

Ethical Theory

Foundational Consequentialism

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Shelly Kagan, *Normative Ethics*, sections 6.4 & 6.5.

Questions

1. What is a foundational consequentialism and how does it differ from factoral consequentialism?
2. What results at the level of factors when you combine foundational consequentialism with . . .
 - A. A *monistic* (rather than pluralistic) foundational theory of the good and the evaluative focal point of actions?
 - B. A *pluralistic* foundational theory of the good and the evaluative focal point of actions?
 - C. The evaluative focal point of rules in *ideal* imbedding conditions?
 - D. The evaluative focal point of rules in *realistic* imbedding conditions?
3. Explain the arguments made by critics in an attempt to show that rule-based approaches reduce to act-based ones.