



## L3.2 - Ethical Analysis – Part 1

# Announcements

- LA-2 due Tuesday at midnight
- LA-1 graded, resubmissions, and retakes
- Remember these are assessments
- Quiz – argument structure
- Short Answer
- Video
  - Ethics vs. study of ethics
  - Ethical point of view vs. selfish point of view
- Participation Point TBA

# Last Time

- Social Contract Theory
  - Hobbes, Rousseau, Rawls
  - Set of moral rules and government to enforce
  - Rights: negative, positive, absolute, limited
  - Principles of Justice
    - Each may claim rights and liberties as long as all may
    - Social and economic inequalities:
      - Equal opportunity to achieve
      - Greatest benefit to least advantaged
- Virtue Ethics
  - Aristotle: greatest happiness and fulfillment is virtue
  - Moral virtues developed through willfully and habitually practicing
  - Virtuous actions become a disposition to act and feel

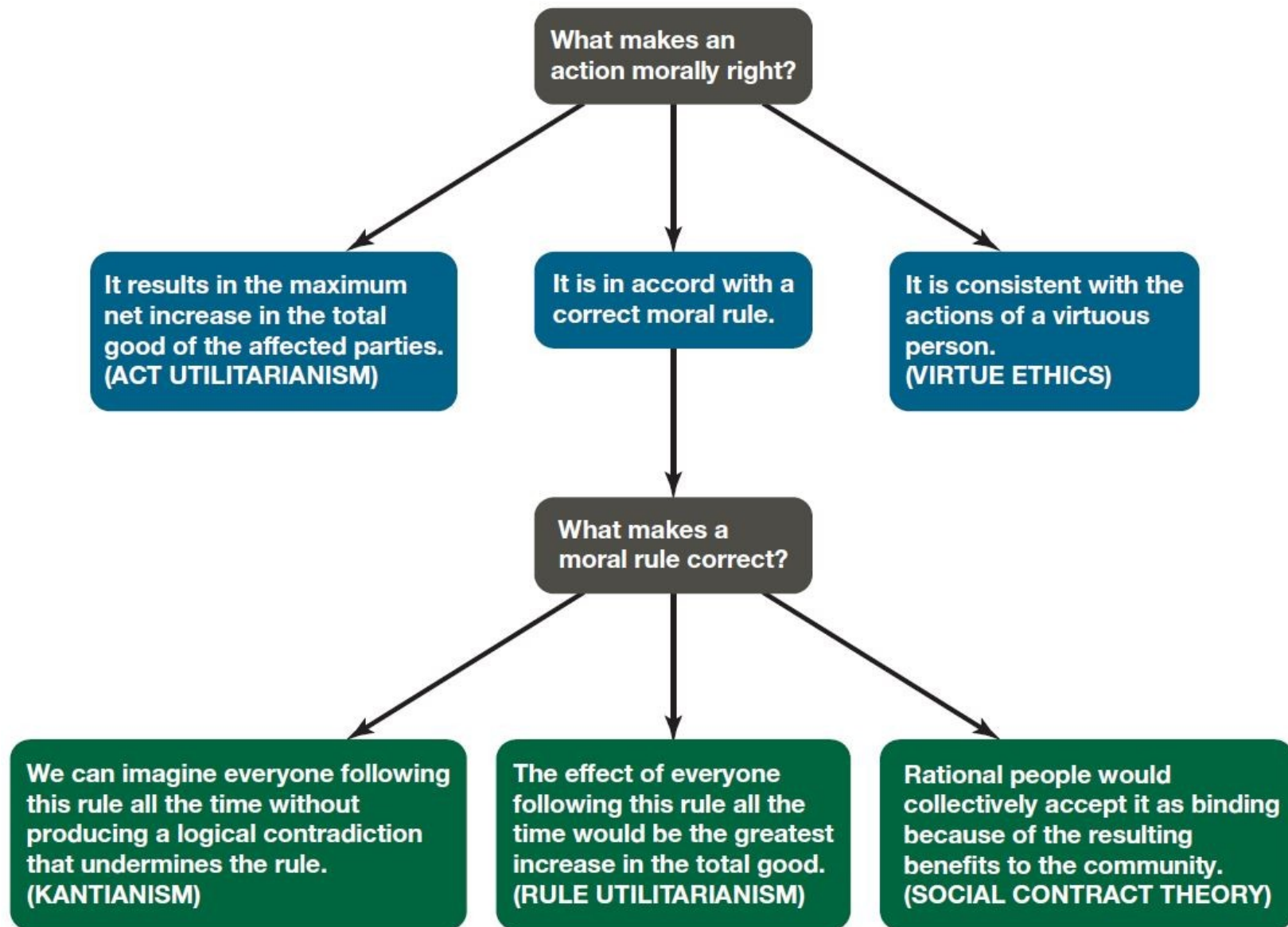
# Today

- Comparing Ethical Theories
  - Objective theories
    - Rational theories
      - deontological
      - consequentialist
      - agentive

# Selection

- **Objective:** we're not making this stuff up
  - Divine Command Theory, Ethical egoism, Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory, Virtue ethics
  - ~~Subjective and Cultural Relativism~~
- **Rational:** logical reasoning based on facts and common beliefs
  - Ethical egoism, Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory, Virtue ethics
  - ~~Divine Command Theory~~
- **Ethical Point of View**
  - Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Social Contract Theory, Virtue ethics
  - ~~Ethical egoism~~

# Selection





# Morality of Breaking the Law

- Morality and legality not identical
- In rare cases an unjust law requires disobedience
- What about just laws?
- Scenario:
  - Copy copyrighted material for a friend
  - Definitely illegal
  - Is it moral?

# Social Contract Theory

- Everyone in society bears certain burdens in order to receive certain benefits
- Legal system supposed to guarantee people's rights are protected
- Everything else being equal, we should be law-abiding
- Should only break law if compelled to follow a higher-order moral obligation



# Kantianism

- Everyone wants to be treated justly
- Imagine rule: “I may break a law I believe to be unjust”
- If everyone acted according to this rule, then laws would be subverted
- Contradiction: Cannot both wish to be treated justly and allow laws to be subverted

# Act Utilitarianism

- Possible to conceive of situations where benefits of breaking law exceed harms
- Suppose give penniless, bedridden friend copy of CD
- Friend benefits by \$15 (value of CD)
- I benefit by \$10 (satisfaction of helping friend)
- Harms of \$0 (no lost sale, no police involvement)
- With \$25 of benefit and \$0 of harm, action is determined to be good

# Rule Utilitarianism

- What would be consequences of people ignoring laws they felt to be unjust?
- Beneficial consequence: Happiness of people who are doing what they please
- Harmful consequences: Harm to people directly affected by lawless actions, general loss of respect for laws, increased burden on criminal justice system
- Harms greater than benefits

# Virtue Ethics

- Copying copyrighted material is theft
- Stealing is a vice
- Virtuous people do not steal
- Small act of stealing begins to form habit and degrades character

# Summary

- **Kantianism:** Every person is equally valuable, and when you interact with other people you should always respect them as rational beings. It is wrong to privilege your needs and desires over those of other people.
- **Utilitarianism:** You should consider the consequences of an action before deciding whether it's right or wrong.
- **Social contract theory:** We should collectively promote human rights, such as the rights to life, liberty, and property.
- **Virtue ethics:** You can count on a good person to do the right thing at the right time in the right way.

# Jedi Council

- Debate the merits of each ethical theory and vote on one to rule them all (does not need to be unanimous)

# Jedi Council

- Scenario:
  - History class take an on-line quiz
    - Students must do their own work
    - Open-notes and open-book
    - 80% to pass
    - Retake unlimited times
  - Luke and Leia are taking the quiz in the computer room
  - Luke asks Leia for help on a question:  
*"What's the difference if you tell me the answer, I look it up in the book, or I get it wrong and retake the quiz? In any case I'll get credit for the right answer."*
  - Leia gives Luke the answer
- Analyze using ethical theories and report the consensus



# Action

- You **can** consider duties **and** rights **and** consequences **and** virtues when making moral decisions
- Ultimately, you have to decide:
  - What kind of person do I want to be?
  - What kind of world do I want to live in?
- Participation Point due tomorrow midnight
  - Which theory did your group pick and why? What was the vote?