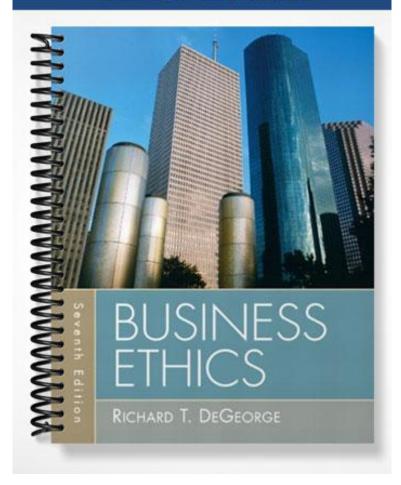
TEST BANK



Instructor's Manual with Essays and Quizzes

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BUSINESS ETHICS

Seventh Edition

Richard DeGeorge

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CHAPTER 1: ETHICS AND BUSINESS

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Identify what the Myth of Amoral Business is.
- 2. Understand the relationship between business as a human activity and, thus, as something that can be evaluated from a moral point of view.
- 3. Understand the relationship between business and society, as a whole.
- 4. Identify descriptive ethics, normative ethics, and metaethics.
- 5. Identify how business issues fits with the other systems of ethics.
- 6. Identify the five kinds of activities that comprise business ethics.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

HORATIO ALGER AND STOCK OPTIONS

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the novels by Horatio Alger caught the imagination of young Americans. The stories presented a "rags to riches" plot about the energetic and dedicated work of the hero. The novels gave flesh to the widespread belief that America was the land of opportunity in which those who worked hard could make it big. Hard work and a little luck were all that was required. Oddly, alongside that belief was another contradictory one that anyone who was or became rich must have become so by unethical activity and behavior.

Stock options have been one way in which the American "dream" was instantiated – companies made stock options a feature of employee compensation in lieu of higher compensation. As stock options rose, many employees, particularly in high-tech companies, became very wealthy – on paper. As the market dropped, and the value of the stock dropped below the strike price, the weaknesses and volatility of the stock option programs was made clear. Additionally, the large blocks of stock given to top executives far exceeded those options given to employees. The disparity seems to have influenced both the rags to riches image of Horatio Alger and the suspicion that those who had exceeding wealth had acquired it unscrupulously.

The American people have for a long time been ambivalent in their response, and despite a growing consensus that ethics has a role to play in business, the public view of business is still expressed in what can be called the *Myth of Amoral Business*.

THE MYTH OF AMORAL BUSINESS

The Myth of Amoral Business expresses the ambivalence of many toward business and a popular, widespread view of American business. The myth describes how many American businesses and American businessmen and businesswomen perceive themselves and are perceived by others: Business is concerned primarily with profit. To earn a profit, a business produces goods or provides services and engages in buying and selling. According to the myth, however, businesses and people in business are not explicitly concerned with ethics. They are not unethical or *immoral*; rather, they are *amoral* insofar as they feel that ethical considerations are inappropriate in business. What is the true relation of ethics and business, which is only slowly emerging? What are the indications of its emergence?

BUSINESS ETHICS AND ETHICS

Business Ethics as a Part of Ethics

- 1. Descriptive ethics is closely related to anthropology, sociology, and psychology and leans heavily on them.
 - It consists of studying and describing the morality of a people, culture, or society.
 - It compares and contrasts different moral systems, codes, practices, beliefs, principles, and values.
 - It provides basic material that normative ethics must account for, and it provides a touchstone of the considered morality of a people or society with which the normative theory must more or less coalesce.

- 2. *Normative ethics* builds on the whole that descriptive ethics provides and attempts to supply and justify a coherent moral system based on it.
 - It attempts to form into a related whole the various norms, rules, and values of a society's morality. It tries to render these as consistent and coherent as possible, with perhaps some hierarchical arrangement of norms.
 - It attempts to find the basic principles from which the particular norms can be derived.
 - It attempts, in a variety of ways, to justify the basic principle of morality.
 - It attempts to provide a procedure by which conflicting norms can be adjudicated and particular cases decided.
- 3. *Metaethics*, the third portion of general ethics, is closely related to normative ethics. Metaethics is the study of normative ethics, and, to some extent, both normative and descriptive ethics involve some metaethical activity. It is sometimes called analytical ethics because it is concerned with analysis.
 - First, metaethics deals with the meaning of moral terms. It asks, for instance, what the terms *good* and *bad* mean in the moral sense and what moral responsibility, moral obligation, and other similar phrases mean. Meaning, of course, is closely related to linguistic usage. Some people think meaning is identical with such usage. To say what good means may be distinct from saying what things or actions are good. The former is generally considered a metaethical concern, the latter a normative ethical concern.
 - Second, metaethics studies the logic of moral reasoning.

The analysis of moral reasoning involves clarifying and evaluating presuppositions and investigating the validity of moral arguments. A famous, and still not completely resolved, metaethical dispute concerns the question of whether a moral ought or duty can be derived logically from a statement of what is, exclusive of normative premises. For instance, from the fact that people typically wish to live rather than die, can we infer a right to life or an injunction against murdering them?

From the fact that people pursue pleasure, can we conclude that it is ethically right or good to pursue pleasure? If we cannot derive how we should act from facts about how we do act, can we derive them from any set of facts, or do we need values or preferences or rules? If we do, why should we act in accordance with these? What is the basis or rationale for prescribing how we should act? The general answer to that question is metaethical. A particular theory that in fact presents a basis or rationale is a normative theory.

• Third, metaethics analyzes hidden presuppositions and brings them to light for critical scrutiny. Many of the activities of ordinary life are simply accepted as given. By viewing them as social constructs, one can look, for instance, at the presuppositions of what is taken to be a just society or a just practice and see if it stands up to critical scrutiny.

Business ethics typically involves five kinds of activities.

- The first is the applying of general ethical principles to particular cases or practices in business. Deciding whether the actions involved are immoral or morally justifiable is important. But the analysis of cases does not end there. Solving cases frequently involves the development, as well as the application, of special rather than general moral principles, which can nonetheless be made universal. Cases involving unethical activity sometimes suggest issues that need attention, clarification, and discussion. Such cases also challenge us to consider imaginatively how we can prevent similar cases from arising in the future, and to develop suggestions that business, if it wishes to act ethically, might implement, or that government, if necessary, might adopt. Some of the questions are as follows: What changes in organization, managerial techniques, social structures, programs, or approaches are required? And would moral imagination, care in assessing future development, or changes in attitude help preclude moral dilemmas? Business ethics, however, involves more than just applying moral principles to business.
- The second kind of activity is metaethical. We shall investigate, for instance, whether moral terms that are generally used to describe individuals and the actions they perform can also be applied to organizations, corporations, businesses, and other collective entities. For instance, are corporations artifacts to be controlled, or moral or quasi-moral entities with rights, or do they have some other status? Do they have consciences in the same way individuals do? Does moral language appropriately apply to them, and if so, does it apply in the same way as it does to individuals? The answers to these questions are not supplied by general ethical theory, which traditionally has been concerned with the actions of human individuals. The meaning of *responsibility* must be changed if it is to be appropriately applied to corporations as well as to human persons. The analysis of this type of problem in business ethics cannot take place in abstraction from general ethical theory. There is a reciprocal relation between business ethics and general ethics. But those involved in business ethics often engage in metaethical inquiries that their work demands and that general theory does not provide.

- A third activity of business ethics is the analysis of the presuppositions of business—both moral presuppositions and presuppositions from a moral point of view. Because business operates within an economic system, part of the proper task of business ethics is to raise questions about the morality of economic systems in general and about the morality of specific, for example, the American, economic systems in particular. In evaluating structures of business, we must also analyze the meaning and justification of such nonmoral terms as *property*, *exploitation*, *competition*, and the presuppositions and uses of cost-benefit analyses, accounting procedures, and so on.
- Fourth, those in business ethics are sometimes led by embedded problems to go beyond the field of ethics into other areas of philosophy and into other domains of knowledge, such as economics or organization theory. But when they go beyond their own areas, they usually do so to resolve some problem in business ethics or to investigate in some other area what appeared, initially, to be a problem in business ethics. This activity becomes especially important in dealing with macromoral issues, such as whether rich countries have any moral obligations to poor countries, or multinational corporations to host countries. Here our ordinary moral intuitions are less clear than they are in our personal dealings with individuals. Hence, there is a special need to sort out the issues carefully, to see which are moral and which are not, and to clarify the language and the level of moral discourse. Sometimes the task concerns reducing moral problems to managerial, organizational, or economic problems, or vice versa.
- The fifth activity in which business ethics is typically involved is describing morally praiseworthy and exemplary actions, of either individuals in business or particular firms. Business ethics initially developed in reaction to scandals, and the cases that aroused public indignation were those that violated fundamental norms of human decency. Business ethics, however, is involved not only in the negative task of trying to clarify what actions are wrong, but also of presenting moral ideals to which businesspeople and corporations can rise. Just as society provides moral exemplars, heroes, saints, and others on whom we can model our lives and behavior, so there are moral exemplars in the business world who can serve as examples to others and set a goal toward which others might aspire.

Business ethics can help people approach moral problems in business more systematically and with better tools than they might otherwise use. It can help them to see issues they might typically ignore. It can also impel them to make changes they might otherwise not be moved to make. But business ethics will not, in and of itself, make anyone moral. Business ethics, as is true of ethics in general, presupposes that those who study it already are moral beings, that they know right from wrong, and that they wish to be even better, more thoughtful, and more informed moral beings. Business ethics will not change business practices unless those engaged in the practices that need moral change wish to change them. Business ethics can produce arguments showing that a practice is immoral, but obviously, only those in a position to implement the changes will be able to bring them about. Business ethics is a field with practical import, but it is up to those who study it to put what they learn into practice.

CASE SUMMARIES

The Case of the Collapsed Mine

Though this case is fictitious, the reality of collapsed mines in the coal industry is an unfortunate reality. The use of cases can cause general questions in ethics to come into clearer focus.

Consider the case of the collapsed mine shaft. In a town in West Virginia, miners were digging coal in a tunnel thousands of feet below the surface. An explosion traps eight miners in a pocket. The explosion was one of great force, and the extent of the tunnel's collapse was considerable. The cost of reaching the men in time to save their lives would amount to several million dollars. The problem facing the manager was whether the expenditure of such a large sum was worth it. What, after all, was a human life worth? Who should make the decision, and how should it be made? Did the manager owe more to the stockholders of the corporation or to the trapped workers? Should he use the slower, safer, cheaper way of reaching them and save a large sum of money, or the faster, more dangerous, more expensive way, and possibly save their lives?

TEACHING STRATEGIES

As with some chapters of this text, the first case study is a starting point for conversation and for the earlier section of the chapter. Another case study completes the chapter. At times, it is more pedagogically appropriate to save both case studies for later, and in those instances, the opening case study is grouped along with the concluding one.

In this chapter, however, as the story of Horatio Alger and the historical background with regard to stock options is crucial in developing the notion of the myth that is the arc of the entire text, it is discussed prior to the beginning of the chapter material.

As a pedagogical matter, it would be helpful here to encourage students to offer stories they have heard or that are part of their own past as examples of either "rags to riches" stories or corporate scandals. Generally discussions of predatory business practices or "pragmatic" business practices wherein "ethics" is seen as a quaint or irrelevant feature will be lively. One can expect the students to arrive at the substance of the Myth of Amoral Business through the course of the discussion. Then, it makes it clearer going forward that there is an argument being developed throughout the text as well as in the opening chapter – that the Myth of Amoral Business is a myth and that there is not only a place for ethics in business, but indeed, that ethical business is itself good business.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The Myth of Amoral Business Metaethics Property Exploitation Competition Descriptive ethics Normative ethics

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1. What is the Myth of Amoral Business? In what ways is it both an accurate representation of business and an inaccurate one?
- 2. Compare and contrast descriptive ethics and normative ethics.
- 3. What are the three kinds of business ethics discussed in the chapter, and how are they similar and different?
- 4. How is the "business of business" decided? By whom and on what basis?
- 5. What is the difference between metaethics and casuistry?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 1. Who was the moral philosopher who wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as well as *The Wealth of Nations?*
 - A. John Locke
 - B. John Wesley
 - C. David Hume
 - D. Adam Smith
 - E. Immanuel Kant
- 2. Who was the philosopher who condemned usury?
 - A. Thomas Aquinas
 - B. Reinhold Niebuhr
 - C. Adam Smith
 - D. Immanuel Kant
 - E. G. W. F. Hegel
- 3. The Myth of Amoral Business is consistent with which of the following?
 - A. Business and people in business are immoral.
 - B. Businesses and people in business are inherently ethical.
 - C. Businesses and people in business are not explicitly concerned with ethics.
 - D. Businesses and people in business are unethical
- 4. Which of the following describes descriptive ethics?
 - A. It deals with the meanings of moral terms.

- B. It compares and contrasts different ethical systems, codes, practices, and beliefs.
- C. It attempts to form into a related whole the various norms, rules, and values of a society's morality.
- D. It studies the logic of moral reasoning.
- 5. Which of the following describes normative ethics?
 - A. It attempts to form into a related whole the various norms, rules, and values of a society's morality.
 - B. It compares and contrasts different ethical systems, codes, practices, and beliefs.
 - C. It studies the logic of moral reasoning.
 - D. It deals with the meanings of moral terms.
- 6. Which of the following describes metaethics?
 - A. It compares and contrasts different ethical systems, codes, practices, and beliefs.
 - B. It attempts to form into a related whole the various norms, rules, and values of a society's morality.
 - C. It attempts to justify the basic principle of morality.
 - D. It analyzes hidden presuppositions and brings them to light for critical scrutiny
- 7. Which of the following describes normative ethics?
 - A. It attempts to justify the basic principle of morality.
 - B. It compares and contrasts different ethical systems, codes, practices, and beliefs.
 - C. It consists of studying and describing the morality of a people, culture, or society.
 - D. It analyzes hidden presuppositions and brings them to light for critical scrutiny
- 8. Special ethics applies to which of the following?
 - A. It analyzes hidden presuppositions and brings them to light for critical scrutiny
 - B. It consists of studying and describing the morality of a people, culture, or society.
 - C. It analyzes societal practices and their application to particular problems.
 - D. It consists of applying general ethics to particular problems.
- 9. Which of the following is the art of solving difficult problems, cases, or deliberations through the careful application of moral principles?
 - A. special effects
 - B. normative ethics
 - C. casuistry
 - D. metaethics
- 10. Business ethics is typically which of the following?
 - A. special effects
 - B. normative ethics
 - C. casuistry
 - D. metaethics

ANSWERS: 1. D; 2. A; 3. C; 4. B; 5. A; 6. D; 7. A; 8. D; 9. C; 10. C

CHAPTER 2: CONVENTIONAL MORALITY AND ETHICAL RELATIVISM

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Identify the levels of moral development.
- 2. Identify the differences between subjective and objective morality.
- 3. Identify the differences between descriptive relativism and normative ethical relativism.
- 4. Identify the differences between moral absolutism and moral pluralism.
- 5. Identify the differences between theologically based ethics and philosophically based ethics.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE MORALITY

Three characteristics are usually associated with such judgments.

- First, moral judgments about the rightness or wrongness of an action are held to be universally applicable. If an action is right for me, it is also right for anyone else in the same circumstances. If it is wrong for you, it is also wrong for anyone else similarly placed. Something of the notion of universality is captured in the injunction "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The moral rule against murder says it is wrong for anyone to murder someone else. It is universal because it applies to everyone.
- Second, moral judgments are important. They are so important, in fact, that they override other considerations. We are morally bound to do what we sometimes may not want to do. For instance, it is wrong to steal, even when we would like to steal. If we say that it is our moral duty to perform an action, that means we have an obligation to do it, and this can only be overridden by a stronger moral consideration. Convenience, personal gain, and even legal requirements fall before moral obligations.
- Third, moral praise can properly accompany the doing of morally right actions, and moral blame can properly accompany acting immorally. If we say that someone in a business transaction acted immorally, this means that, from a moral point of view, it is appropriate for us to blame that person. For instance, if taking bribes is immoral, then those involved in bribery deserve moral blame or censure.

DESCRIPTIVE RELATIVISM

Descriptive transcultural relativism describes the differences between cultures. In some cases, the differences are such that the terms "right" and "wrong" or "better" and "worse" are not applicable to the differences noted. All cultures have a language, and some languages are more complex than others. But it makes little sense to say that one language is, in some absolute sense, better than another. Similarly, many aspects of one culture will differ from aspects of another, but the two can be equally good.

NORMATIVE ETHICAL RELATIVISM

Normative ethical relativism claims that when any two cultures or any two people hold different moral views of an action, both can be right. Thus, an action may be right for one person or society, and the same action, taken in the same way, may be wrong for another person or society, and yet the two persons or societies are equally correct.

MORAL ABSOLUTISM

One alternative to ethical relativism is *moral absolutism*. A moral absolutist holds that there are eternal moral values and eternal moral principles that are always and everywhere applicable.

MORAL PLURALISM

We can distinguish four levels of moral pluralism: radical moral pluralism, the pluralism of moral principles, the pluralism of moral practices, and the pluralism of self-realization.

- Radical moral pluralism describes that state of affairs in which people hold mutually irreconcilable views about morality, such as what the terms "right" and "wrong" mean, and which actions are right or wrong.
- A plurality of moral principles within a society does not necessarily mean irreconcilable diversity. Pluralism on the level of moral principles is compatible with social agreement on the morality of many basic practices.
- On the level of specific actions, we encounter a variety of moral opinions about some of them. This pluralism regarding moral practices may stem from differences of moral principles, but it may also stem from differences of fact or perception of facts, differences of circumstances, or differences in the weighing of relevant values. Even when there is basic agreement on principles, not all moral issues are clear.
- The fourth level of moral pluralism is that of self-realization. As long as the members of a society abide by the basic moral norms, they are allowed, in such a pluralistic society, to choose freely their other values and their lifestyles.

PLURALISM, BUSINESS, AND THE LAW

- What laws should a society establish and how are they justified? Many laws prohibit immoral practices; immoral practices, for the most part, are socially harmful practices. Some, such as murder, stealing, and perjury, are so harmful that to moral sanction is added the sanction of law. Hence, one way to argue that a law should be passed is to argue that the conduct the law is to govern is immoral and seriously harmful to society. For instance, racial discrimination was immoral before it was made illegal. The worst abuses by business—such as slave or child labor or sweatshop conditions—although unethical could only be substantially eliminated when made illegal. If law were the only guide, it would not have been possible to argue against those abuses.
- Law is for the most part reactive. There is a lag between practices that society discovers are harmful and legislation being drafted and passed to render them illegal. One reaction to scandals is often an attempt to preclude similar future scandals by legislation. Thus law is important not as a determinant of what is or should be permitted but as an enforcer of rules that aim to prevent social harm or promote human or social well-being.
- Not all laws are morally defensible. Laws requiring racial segregation and discrimination are a case in point. To abide by the law in practicing discrimination was, in fact, to act immorally. It is dangerous to equate law with what one is morally, as well as legally, required to do because this denies the possibility of arguing, from a moral point of view, that either a law should be passed or a bad law should be repealed.
- Not everything that is immoral can be made illegal. Although, for instance, it is immoral to lie, this does not mean that all lying should be made illegal. Such a law would be unenforceable, nor would it be worth the time and effort to try to enforce it to any considerable extent. Yet it does not follow—even for those in businesses who claim that they are bound only by law—that it would be right for businesspeople to lie whenever they feel like it, either to those within the company or to those with whom they do business. In most cases it would be considered bad business as well as immoral.
- All this notwithstanding, it is sometimes the case that actions that are not unethical in themselves become unethical because of laws that are passed. This is because in general, members of a society have a moral obligation to obey the just laws of their society. An example would be the obligation to pay one's income tax. Members of a society have no general moral obligation to give money to the government. Once a tax law is passed, however, they incur the moral obligation to pay their fair share of taxes. The amount they pay is determined by the law, and may vary from time to time, place to place, and level of income. Cheating on one's income tax is both unethical and illegal, and in this case is unethical because it is illegal.

BUSINESS AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS

Just as law is important but not the solution to moral pluralism, so religious ethics is important to many in and out of business, but not the solution to moral pluralism because there are many religions and their ethical codes are not all the same. This is clearly the case on the global level and is also true on the national level if a single religion is not enforced by the state. This does not mean that individuals may and many do live their lives, including their business lives, on the basis of their religiously held moral beliefs.

APPROACHES TO ETHICAL THEORY

The search for a completely satisfactory ethical theory is a never-ending one. There is no theory on which all people or all philosophers agree. Nonetheless, we need not describe here the many different ethical systems that have been developed in the history of philosophy. Through the centuries, two basic approaches to moral reasoning have

prevailed. One approach argues on the basis of ends. This approach to ethical reasoning is called a *teleological* approach, the most prominent version of which is consequentialism. The latter states that whether an action is right or wrong depends on the consequences of that action. A common form of consequentialist ethics, one that is very strongly represented in our society, is *utilitarianism*, a theory we shall examine in the next chapter.

Philosophers and others who wish to be consistent often attempt to use only one of the ethical approaches to questions. Because they hold a single approach, they are called *ethical monists*. Those who are willing to mix their approaches are sometimes called *ethical pluralists*. They hold one primary approach or set of principles but join them with another approach or set of principles.

CASE SUMMARY

Purchasing Abroad

Mary Thompson is the vice president and head of the strategic planning division of an American-based multinational. She long believed in the slogan "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," but in recent years she has been forced to rethink that position. Faced with the prospects of purchasing fabric likely produced with forced labor, or with child labor, or in situations where women are systematically oppressed, should she use American values and American views as a guide to what is right and wrong, or should she simply get the best products she can at the best price and not worry about how or by whom they are produced?

TEACHING STRATEGIES

It is most important to make clear the distinctions between relativism and consequentialism and the ways in which each of the principles/ethical approaches is developed. Incorporating the Purchase Abroad case allows the instructor to distinguish between descriptive and normative relativism (and, perhaps, continue the conversation of the first chapter on the Myth of Amoral Business into this chapter).

Making the distinction between ethical monism and ethical pluralism is also an important building block for later chapters. The different paths – approaching problems from a single ethical perspective or from a plurality of them – form the basis of much of the analysis in the forthcoming chapters.

This is a chapter that continues to build the foundation of the ethical frameworks that will be necessary for truly assessing ethical situations. Again, it is important that that foundation is solidly understood before progressing.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Ethical pluralism
Ethical monism
Consequentialism
Utilitarianism
Moral pluralism
Relativism
Descriptive Relativism
Normative Ethical Relativism
Moral Absolutism
Subjective Morality
Objective Morality

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1. Compare and contrast theologically base ethics and philosophically based ethics.
- 2. Compare and contrast the teleological approach to ethics and a deontological one.
- 3. What is the difference between ethical monism and ethical pluralism? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
- 4. What is the difference between saying that something is objectively right and subjectively right?

5. What is the distinction between being a moral absolutist and a moral relativist? Is there some position between the two and, if so, what is it?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 1. What is the first level of moral development, according to Lawrence Kohlberg?
 - A. preconventional
 - B. conventional
 - C. autonomous
 - D. postconventional
- 2. According to Lawrence Kohlberg, what is the second level of moral development?
 - A. preconventional
 - B. conventional
 - C. autonomous
 - D. postconventional
- 3. Which level of moral development does Kohlberg call the "principled level"?
 - A. Level I
 - B. Level IV
 - C. Level III
 - D. Level II
- 4. What does it mean for an action to be subjectively right?
 - A. An action is subjectively right if it is in conformity with the moral law.
 - B. An action is subjectively right if a person believes that the action is moral.
 - C. An action is subjectively right if it promotes the greater good.
 - D. An action is subjectively right if it advances one's own self-interest.
- 5. What does it mean for an action to be objectively right?
 - A. An action is objectively right if a person believes that the action is moral.
 - B. An action is objectively right if it promotes the greater good.
 - C. An action is objectively right if it advances one's own self-interest.
 - D. An action is objectively right if it is in conformity with the moral law.
- 6. What is the name given to philosophers who attempt to use only one ethical approach to ethical questions?
 - A. ethical pluralists.
 - B. utilitarians
 - C. ethical monists.
 - D. deontologists
- 7. What is the name given to philosophers who construct their ethical approaches with mixed approaches?
 - A. ethical pluralists.
 - B. utilitarians
 - C. ethical monists.
 - D. deontologists
- 8. Consequentialism belongs to which sort of ethical approach?
 - A. deontological
 - B. special
 - C. teleological
 - D. theological
- 9. A Kantian ethical approach applies to which sort of general ethical approach?
 - A. deontological

- B. special
- C. teleologicalD. theological
- 10. John Stuart Mill's approach to ethics would be classified as which sort of general ethical approach?
 - A. deontological
 - B. utilitarian
 - C. theological
 - D. ontological

ANSWERS. 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. B; 5. D; 6. C; 7. A; 8. C; 9. A; 10. B