**Utilitarianism and Deontology**

Tutorial exercises

1. Discussion
   1. David would like to buy a new car. Now he has come down to two options: Either P or Q. P has 10 pros and 4 cons, and Q has 9 pros and 5 cons. Finally he chose Q. He need not violate the utilitarian principle. Why not?
   2. A pregnant woman leading a group of 10 people in an attempt to leave a cave on a coast is stuck at the mouth of that cave. Very soon a high tide will be upon them. Unless she is unstuck, they will all be drowned except her (since her head is outside of the cave). Incidentally, someone has with him a stick of dynamite. There seems no way to get the pregnant woman out without using the dynamite which would kill her and the unborn child.

Option 1

No one uses the dynamite and everyone, except for the pregnant woman and her unborn baby, dies.

Option 2

They use the dynamite, the woman dies, everyone else survive.

Which option would a utilitarian take? Why? (Hint: Rule-utilitarians highlight the

Utility value of moral rules and principle.)

Which option would a deontologist take? Why?

1. Which moral standpoint or theory (utilitarianism or deontology) does each of the following cases of moral thinking indicate? Explain your answers.
2. I was walking down the street and I found $50 on the floor of the MH supermarket. I handed it in to the customer services, because I thought that is the right thing to do.
3. I decided to stop eating meat, especially chicken. I couldn’t stand the idea of all those animals suffering, penned up in tiny cubicles all their lives, and then the brutal way in which they are slaughtered. Anything that feels pain is worthy of moral consideration.
4. I believe we should allow the death penalty. It may involve the death of one criminal, but the wider positives for the rest of society outweigh the loss of the criminal’s life and the pain and suffering of his or her family.
5. I would never cheat in paying my bus fare when the bus is really busy. Even if it is very easy to get away with it. Imagine if everyone thought like that! It should become a universal moral law to pay the bus fares. It is our responsibility as good citizens of this country.
6. I would never cheat in paying my bus fare when the bus is really busy. Even if it is very easy to get away with it. Imagine if everyone thought like that! No one would pay and the buses would never run! It would cause short- and long-term problems in our society.
7. I ended paying back that money I owed him. I think he would have come after me in the end. And looking at it in the long-term, I may need to borrow more money from him in the future. In this way he’ll trust me with more money.
8. The traders who were artificially raising their prices to victims of the floods in the West and then denying them a receipt were plain wicked. They did not treat the victims as ends!
9. I think we should build that hydro-electric power-station. I know it means the relocation of those villages, but the whole of Fiji needs power to fuel its economy. All things considered everyone would be happier if it was built.
10. Why do you pretend that Khan is your friend? You’re only using him for lifts into town. If he found out how you really felt about him he would feel that you were not respecting him. You shouldn’t treat people as a means to your own end.
11. When I give money to charity, I don’t like anybody to know. I don’t do it to look good. I do it because I feel like it is my responsibility to help those in need.
12. You should pay your taxes, even if your accountant has found a tricky way for you to not to. Everyone has a duty to pay their taxes. I will never fail to pay my taxes for I consider myself as a responsible citizen.
13. You should pay your taxes, even if your accountant has found a way for you to not to. Imagine the mess we’d be in if we all tried to sneak off and not pay it! It would affect the welfare and economy of our country and the government would fail to provide the most necessary services.
14. I don’t look after my elderly mother because it’s a duty! I do it because it is her happiness and my happiness – the whole family’s happiness.
15. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima was awful. However, it was the right thing to do as otherwise many more would have died without a quick end to the war.
16. It doesn’t matter how much easier it would be just to shoot the crook. We’ve got rules, and these rules mean that he has a right to a fair trial. We all know he’s guilty and will hang, and it will cause a lot of hassle to put this through the courts, but it’s morality; it’s the law.
17. I want to be a doctor. I want to save as many people as possible. Imagine the buzz and feeling of accomplishment you’ll get at the end of the day knowing that you’ve done all that. You are more likely to get a public award for something like that.
18. I gave the phone back. I realized that they’d find out it was me!
19. The five people had been at sea for fifteen days. Little Johnny was very ill as he’d drunk sea-water even though the others had told him not to. If they didn’t eat something they’d all die. When Johnny was asleep, with great reluctance, they slit his throat and feasted on his corpse.