

Theory / Definition	Justification	Criticism	Implications
<p><b>VIRTUE ETHICS</b></p> <p>An action is ethical if performed by a virtuous person, who knows what a right action is.</p> <p>(Aristotle)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We all know who the good people are; their attributes are visible—integrity, honesty, etc.</li> <li>There is a close connection between the action itself and the person performing it.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We may disagree on who is virtuous!</li> <li>We might disagree on what makes a person virtuous.</li> <li>We might argue that actions are independent of individuals performing them.</li> </ol>	<p>A virtuous person will pursue knowledge in an ethical way.</p>
<p><b>DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS</b></p> <p>An action is ethical if it is performed out of respect for a moral law.</p> <p>The action is undertaken for the sake of <i>duty</i>—the only motivation is the knowledge that it is the right thing to do.</p> <p>An action is ethical if we can universalize it—we would want everyone to act the same way in the same situation.</p> <p>(Immanuel Kant)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ethical action is one we know we should perform because it is our duty.</li> <li>There is a close connection between the action itself and the intention of the person performing it.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the moral law defined? There may be different versions, both religious and secular.</li> <li>Is it always right to tell the truth? Might there be scenarios in which disobeying the moral law might be the right thing to do?</li> <li>Universalizing an ethical rule requires imagining a scenario, such as: “What would happen if all people did this?”—which assumes we can imagine such scenarios with some accuracy.</li> </ol>	<p>A person who follows the moral law will perform ethical actions out of respect and reverence for the moral law.</p> <p>We may think that it is our duty to pursue and apply particular types of knowledge.</p>
<p><b>UTILITARIANISM</b></p> <p>An action is right if it produces certain consequences, that is, <i>the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people</i>.</p> <p>(Jeremy Bentham; John Stuart Mill)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ethics of an action can only be measured by the consequences it produces.</li> <li>There is a close connection between the action itself and the consequences it produces.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unethical actions could be justified if they produce happiness.</li> <li>It is assumed that we can know and measure the possible consequences of an action.</li> <li>How do we measure the timeframe of an action’s effect? Is it ethical if it produces short-term or long-term happiness?</li> <li>How can we define and know what happiness is?</li> </ol>	<p>An ethical person will act in such a way to bring about a good outcome for others.</p> <p>We might pursue knowledge that will produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people (or minimize the unhappiness).</p>