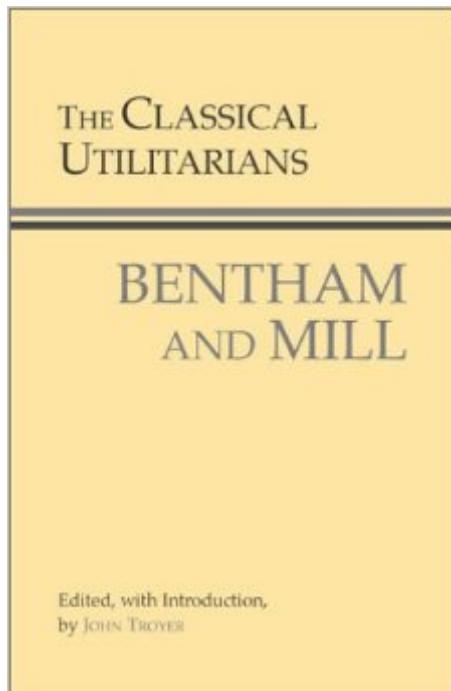


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The Classical Utilitarians (Hackett Classics)



Synopsis

This volume includes the complete texts of two of John Stuart Mill's most important works, Utilitarianism and On Liberty, and selections from his other writings, including the complete text of his Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy. The selection from Mill's A System of Logic is of special relevance to the debate between those who read Mill as an Act-Utilitarian and those who interpret him as a Rule-Utilitarian. Also included are selections from the writings of Jeremy Bentham, founder of modern Utilitarianism and mentor (together with James Mill) of John Stuart Mill. Bentham's Principles of Morals and Legislation had important effects on political and legal reform in his own time and continues to provide insights for political theorists and philosophers of law. Seven chapters of Bentham's Principles are here in their entirety, together with a number of shorter selections, including one in which Bentham repudiates the slogan often used to characterize his philosophy: The Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number. John Troyer's Introduction presents the central themes and arguments of Bentham and Mill and assesses their relevance to current discussions of Utilitarianism. The volume also provides indexes, a glossary, and notes.

Book Information

Series: Hackett Classics

Library Binding: 311 pages

Publisher: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. (March 15, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0872206505

ISBN-13: 978-0872206502

Product Dimensions: 1 x 5.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,352,292 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #65 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Utilitarianism #1052 in Books > Textbooks > Business & Finance > Economics > Economic Theory #3177 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Philosophy > Ethics

Customer Reviews

This volume suffers from too many omissions. While Troyer was wise to include J.S. Mill's "Utilitarianism" and "On Liberty" in their entirety, I can't understand why he covered Bentham only by including selections from the "Principles of Morals and Legislation". Such limited coverage of

Bentham will only continue the false impressions that the "Principles" is Bentham's only worthwhile text, that his main contributions to philosophy concerned punishment and the utilitarian calculus, and that while his name is a mainstay in utilitarian philosophy his other writings are esoteric and not worth reading. In point of fact, Bentham wrote voluminously and is almost single-handedly responsible for developing the utilitarianism of the early moralists into the theory in its recognizably secular and systematic form and making it a critical tool of moral and legal philosophy and political and social improvement. In 1776, Bentham first announced himself to the world as a proponent of utility as the guiding principle of conduct and law in "A Fragment on Government". In the "Principles" (printed 1780, published 1789), as a preliminary to developing a theory of penal law he detailed the basic elements of classical utilitarian theory. The penal code was to be the first in a collection of codes that would constitute a complete body of law based on the utility principle, the development of which was to engage Bentham in a lifetime's work and was to include civil, procedural, and constitutional law.

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