

Section 2 of the *Groundwork*: The Big Picture of the different formulations of the Categorical Imperative [see handout on “Formulations of the Categorical Imperative” with this handout].

This section works up to the “supreme principle of morality,” which is expressed as a categorical imperative (CI). Kant formulates the CI in several distinct ways.

1. Each of the formulations is important to consider and scrutinize in its own right. Each introduces powerful moral ideas.
2. We want to know several things about *each* of these formulations separately, and the concepts involved in it:
 - a. How does Kant derive each of the formulations? What is his argument for them?
 - b. How did Kant understand the concepts, how they fit together
 - c. How did Kant understand the formula/formulation operating as the supreme moral principle, especially in relation to the examples he gives to illustrate it? [We looked at this systematically in class with the Formula of Universal Law (FUL/N), and in the handout on FUL]
 - d. How do *we* understand the concepts Kant uses in the formula, and is this understanding different in some way from Kant’s?
 - e. Do we agree that the formulation/formula operates in the way Kant thought it did, to generate the various actions, principles of action, and judgments of rightness and wrongness of maxims and principles that he thought?
3. Once Kant has got the different formulations, how do they relate to each other:
 - a. Do they all say the same thing, just in different ways?
 - b. Do the formulations all yield the same moral judgments? [they could do that without meaning the same thing, just as deontology and consequentialism sometimes yield the same moral judgments.]
 - c. Where they do yield the same moral judgments, do they give the same *explanation* of those judgments, i.e. of whether the maxims or acts in question are right or wrong?

Looking at all the formulations taken together, they rely at least on these key concepts, so we want to know how these are seen by Kant as relating to each other:

Rationality
 Universality
 End-in-itself
 Humanity
 Kingdom of ends
 Autonomy