

Handout #0: Questions to Consider in Applying Ethical Theories

1. Is the action a *moral* issue or does it belong to some other category (prudential, merely legal, or conventional)?
2. Is the viewpoint sensitive to the *situational differences* of cultures (Cultural Relativism)?
3. Does the action *unfairly* discriminate against any groups on the basis of sex, skin color, cultural background, age, etc.?
4. Is the action unduly hindering an individual's pursuit of happiness (Egoism)?
5. Does the action promote the happiness of *everyone* or does it promote the happiness of a limited group of people (Utilitarianism)?
6. Is the action one that respects the capacity of human beings to make free decisions?
7. Does the action use a person *merely as a means* (in terms of their instrumental value) rather than as an end (Kant)?
8. Even if the action does not create a direct danger for the people immediately involved, are there any *indirect or long-term consequences* that might be harmful (utilitarianism)?
9. Is the action one that we could make universal and apply equally to everyone?
10. Does the action violate any fundamental rights (e.g. the right to life, property, privacy, control over our own body)?
11. Is the action so contrary to common sense or our moral instinct that there is no way we could ever accept it as moral?