

## Kantian and Utilitarian approaches on a variety of issues

### On 'compatibility' with Judeo-Christian (J-C) moral traditions

| Kantian   | Utilitarian  |
|---|--|
| <p>Kant's background was Protestant, and his influence among later Protestant thinkers was immense</p>  | <p>it's quite easy to square some more recent forms of utilitarianism with the Golden Rule</p>   |
| <p>Kant's Categorical Imperative does chime with the <i>Golden Rule</i>, which is central to Christianity (and to other faith traditions)</p>                                       | <p>Situation Ethics seems to be a version of Christian Utilitarianism</p>  |
| <p>the Kantian notion of the value of the rational being and the respect for persons is in harmony with J-C notion of the sanctity of human life</p>                                | <p>although Act Utilitarianism (AU) could be criticised for yielding repugnant moral conclusions (e.g. executing an innocent person to maximise utility), Rule Utilitarianism (RU) avoids this weakness; it could support basic J-C precepts</p> |
| <p>the importance of motive echoes the Sermon on the Mount and its condemnation of bad intentions</p>   | <p>unlike Kantian ethics, utilitarianism seems better suited to resolving 'duty-conflict' situations by weighing different goods – this aligns it more closely to traditional Christian moral thought</p>  |
| <p>Kant's deontological ethic leads him to declare that it's your duty not to mislead a maniac as to the whereabouts of his intended victim – is this a J-C ethical conclusion?</p> | <p>animals, as sentient beings, can form part of the moral community in utilitarianism</p>   |
| <p>for Kant, animals do not form part of the moral community – this does not square with J-C tradition</p>  | <p>in the assessment of an act's morality, results rather than motives are central – disregard for motive does not square with J-C morality</p>  |
| <p>for Kant, religion's use and value is instrumental – it should support the moral life</p>  |  |
| <p>metaphysical questions are out of bounds</p>   |  |

| Issue/Action                       | Kantian Analysis | Utilitarian Analysis |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Telling a lie                      |                  |                      |
| Taking your own life               |                  |                      |
| Taking what does not belong to you |                  |                      |
| Treatment of animals               |                  |                      |
| Treatment of criminals             |                  |                      |