Intuitionism: An action is right iff you obey the prima facie duty that becomes a “duty proper” or binding duty in a given situation. Advocated by Sir W. D. Ross (1877-1971) in the (1930), this type of objectivist type of rule intuitionism claims that a significant set of moral principles are self-evident to us (pluralistic account of duties). We have an intuitive knowledge (internal perceptions) of the rightness & wrongness of acts. Intuition presents us with duties, a Latin word meaning “on first appearance” or “on first appearance.” Ross identifies 7 duties: (1) fidelity: keeping one’s promises; (2) reparation: making up for wrongs done to others; (3) gratitude (gratefulness & return the same); (4) non-injury (no harm to others); (5) justice (present or correct mismatch between beneficence person’s pleasure or happiness & their merit); (6) self-improvement (improving one’s condition). When you have to make a moral decision in a situation where prima facie duties come into conflict with each other, one prima facie duty will become unconditional, a will become the objective, overriding duty to obey; the conditional prima facie duties, you will be able to identify. 

Advantages: (1) Deontological yet not rigid in view of which one becomes the weightiest. Situational setting drives which conditional duty becomes unconditional; it will be self-evident via intuition which one to follow-& you are obligated to follow it.

Disadvantages: (1) List of prima facie duties is not prima facie duties is without justification; how can we be sure the list is accurate? (4) Don’t our intuitions change over time, space, & culture? (5) people have different intuitions about moral issues? (6) Is there a better procedure to follow to know which duties to trust

Kantian Ethics: An action is right iff it is in accord with the Categorical Imperative, that is, the supreme principle of morality. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) offers 3 formulations-which may be seen as a threefold way of considering the secularization of “Love your neighbor as yourself” or “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” First Formulation: “Act in conformity with the maxim and the maxim only, that you can will at the same time a universal law.” This means that what you consider doing, it must be something that you can will or accept that all do (universal); it is replacing individual preferences with purely universal terms. Second Formulation in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always an end and never as a means only.” In sum, every person has intrinsic value & that humanity is a limit or constraint on your action. Third Formulation: “Therefore, every rational being must act as if he were though his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends.” You have to will what is consistent with the operations of the kingdom as a whole. All people should consider themselves as both members & heads. Hypothetical Imperatives are instrumental, means-end imperatives that are expressive of the goals you personally want to achieve: if you want A, then do B (e.g., if you want to make an A+ in this course, meet & exceed course objectives, study a little bit every day, & regularly meet with your professor.

Advantages: (1) Fairness, consistency, & morally equal treatment of all people for they are intrinsically valuable; (2) emphasizes the Law of Non-contradiction; you would not will anything that is not rational; (3) emphasizes doing what is morally right (it is your duty); (4) universally binding & impartial-in order for an action to be morally permissible, you have to be able to will it for it all.

Disadvantages: (1) No clear way to resolve moral duties when they come into conflict with each other; (2) consequential moral systems in disguise enshrined in customs & law have been known to give the best consequences; (3) does not readily allow for gray areas because they are based on absolutes; (4) which duties qualify given time or location: are old duties still valid? (5) human welfare & misery: Some principles may result in a clash with what is best for human welfare & prescribe actions which cause human misery; (6) rule worship: the refusal to break a generously beneficial rule in those areas in which it is not most beneficial is rule worship; (7) exclusive focus on “rationality” ignores our relations to & with other human beings.

Advantages: (1) Deontological yet not rigid in view of using what prima facie duty will be most apropos & weighty; (2) Appeals to common sense. We don’t get tangled up in ethical theory, complex models, & confused by moral speculation. (3) Intuition about what is right & wrong have a distinctive force that is appealing; (4) Acknowledges real moral conflicts between duties & offers relief by following what is most weighty in a given situation; (5) Sensitive to context & behooves to take situational setting very seriously, carefully, & reflectively.

Disadvantages: (1) List of prima facie duties is not complete & does not follow a logical step-by-step procedure; (2) Provides no principle for determining what our actual moral obligations are in a particular situation. (3) List of prima facie duties is without justification; how can we be sure the list is accurate? (4) Don’t our intuitions change over time, space, & culture? (5) people have different intuitions about moral issues? (6) Is there a better procedure to follow to know which duties to trust instead of reliance upon intuition?