

PHIL 160, B
Spring 2006, Rubin

Handout 12: Formulating Act-Utilitarianism

AUb: An act-token, x , is morally right if and only if x results in the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

AUm: An act, x , is morally right if and only if x results in more pleasure and less pain than any alternative would result in.

AUh*: An act-token, x , is morally right if and only if there is no other act-token the agent of x could have done at the time of x instead of x that would result in a higher quantity of pleasure-minus-pain than x would result in.

D1: The hedonic utility of an act-token x =df. the total quantity of pleasure that would result from x minus the total of quantity of pain that would result from x .

D2: An act-token, x , maximizes hedonic utility =df. no alternative to x has a higher hedonic utility than x .

D2': An act-token, x , maximizes hedonic utility =df. x has at least as much hedonic utility as any alternative to x .

D3: y is an alternative to x =df. y is another act-token that the agent of x can do at the time of x instead of x .

AUh: An act-token, x , is morally right if and only if x maximizes hedonic utility.