

**Hong Kong Catastrophic Risk Centre  
Hybrid Research Seminar**

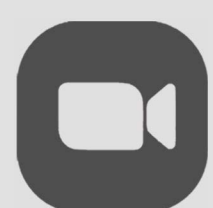
# **Maximising Rationality and Saving the Greater Number**

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It is typically assumed that the rationale behind a general obligation to save the greater number (SGN) is that there is a pro tanto obligation to make things go best, and that the death of the many is a worse thing than the death of the few because the lives of the many add up to outweigh the lives of the few. Some philosophers have rejected SGN because they do not buy into this rationale. In this paper, I argue that we can defend SGN without appealing to the notions of goodness simpliciter, the impersonal perspective, and interpersonal aggregation. Instead, we can appeal to the concept of maximising rationality: given a desire or goal to save everyone, *ceteris paribus*, we are rationally required to choose the option which best satisfies this desire or goal—i.e., the many over the few. I suggest that this approach not only avoids concerns raised by those who reject SGN but also answers the question of whether we can allow many smaller harms to outweigh a larger harm. Furthermore, this approach allows us to take a novel position in the debate about Effective Altruism.

**Venue: LKK302 & Zoom Seminar**



**zoom  
seminar**

Here is the link to the seminar –

[lingnan.zoom.us/j/98319515823?  
pwd=Q9Qa5HadK0gFWfVEm1fTmQnBY31w8.1](https://lingnan.zoom.us/j/98319515823?pwd=Q9Qa5HadK0gFWfVEm1fTmQnBY31w8.1)

**For more information:**

**<https://www.ln.edu.hk/philoso/hkcrc/>**

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**13  
Oct  
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**4:45-6:15 p.m. (HKT)**