

Philosophy 302: Ethics Case Study

Your group is requested to do four things:

- Carefully read the situations in paragraphs A through E below.
- Rate the actions described in A through E from best to worst according to your personal ethics.
- Rate the actions described from best to worst according to your group as a whole.
- Justify why you rated the actions the way you did.

Situations: (Adapted from John Hospers, *Human Conduct* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972), 24.

[A] Because of graft and corruption among high officials in the city government, city taxes have to be raised 35 per cent.

[B] The ambulance brings to the hospital a man bleeding to death. The hospital, being a free city hospital, does not admit him. “We don’t have room,” the man at the receiving desk says falsely. “Take him to the other city hospital.” At the other city hospital he is also refused, on exactly the same grounds. So he is returned to the first hospital, but by that time he is dead.

[C] A group of Black soldiers in the South going home on leave is riding in a bus. An intoxicated white soldier on the bus becomes sick and vomits. The bus driver accuses one of the Blacks of doing it and has the bus evacuated while the Black soldiers clean it up. While they are working the driver calls the local sheriff and has the Black soldiers locked up for disorderly conduct. The judge sentences them to thirty days on the chain gang. They are not permitted to get in contact with Army headquarters or with their families who are expecting them home for Christmas the next day. (*Cf.*, *New Republic*, Vol. III, No. 1569, pp. 871-872).

[D] “Preachers, rabbis, priests . . . use religion to cloak and to support impersonal, wholesale murder—and the preparation for it. They condone the intent to murder millions of people by clean-cut young men flying and aiming intricate machineries toward Euro-Asia, zeroing in on cities full of human beings—young men who, two years before, were begging their fathers for the use of the family car for a Saturday-night date.” (C. W. Mills, *The Causes of World War Three* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958,) 126. (The issue is about religious leaders influencing political issues, not about the ethics of war.)

[E] The communist youth turns in his parents to the Secret Police for suspected activity hostile to the aims of the Party.

Rating and Justification:

	Situation	Justification
Best		
Worst		

