Society: association of people.
  - Under a system of rules.
  - Work to advance the good of its members over time.

Morality: rules of conduct in this society.

Ethics: a philosophical study of morality - a rational examination.
Kantianism

- Ethical theory by the German philosopher Kant.
- Believe peoples actions ought to be guided by moral laws.
- Moral laws are universal.
- A *good will* is the only unqualified form of good.
- A *dutifull* person focus's on what they ought to do when making decisions.
- What makes a moral rule appropriate?
Categorical Imperative (First Formulation)

Act only from moral rules that you can at the same time will to be universal moral laws.

- Reasoning: If you make a promise to someone to get out of a difficult situation now, knowing you will break that promise later, is this moral?
- Can you make it a universal law where it is okay to break a promise?
- How reliable would a promise be if it was morally acceptable.
Categorical Imperative (Second Formulation)

Act so that you always treat both yourself and other people as ends in themselves, and never only as a means to an end.

- It's wrong to use somebody.
Kantianism - Uses

- It is rational.
  - Rational people can explain the “why” behind their solutions to an ethical problem.
- Produces universal moral guidelines.
  - Same morals apply to everyone for all of history.
- All people are treated as moral equals
  - It's an ethical framework that combats discrimination.
Kantianism - Problem

- Sometimes no single rule fully characterizes an action.
  - I steal bread to feed my starving children. How do we choose which moral rule to apply?
  - Am I stealing?
  - Am I caring for my children?
  - Am I trying to save the lives of innocent people?

- No way to resolve a conflict between rules.
  - If multiple moral rules apply there is no mechanism to rate which is more important of a law.

- Allows no exception to a law.
  - White lies: Kantian law states lying is wrong. But if you lie not to hurt someone's feeling that is deemed fine.
Utilitarianism

- Sharp contrast to Kantianism.
- Based on the Principle of Utility (Greatest Happiness Principle)
  - An action is right (or wrong) to the extent that it increases (or decreases) the total happiness of the affected parties.

**Utility**: tendency to produce happiness or prevent unhappiness for an individual or community.

- Add values that increase/decrease happiness of individuals/community: grand total decides if its morality.
- Don’t care about the **attitude** behind the action, only the **consequences** of action.
Act Utilitarianism

- Action is good based on the net effect of **consequences**.
- Measure the affects based on the increase and decrease of **beings**.
  - **Beings**: which beings are morally significant when deciding.
  - Makes environmental impact part of calculation when all animals are included.
  - More beings complicated the calculation.
Act Utilitarianism

Not all benefits have equal weight so seven attributes exit:

- **intensity**: magnitude of experience.
- **duration**: how long the experience lasts.
- **certainty**: probability it will actually happen.
- **propinquity**: how close the experience is in space and time.
- **fecundity**: its ability to produce more experience of the same kind.
- **purity**: extent to which pleasure is not diluted by pain, or vice versa.
- **Extent**: number of people affected.
Act Utilitarianism - Uses

- It focuses on happiness.
  - People tend to believe they are supposed to be happy.
- It is down-to-earth.
  - Straight forward to calculate.
  - Easier for diverse cultures to come to a collective decision.
- It is comprehensive.
Act Utilitarianism - Problem

- How big to we cast our new - the size will affect the outcome.
  - How do we decide how which beings to include.
- Requires a lot of energy to calculate for each moral decision.
- Susceptible to the problem of moral luck.
  - Some actions do not have the intended consequences.
Rule Utilitarianism

- Based on the Principle of Utility.
- Focus on the adoption of moral rules.
  - Rules have to increase the happiness of the community if adopted by everyone.
- Act: applied Principle of Utility to individual morals.
- Rule: applied Principle of Utility to moral rules.
Rule Utilitarianism - Uses

- Simpler to calculate.
  - Long term consideration coupled with make the rule universal makes it easier to calculate.
- Not every moral decision requires calculation.
  - Simple rely on already decided rules.
- Exceptional situations do not overthrow moral rules.
- Doesn’t suffer from moral luck.
- Appeals to a wide cross section of society.
Utilitarianism - Problem (General case)

- Uses a single scale or measure to evaluate.
- Ignored the problem of unjust distribution of good.
  - An action can produce as a sum a lot more good than bad.
  - Action can positively affect only a small subset of the beings positively.
Social Contract

- Inspired by the observation of social anarchy during war times.
- Based on idea that to avoid miserable conditions rational people understand cooperation is essential.
- People have a mutual agreement to follow guidelines.
- Civilized societies implicitly agree to two things:
  - Establishment of a set of moral rules governing relations among citizens.
  - Capable government enforce these rules.
- Purpose: works to guarantee everybody safety and their property while each person remains free.
- Participant agree to give themselves and their rights to the community.
- Bad rules do not get enacted: No one is above the rules.
Morality consists in the set of rules, governing how people are to treat one another, that rational people will agree to accept, for the mutual benefit, on the condition that others follow those rules as well.
Social Contact - Uses

- Framed in the language of rights.
- Explains why rational people act out of self-interest in the absence of a common agreement.
- Provides a clear ethical analysis of some important moral issues regarding the relationship between people and government.
Social Contact - Problem

None of us signed the social contact.

Some actions can be characterized multiple ways.

Doesn’t explain how to solve a moral problem when the analysis reveals conflicting rights.

Could be unjust to people who can’t uphold the social contract.

  There is a difference between choosing to break and not being able to uphold: mentally disabled people.

  It is often hard to differentiate the two groups.
Morality of breaking the Law

- What is moral and what is legal are not identical.
  - A wrong action may have no law forbidding it - still wrong.
- Begs the question: can an illegal action be the right action?
- Scenario:
  - You copy a copyrighted music CD and give it to your friend - its illegal to copy and distribute.
Social Contract theory Perspective

- Each individual bears certain burdens to receive certain benefits.
- Legal system protect peoples rights.
- Enforces common good over self interest.
- You are therefore obligated to follow the law:
  - For abiding the law we get to have our own rights respected.
  - Can only break the law if you follow a higher-order obligation.
  - Answer: wrong to copy the CD.
Kantian Perspective

- Act on moral rules we can will into universal moral rules.
- The first Categorical Imperative:
  - If we can will its okay to ignore an unjust law: congress to legislate laws is undermined.
  - Congress has to create laws that are just for society.
  - Can’t both have justice and there be no justice: a contradiction.
- The second Categorical Imperative:
  - You violate the legal writes of an individual: means to an end.
  - Violates the second law.
Rule Utilitarian Perspective

- It's a snowball effect: consequences of people ignoring laws they felt unjust?
- People ignoring the laws are happier.
- Crime increases though and places a greater burden on society to enforce the law.
- The negative effect outweighs the positive: it is wrong.
Act Utilitarian Perspective

Can argue there is a situation where the benefits outweigh the harm.

Scenario:
- Your friend is sick.
- Has no money.
- He would never have bought the CD.
- You make him happy by giving him something he enjoys.
- You are happier for making him feel better.
- You violated the rights of the individual who owns the copyrighted material.
- The good outweighs the bad in this formulation.
Analysis Conclusion

- Three of the four theories make it illegal and morally unacceptable to break the law.
- For an act utilitarian a blanket prohibition against copying cannot be morally justified.
  - But an act utilitarian evaluated each action individually.
  - Breaking the law to kill someone is not allowed.