Ethics, also known as *moral philosophy*, is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.

ANCIENT ETHICS

- Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh
- Homer's Iliad
- The Icelandic Eddas
- The Sumerian Farmer's Almanac
- The Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope

Ethical Theories

An introduction to three main branches of normative ethics

Normative vs. descriptive Ethics

Descriptive Ethics: seeks to describe how people behave and/or what sorts of moral standards they claim to follow. (Think Anthropology or sociology)

◦ non-evaluative

Normative ethics: seeks to create or evaluate moral standards. it is an attempt to figure out what people **should** do or whether their current moral behavior is reasonable.

Three types of normative ethics

Teleological -- look at "ends" or consequences of what we do

Deontological – adheres to independent moral rules or duties; motives behind certain actions are right or wrong instead of focusing on the results
(Duty-based)
◦ The Golden rule
◦ Religion (ex. The ten commandments)

Virtue ethics- Character-based Theories that look for the role one's character plays in the decision making and how that decision will affect the character of others

Three Main Ethical Approaches

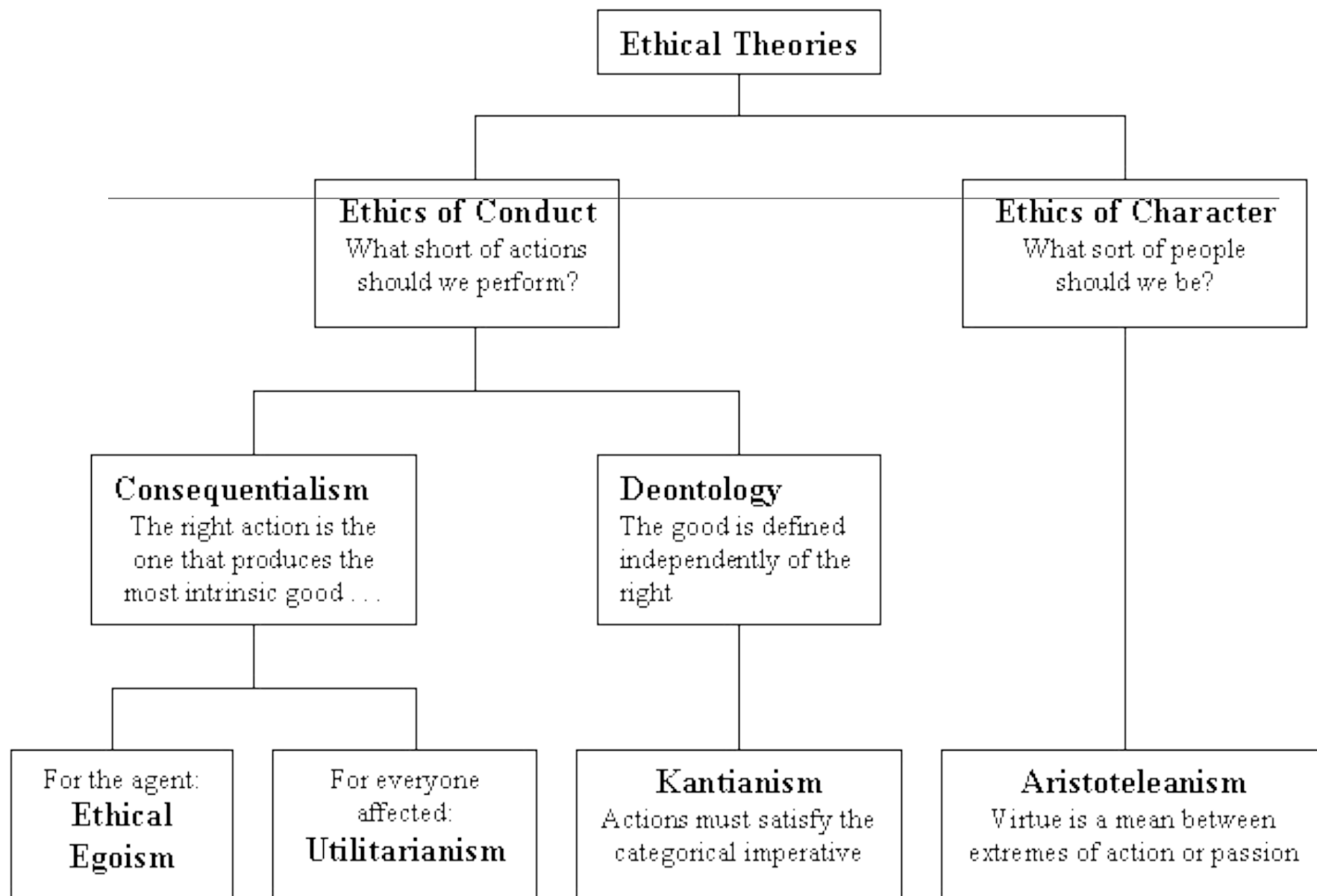Three main approaches to normative ethics that we will discuss:

●● Virtue ethics (ethics of character)

●● Utilitarianism (teleological)

●●

Deontology

The difference between these three approaches to morality tends to lie more in the way moral dilemmas are approached, rather than in the moral conclusions reached.

Ethical Theories

Ethics of Conduct
What short of actions should we perform?

Ethics of Character
What sort of people should we be?

Consequentialism
The right action is the one that produces the most intrinsic good . . .

Deontology
The good is defined independently of the right

For the agent:
Ethical Egoism

For everyone affected:
Utilitarianism

Kantianism
Actions must satisfy the categorical imperative

Aristoteleanism
Virtue is a mean between extremes of action or passion

Virtue Theory (ethics of Character)

- **Virtue ethics** emphasizes the role of one's character and the virtues that one's character embodies for determining or evaluating ethical behavior.

- The roots of this theory lie in the works of Plato and Aristotle.

- Virtue ethics place emphasizes **being** rather than **doing**. In virtue ethics, morality stems from the identity and/or character of the individual, rather than being a reflection of the actions (or consequences) of the individual.

- A virtue ethics philosopher will identify virtues, desirable characteristics, that the moral or virtuous person embodies. Possessing these virtue in virtues, ethics, is what makes one moral,

Deontological Ethics (Kantian Ethics or Duty Ethics)

- places the emphasis on adhering to ethical principles or duties and fulfilling obligations

- How these duties are defined, however, is often a point of contention and debate in deontological ethics.

- Deontology also depends, at least partially, upon moral absolutes that make an action moral regardless of circumstances.

- There are multiple motivations for "duty"-
    - Immanuel Kant--our actions should be motivated by reason, rather than by emotions -you should not only do good things when you feel like it
    - Divine Command Theory– It has been decreed by God to be "good."

Consequentialism

●● Consequentialism bases the morality of an action

upon the consequences of the outcome

●● Instead of saying that one has a moral duty to abstain from murder, a consequentialist would say that we should abstain from murder because it causes undesirable effects.

●● The main contention here is what outcomes should/
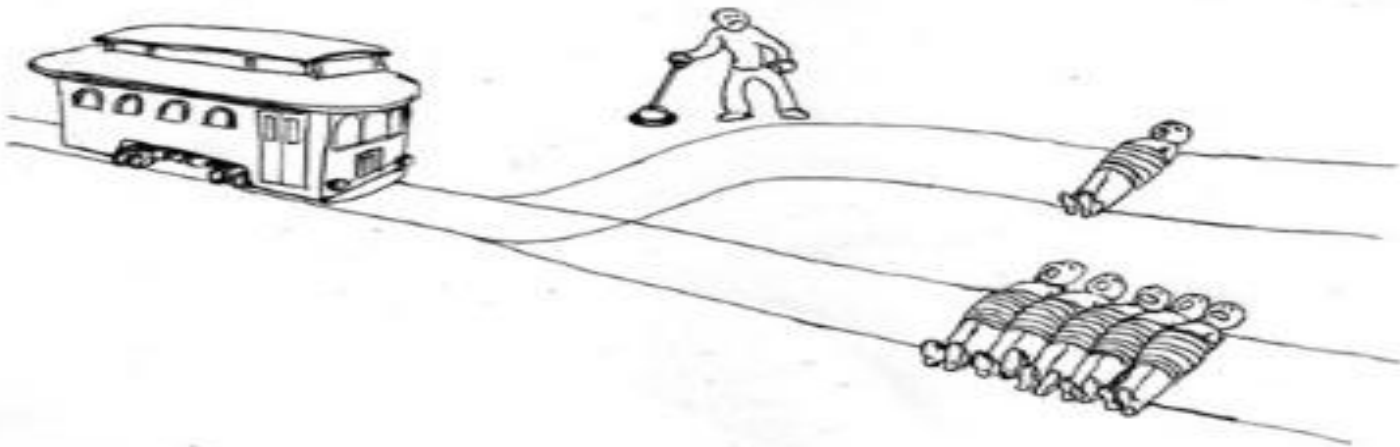
can be identified as objectively desirable.

Utilitarianism

- Utilitarianism is one form of consequentialism which has as its main tenet that we should seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

  - Greatest Happiness Principle of John Stuart Mill

- Seeks utility over morality

- Our determinant of the desirability of an action is the net amount of happiness it brings, the number of people it brings it to, and the duration of the

UTILITARIANISM

Seeking utility can be problematic
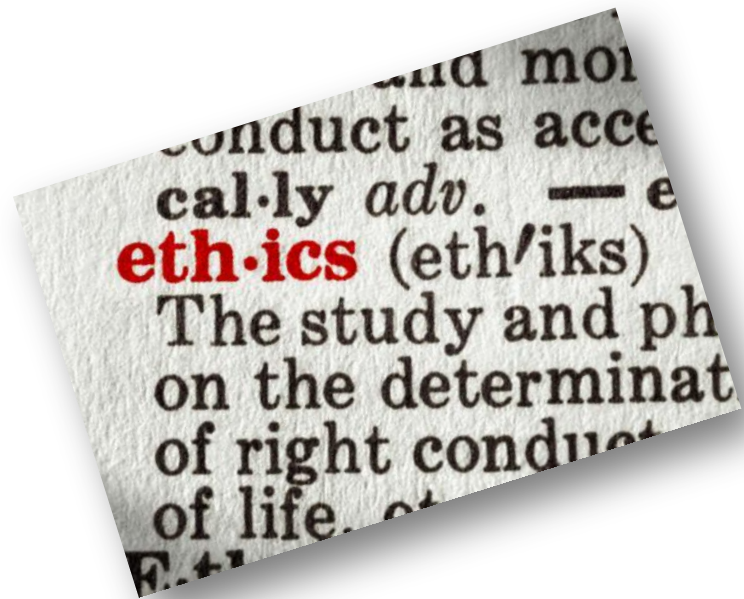
Example: [The Trolley problem](#)

Comparing the Three Ethical Approaches

1. A consequentialist may argue that lying is wrong because of the negative consequences produced by lying—though a consequentialist may allow that certain foreseeable consequences might make lying acceptable.

2. A deontologist might argue that lying is *always* wrong, regardless of any potential "good" that might come from lying.

3. A virtue ethicist would focus less on lying in any particular instance and instead consider what a decision to tell a lie or not tell a lie said about one's character and moral behavior. Therefore, the decision to lie would be made in a case-by-case basis that weigh personal benefit, group benefit, and intentions.

COMPONENTS/QUALITIES

- Honesty

- Integrity

- Transparency

- Accountability

- Confidentiality

- Objectivity

- Respectfulness

- Obedience to the Law

"Whistleblowing"

"Whistleblowing"

A **whistleblower** is a person who tells the public or someone in authority about alleged dishonest or illegal activities occurring in a government department or private company or organization.

A **whistleblower** is a person who raises concern about frauds, corruptions, wrongdoings and mismanagement.
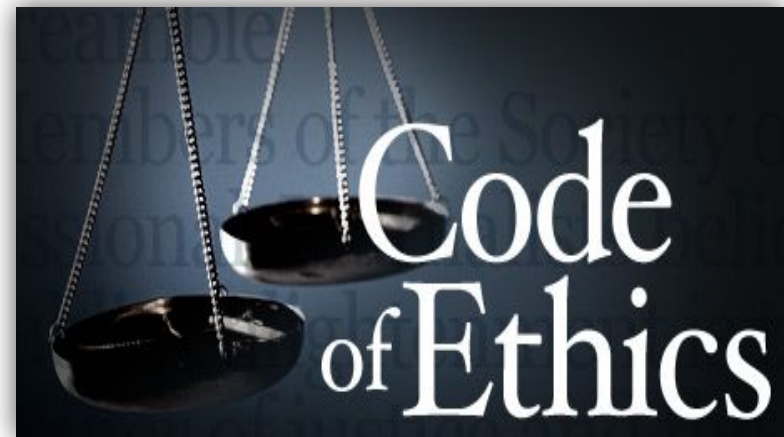
DIMENSIONS OF ETHICS (3 "R's" of Ethics)

◦ RULES

◦ RESPONSIBILITY

◦ RESPECT

CODES OF ETHICS

The primary aspect of codes of ethics is to provide the basic framework for ethical judgment for a professional.

CODES OF ETHICS

The codes of ethics are guidelines for specific group of professionals to help them perform their roles, to know how to conduct themselves, and to know how to resolve various ethical issues.

The codes of ethics help the professionals to apply moral and ethical principles to the specific situations encountered in professional practice.

These codes convey the rights, duties, and obligations of the members of the profession.

POSITIVE ROLES OF CODES OF ETHICS

Inspiration

Guidance

Support for responsible conduct

Deterring and disciplining unethical professional conduct

Education and promoting of mutual understanding

Contributing to a positive public image of the profession

Protecting the status quo and suppressing dissent within the profession

Promoting business interests through restraint of trade

PROTECTING THE STATUS QUO

The codes institute ethical conventions. These ethical conventions can promote a minimum, acceptable level of ethical conduct.

The codes can also suppress the dispute within the profession.

LIMITATIONS OF CODES OF ETHICS

Codes of ethics are broad guidelines, restricted to general phrases. The codes cannot be applied directly to all situations.

Engineering codes often have internal conflicts, since several entries in codes overlap with each other, which may result in moral dilemmas.

The codes cannot serve as the final moral authority for professional conduct.

COMPUTER ETHICS

Computer ethics is the study of ethical issues that are associated primarily with computing machines and computing profession.

COMPUTER ETHICS

Don't use a computer to harm other people.

Don't interfere with other people's computer work.

Don't snoop around in other people's computer files.

Don't use a computer to steel.

Don't copy or use propriety software for which you have not paid.

Don't use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.

Don't appropriate other people's intellectual output.

COMPUTER ETHICS

Think about the social consequences of the program you are waiting or the system you are designing.

Use a computer in ways that insure considerations and respect for your fellow humans.

QUESTIONS

Questions are guaranteed in life; Answers aren't.