0116 The second one I guess involves an active choice of
0117 pushing a person
0118 and down which
0119 I guess that
0120 that person himself would otherwise not have been involved in the situation at all
0121 and so
0122 to choose on his behalf I guess
0123 to
0124 involve him in something that he otherwise would have this escaped is
0125 I guess more than
0126 what you have in the first case where
0127 the three parties, the driver and
0128 the two sets of workers are
0129 already I guess in this situation.
0130 but the guy working, the one on the track off to the side
0131 he didn't choose to sacrifice his life any more than the fat guy did, did he?
0132 That's true, but he was on the tracks.
0133 this guy was on the bridge.
0134 Go ahead, you can come back if you want.
0135 Alright, it's a hard question
0136 but you did well you did very well it's a hard question.
0137 who else
0138 can
0139 find a way of reconciling
0140 the reaction of the majority in these two cases? Yes?
0141 Well I guess
0142 in the first case where
0143 you have the one worker and the five
0144 it's a choice between those two, and you have to
0145 make a certain choice and people are going to die because of the trolley car
0146 not necessarily because of your direct actions. The trolley car is a runaway,

0147 thing and you need to make in a split second choice

0148 whereas pushing the fat man over is an actual act of murder on your part

0149 you have control over that

0150 whereas you may not have control over the trolley car.

0151 So I think that it's a slightly different situation.

0152 Alright who has a reply? Is that, who has a reply to that? no that was good, who has a way

0153 who wants to reply?

0154 Is that a way out of this?

0155 I don't think that's a very good reason because you choose

0156 either way you have to choose who dies because you either choose to turn and kill a person

0157 which is an act of conscious

0158 thought to turn,

0159 or you choose to push the fat man

0160 over which is also an active

0161 conscious action so either way you're making a choice.

0162 Do you want to reply?

0163 Well I'm not really sure that that's the case, it just still seems kind of different, the act of

0164 pushing someone over onto the tracks and killing them,

0165 you are actually killing him yourself, you're pushing him with your own hands you're pushing

0166 that's different

0167 than steering something that is going to cause death

0168 into another...you know

0169 it doesn't really sound right saying it now when I'm up here.

0170 No that's good, what's your name?

0171 Andrew.

0172 Andrew and let me ask you this question Andrew,

0173 suppose

0174 standing on the bridge

0175 next to the fat man

0176 I didn't have to push him, suppose he was standing

0177 over a trap door that I could open by turning a steering wheel like that

0178 would you turn it?

0179 For some reason that still just seems more

0180 more wrong.

0181 I mean maybe if you just accidentally like leaned into this steering wheel or something like

0182 or but,

0183 or say that the car is

0184 hurdling towards a switch that will drop the trap
0185 then I could agree with that.
0186 Fair enough, it still seems
0187 wrong in a way that it doesn't seem wrong in the first case to turn, you say
0188 An in another way, I mean in the first situation you're involved directly with the situati
0189 in the second one you're an onlooker as well.
0190 So you have the choice of becoming involved or not by pushing the fat man.
0191 Let's forget for the moment about this case,
0192 that's good,
0193 but let's imagine a different case. This time your doctor in an emergency room
0194 and six patients come to you
0195 they've been in a terrible trolley car wreck
0196 five of them sustained moderate injuries one is severely injured you could spend all day
0197 caring for the one severely injured victim,
0198 but in that time the five would die, or you could look after the five, restore them to hea
0199 during that time the one severely injured
0200 person would die.
0201 How many would save
0202 the five
0203 now as the doctor?
0204 How many would save the one?
0205 Very few people,
0206 just a handful of people.
0207 Same reason I assume,
0208 one life versus five.
0209 Now consider
0210 another doctor case
0211 this time you're a transplant surgeon
0212 and you have five patients each in desperate need
0213 of an organ transplant in order to survive
0214 one needs a heart one a lung,
0215 one a kidney,
0216 one a liver
0217 and the fifth
0218 a pancreas.
0219 And you have no organ donors
0220 you are about to

0221 see you them die
0222 and then
0223 it occurs to you
0224 that in the next room
0225 there's a healthy guy who came in for a checkup.
0226 and he is
0227 you like that
0228 and he's taking a nap
0229 you could go in very quietly
0230 yank out the five organs, that person would die
0231 but you can save the five.
0232 How many would do it? Anyone?
0233 How many? Put your hands up if you would do it.
0234 Anyone in the balcony?
0235 You would? Be careful don't lean over too much
0236 How many wouldn't?
0237 All right.
0238 What do you say, speak up in the balcony, you who would
0239 yank out the organs, why?
0240 I'd actually like to explore slightly alternate
0241 possibility of just taking the one
0242 of the five he needs an organ who dies first
0243 and using their four healthy organs to save the other four
0244 That's a pretty good idea.
0245 That's a great idea
0246 except for the fact
0247 that you just wrecked the philosophical point.
0248 Let's step back
0249 from these stories and these arguments
0250 to notice a couple of things
0251 about the way the arguments have begun to unfold.
0252 Certain
0253 moral principles
0254 have already begun to emerge
0255 from the discussions we've had
0256 and let's consider
0257 what those moral principles

0258 look like

0259 the first moral principle that emerged from the discussion said

0260 that the right thing to do the moral thing to do

0261 depends on the consequences that will result

0262 from your action

0263 at the end of the day

0264 better that five should live

0265 even if one must die.

0266 That's an example

0267 of consequentialist

0268 moral reasoning.

0269 consequentialist moral reasoning locates morality in the consequences of an act. In the sthe

0270 world that will result

0271 from the thing you do

0272 but then we went a little further, we considered those other cases

0273 and people weren't so sure

0274 about

0275 consequentialist moral reasoning

0276 when people hesitated

0277 to push the fat man

0278 over the bridge

0279 or to yank out the organs of the innocent

0280 patient

0281 people gestured towards

0282 reasons

0283 having to do

0284 with the intrinsic

0285 quality of the act

0286 itself.

0287 Consequences be what they may.

0288 People were reluctant

0289 people thought it was just wrong

0290 categorically wrong

0291 to kill

0292 a person

0293 an innocent person

0294 even for the sake

0295 of saving
0296 five lives, at least these people thought that
0297 in the second
0298 version of each story we reconsidered
0299 so this points
0300 a second
0301 categorical
0302 way
0303 of thinking about
0304 moral reasoning
0305 categorical moral reasoning locates morality in certain absolute moral requirements in
0306 certain categorical duties and rights
0307 regardless of the consequences.
0308 We're going to explore
0309 in the days and weeks to come the contrast between
0310 consequentialist and categorical moral principles.
0311 The most influential
0312 example of
0313 consequential moral reasoning is utilitarianism, a doctrine invented by
0314 Jeremy Bentham, the eighteenth century English political philosopher.
0315 The most important
0316 philosopher of categorical moral reasoning
0317 is the
0318 eighteenth century German philosopher Emmanuel Kant.
0319 So we will look
0320 at those two different modes of moral reasoning
0321 assess them
0322 and also consider others.
0323 If you look at the syllabus, you'll notice that we read a number of great and famous books
0324 Books by Aristotle
0325 John Locke
0326 Emanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill,
0327 and others.
0328 You'll notice too from the syllabus that we don't only read these books,
0329 we also all
0330 take up
0331 contemporary political and legal controversies that raise philosophical questions.

0332 We will debate equality and inequality,
0333 affirmative action,
0334 free speech versus hate speech,
0335 same sex marriage, military conscription,
0336 a range of practical questions, why
0337 not just to enliven these abstract and distant books
0338 but to make clear to bring out what's at stake in our everyday lives including our politic
0339 lives,
0340 for philosophy.

0341 So we will read these books
0342 and we will debate these
0343 issues and we'll see how each informs and illuminates the other.

0344 This may sound appealing enough
0345 but here
0346 I have to issue a warning,
0347 and the warning is this
0348 to read these books
0349 in this way,
0350 as an exercise in self-knowledge,
0351 to read them in this way carry certain risks
0352 risks that are both personal and political,
0353 risks that every student of political philosophy have known.

0354 These risks spring from that fact
0355 that philosophy
0356 teaches us
0357 and unsettles us
0358 by confronting us with what we already know.

0359 There's an irony
0360 the difficulty of this course consists in the fact that it teaches what you already know.

0361 It works by taking
0362 what we know from familiar unquestioned settings,
0363 and making it strange.

0364 That's how those examples worked
0365 worked
0366 the hypotheticals with which we began with their mix of playfulness and sobriety.

0367 it's also how these philosophical books work. Philosophy
0368 estranges us

0369 from the familiar
0370 not by supplying new information
0371 but by inviting
0372 and provoking
0373 a new way of seeing
0374 but, and here's the risk,
0375 once
0376 the familiar turns strange,
0377 it's never quite the same again.
0378 Self-knowledge
0379 is like lost innocence,
0380 however unsettling
0381 you find it,
0382 it can never
0383 be unthought
0384 or unknown
0385 what makes this enterprise difficult
0386 but also riveting,
0387 is that
0388 moral and political philosophy is a story
0389 and you don't know where this story will lead but what you do know
0390 is that the story
0391 is about you.
0392 Those are the personal risks,
0393 now what of the political risks.
0394 one way of introducing of course like this
0395 would be to promise you
0396 that by reading these books
0397 and debating these issues
0398 you will become a better more responsible citizen.
0399 You will examine the presuppositions of public policy, you will hone your political
0400 judgment
0401 you'll become a more effective participant in public affairs
0402 but this would be a partial and misleading promise
0403 political philosophy for the most part hasn't worked that way.
0404 You have to allow for the possibility
0405 that political philosophy may make you a worse citizen

0406 rather than a better one
0407 or at least a worse citizen
0408 before it makes you
0409 a better one
0410 and that's because philosophy
0411 is a distancing
0412 even debilitating
0413 activity
0414 And you see this
0415 going back to Socrates
0416 there's a dialogue, the Gorgias
0417 in which one of Socrates' friends
0418 Calicles
0419 tries to talk him out
0420 of philosophizing.
0421 calicles tells Socrates philosophy is a pretty toy
0422 if one indulges in it with moderation at the right time of life
0423 but if one pursues it further than one should it is absolute ruin.
0424 Take my advice calicles says,
0425 abandon argument
0426 learn the accomplishments of active life, take
0427 for your models not those people who spend their time on these petty quibbles,
0428 but those who have a good livelihood and reputation
0429 and many other blessings.
0430 So Calicles is really saying to Socrates
0431 quit philosophizing,
0432 get real
0433 go to business school
0434 and calicles did have a point
0435 he had a point
0436 because philosophy distances us
0437 from conventions from established assumptions
0438 and from settled beliefs.
0439 those are the risks,
0440 personal and political
0441 and in the face of these risks there is a characteristic evasion,
0442 the name of the evasion is skepticism. It's the idea

0443 well it goes something like this
0444 we didn't resolve, once and for all,
0445 either the cases or the principles we were arguing when we began
0446 and if Aristotle
0447 and Locke and Kant and Mill haven't solved these questions after all of these years
0448 who are we to think
0449 that we here in Sanders Theatre over the course a semester
0450 can resolve them
0451 and so maybe it's just a matter of
0452 each person having his or her own principles and there's nothing more to be said about
0453 it
0454 no way of reasoning
0455 that's the
0456 evasion. The evasion of skepticism
0457 to which I would offer the following
0458 reply:
0459 it's true
0460 these questions have been debated for a very long time
0461 but the very fact
0462 that they have reoccurred and persisted
0463 may suggest
0464 that though they're impossible in one sense
0465 their unavoidable in another
0466 and the reason they're unavoidable
0467 the reason they're inescapable is that we live some answer
0468 to these questions every day.
0469 So skepticism, just throwing up their hands and giving up on moral reflection,
0470 is no solution
0471 Emanuel Kant
0472 described very well the problem with skepticism when he wrote
0473 skepticism is a resting place for human reason
0474 where it can reflect upon its dogmatic wanderings
0475 but it is no dwelling place for permanent settlement.
0476 Simply to acquiesce in skepticism, Kant wrote,
0477 can never suffice to overcome the restless of reason.
0478 I've tried to suggest through theses stories and these arguments
0479 some sense of the risks and temptations

0480 of the perils and the possibilities I would simply conclude by saying
0481 that the aim of this course
0482 is to awaken
0483 the restlessness of reason
0484 and to see where it might lead
0485 thank you very much.
