

JUSTICE

Lecture 2 – Classical Utilitarianism

1. The Pinto Affair
2. Cost/Benefit Analysis in law and public policy
3. Two distinctions:
 - a. Empirical vs. normative claims
 - b. Theory of society and politics vs. theory of social and political morality
4. Utilitarianism as a *comprehensive* theory of morality
5. The Principle of Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle
6. The argument for the Principle of Utility
 - a. “Consequentialist” view of right action (rightness is a function of consequences)
 - b. “Hedonist” theory of value (what matters intrinsically is happiness, understood as pleasure and the absence of pain)
 - c. Impartiality (everyone’s happiness counts equally)
 - d. Sum-maximization (what is to be maximized is the *sum* of happiness)
7. Implications of the Principle of Utility
 - a. Perfect altruism?
 - b. Enforcement of majority likes and dislikes?
 - c. Domain of civil liberties (where punishment “unprofitable”)
 - d. Meaning of rights
8. A note on Bentham

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

24.04J / 17.01J Justice
Spring 2012

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.