

Second Paper Assignment

(a) Describe J. S. Mill's principle of utility. (b) Explain what Mill means when he says that the principle of utility is the "First Principle" of morality and explain Mill's reasons for thinking that a person's (or culture's) morality must have a first principle. (c) Distinguish direct and indirect utilitarianism. (d) Describe Bernard Williams' hypothetical case in which "George the chemist" faces a moral dilemma. (e) Does the case of George the chemist show that some forms of utilitarianism are false, mistaken or that they provide us with a poor guide to action? (fi) If you think the example undermines some forms of utilitarianism, describe which and explain why you think the example undermines these forms of utilitarianism. (fii) On the other hand, if you think the example fails to undermine any form of utilitarianism explain why you think this is so. (g) How might an indirect utilitarian (who still thinks that promoting happiness is the point of adopting a moral code in the first place) justify acting in accordance with a rule on a particular occasion when she knows that if she made an exception to that rule on that particular occasion alone this would lead to more happiness than would result if she did not make an exception on that occasion?

Due 11/9/16 in class

The paper must be 4-5 pages long, double-spaced text in a normal font (e.g. Times New Roman 12 pt.), with normal tabs and margins (e.g. Microsoft Word's default settings).