

Political Science

CSS-2026

Section-A

Q#2

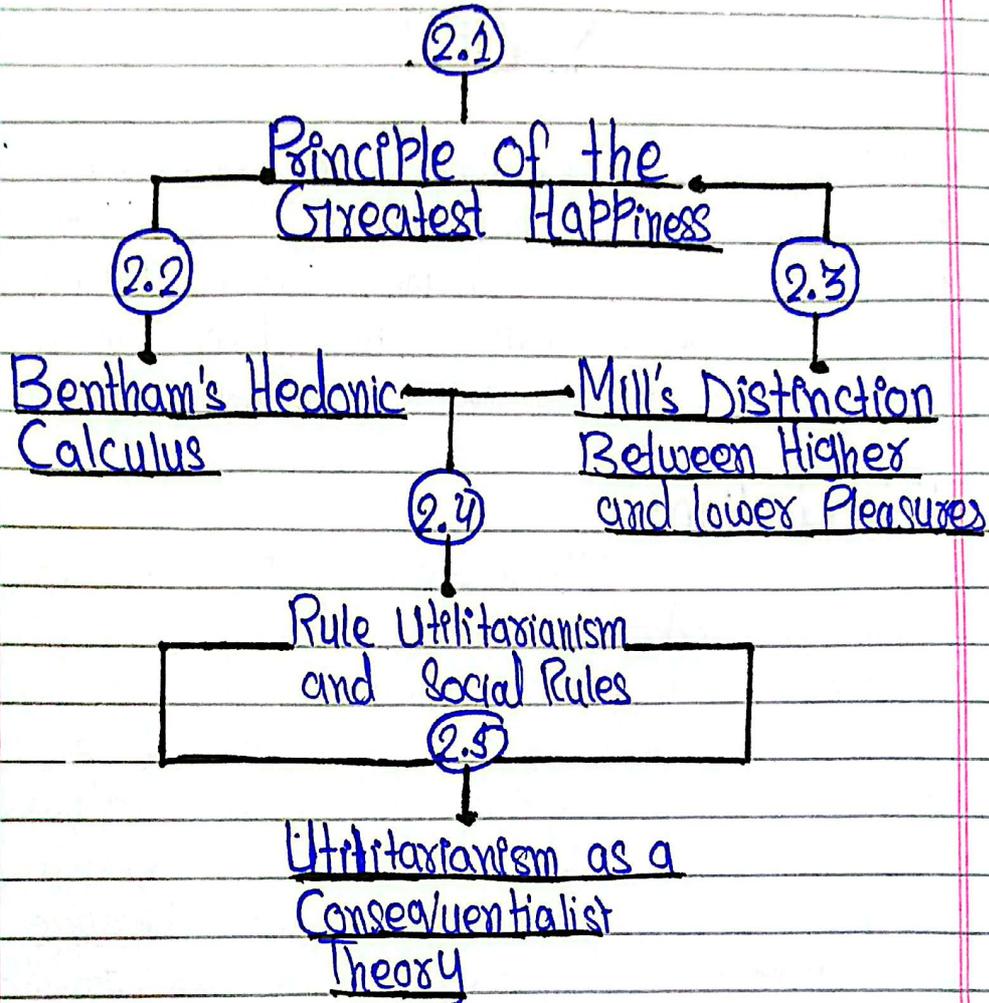
Utilitarianism remains to be one of the most important ideologies of western Political Thought. Explain Utilitarianism and write in detail about its application in contemporary times.

Introduction:

Utilitarianism is a major ethical and political doctrine in western political thought which evaluates actions and policies according to their consequences for human welfare. The central idea is that the best policy is the one that produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. The theory was systematically developed by Jeremy Bentham and later refined by John Stuart Mill during the 19th century. Utilitarian ideas influenced democratic governance, lawmaking, and modern public policy debates across many contemporary societies today worldwide.

02

Explanation of Utilitarianism



2.1 Principle Of the Greatest Happiness

The core principle of utilitarianism is that moral actions and political decision must maximize overall happiness

and minimize suffering in society.
According to the Jeremy Bentham
that human beings are governed
by two masters: pleasure and
pain.

2.2 Bentham's Hedonic

Calculus

Bentham attempted to make
moral judgment systematic through
a method known as hedonic
calculus which evaluates the
consequences of actions based
on measurable factors.

Bentham describes this method
in "An introduction to the Principles
of Morals and Legislation", arguing
that governments should adopt
policies that generate the greatest
measurable social benefit.

2.3 Mill's Distinction Between

Higher And Lower Pleasures

John Stuart Mill criticized Bentham's

Purely quantitative view and argued that not all pleasures are equal in quality.

According to the Mill, intellectual, moral, and cultural pleasures are superior to purely physical pleasures.

2.4 Rule Utilitarianism

And Social Rules

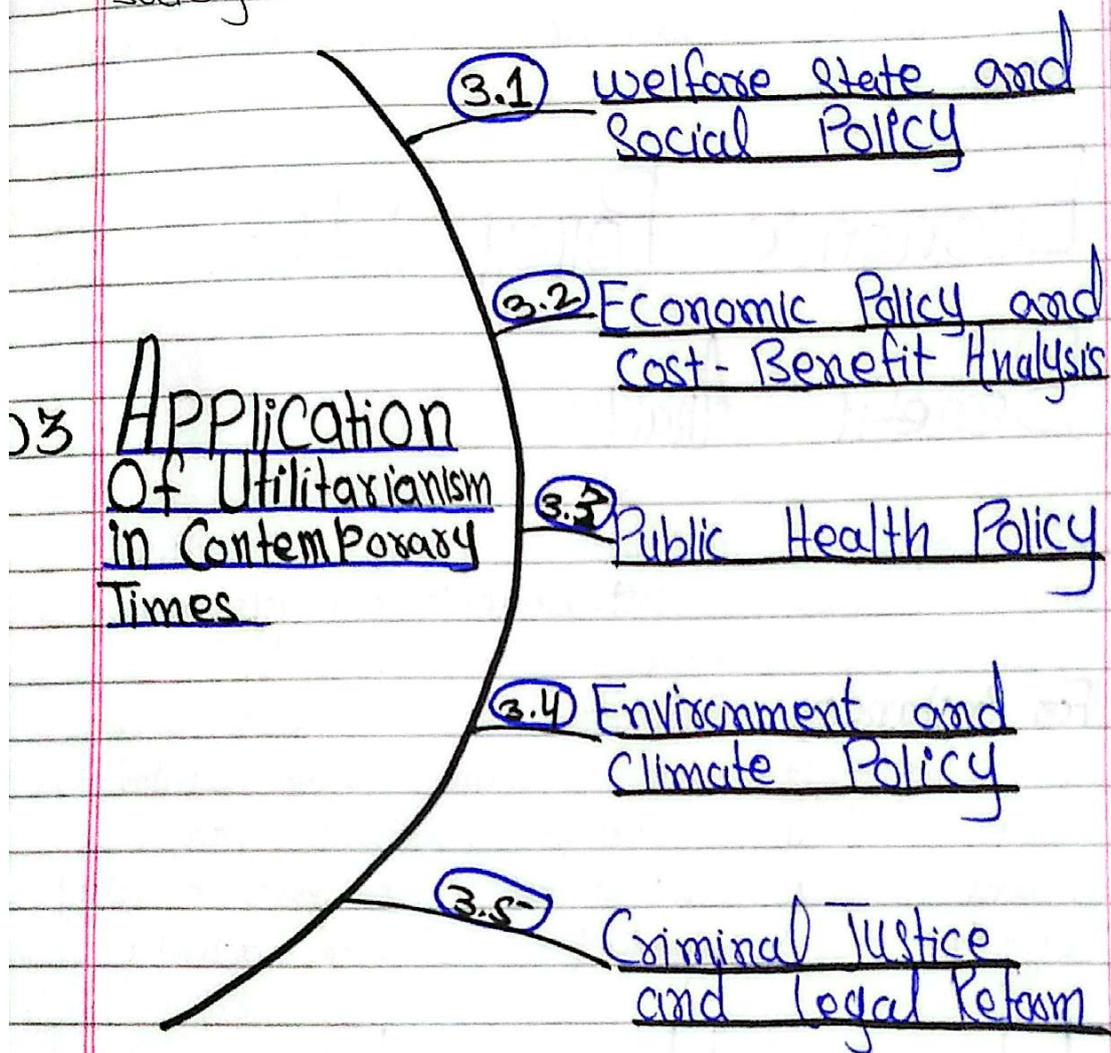
Later thinkers expanded utilitarianism into rule utilitarianism, which argues that societies should follow general rules that maximize overall happiness over time.

According to the Andrew Heywood that this development in political Theory: An Introduction, noting that rule-based systems help maintain long-term social order.

2.5 Utilitarianism as a Consequentialist Theory

Utilitarianism belongs to the broader philosophical tradition known as

consequentialism, which judges the morality of actions based on their outcomes rather than intentions. According to this perspective, a policy is morally justified if its consequences produce greater overall welfare for society.



3.1 Welfare State And Social Policy

Modern welfare state apply utilitarian thinking when designing social policies aimed at improving the well-being of the majority. According to Andrew Heywood in Political Theory: An Introduction, utilitarian ideas strongly influenced the development of modern welfare policies in democratic states.

3.2 Economic Policy And Cost-Benefit Analysis

Governments frequently apply utilitarian logic through cost-benefit analysis when evaluating economic projects.

For instance, infrastructure projects such as highways or dams are justified when they benefit millions of citizens by improving transport, electricity supply, or ~~improving~~ economic activity.

3.3 Public Health Policy

Public health decisions frequently reflect utilitarian reasoning because they aim to protect the largest number of people. During the global crisis caused

by COVID-19 many countries proposed lockdowns and vaccination campaigns to reduce deaths and protect public health.

3.4 Environmental and Climate Policy

Utilitarian thinking is increasingly important in environmental policy because governments must consider the long-term welfare of humanity.

For instance, international climate agreements seek to limit greenhouse gas emissions to protect ecosystems and human populations.

3.5 Criminal Justice And Legal Reform

Utilitarian principles influence modern criminal justice system, particularly the idea that punishment should produce beneficial consequences such as deterrence or rehabilitation. The foundation of this utilitarian legal philosophy are

linked to the work of Jeremy Bentham, whose ideas about law and punishment influenced modern legal theory.

Conclusion

Utilitarianism remains a central doctrine in modern political and ethical thought. Its principle of maximizing collective welfare continues to influence policy decisions in economics, ~~not~~ healthcare, environmental protection, and law. Although critics debate its limits, the theory still provides a practical framework for evaluating public policies today.
