

WHAT IS ETHICS?

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Welcome to Ethics! This field of study can be thought of in several ways, but for our purposes, we will think of Ethics as the study of applied value.¹ When we *talk* about Ethics, we are generally talking about one of three things:

1. Descriptive Ethics
2. Normative Ethics, or
3. Metaethics

Descriptive Ethics is describing what and how a person or group thinks about right and wrong. The goal is to *understand* the Other. Here we are not attempting to *evaluate* the Other's positions. We will not be spending much time doing descriptive ethics – we will leave that to the fields of Religious Studies, Sociology, History, et cetera.

Normative Ethics is the process of figuring out what is

1. Mark Schroeder, "Value Theory," in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2016 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2016), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/value-theory/>.

morally permissible or impermissible by applying a moral theory to a given problem or situation. The goal is to *figure out* what is right and wrong. Another way of saying this is that normative ethics is the *do-ing* of ethics. We will be spending a portion of our time in this course doing normative ethics. You will encounter lots of moral dilemmas, thought experiments, and historical reflections that will challenge you to coherently apply a given (or your own) moral approach to the problem to create solutions.

Metaethics is the process of thinking about Ethics itself.² This is what we will primarily be concerning ourselves with in this class. Some questions we will cover will include the following.

- What is the nature of value? Is it a fiction, created, or discovered?
- What beings are valuable (and to what degree)?
- What is the right or wrong making feature of our actions?
- What determines a valuable life (the good life)?

We will also look at various moral theories that have been

2. Geoff Sayre-McCord, "Metaethics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2014 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2014), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/metaethics/>.

posed as methods of determining what is moral and immoral. Major approaches include:

- Natural Law Theory,
- Utilitarianism,
- Deontology, and
- Virtue Ethics.

Our goal here is to understand the nature of Ethics and determine which ethical approaches are worthwhile. We might ask if the approach is coherent (consistent with itself without contradiction), complete (is able to address most ethical questions), pragmatic (is able to be lived out), et cetera. In this class, we will primarily be doing Metaethics.

Methods of Thinking about Ethical Problems³

Throughout this class, we will deal with ethical problems, situations in the abstract or real people's lives in which we must make a moral determination (example of doing

3. This section was drawn from David Svolba's chapter on the same topic in *Introduction to Ethics* from NGE Press. His work is licensed under the Creative Commons open culture licence (CC-BY).

normative ethics). We begin with a *hard case*, one which might pull us in different directions.

Baby Theresa. Theresa is born an anencephalic infant, which means that she will never be conscious, though she may live for several months since she has a functioning brain-stem that controls respiration and other life-sustaining processes. Theresa's parents are understandably devastated. After consulting with Theresa's doctors, the parents make a decision: they request that Theresa's healthy organs be removed, thereby killing her, and given to otherwise healthy children who will die if they do not receive an organ. The alternative is to donate Theresa's organs after she dies, but as we wait for nature to take its course children will die who could have been saved, and Theresa's organs will become less viable.⁴

Would it be *ethically wrong* to kill Baby Theresa in order to save the lives of other children?

How would we even begin to answer a question like this?

Some False Starts

Why not seek an answer to the question by...

4. Drawn from the actual case of Theresa Ann Campo Pearson. For an overview of the ethical issues involved, see <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5606434/>.

Consulting the law?

But there may not be a law that covers the hard case, in which case the law will not offer us any guidance. More importantly, however:

Is the law a reliable guide to right and wrong? Let's consider: can we think of actions (real or imagined, current or historical) that are legal but unethical? Can we think of actions that are illegal but ethical? If so – if legality and ethics can diverge – then the law probably isn't a reliable guide to determining the right thing to do.

Conducting an opinion poll?

But others may be as torn as we are concerning what to do, in which case an opinion poll won't offer us any guidance. More importantly, however:

Are opinion polls a reliable guide to right and wrong? Let's consider: can we think of actions that are (or *were*) popularly approved of but unethical? Can we think of ethical actions that are not popularly approved of? If so – if popular opinion and ethics can diverge – then opinion polls will not be a reliable guide to determining the right thing to do.

Going with 'gut feelings,' or the dictates of conscience?

But especially when it comes to hard cases, we may not have

clear feelings one way or the other—or, more likely still, our feelings might pull us in opposing directions, leading us to draw different conclusions about right and wrong. More importantly, however:

Are ‘gut feelings’ (or conscience) a reliable guide to right and wrong? Again, let’s apply the same *divergence test* we applied when considering the first two suggestions: can we think of examples in which conscience errs, or a person’s gut feelings lead her astray? We might also reasonably wonder about the *source* of gut feelings or dictates of conscience. Why think that these give us glimpses of ethical truth, rather than, for example, merely reflecting on assumptions and biases that we have accumulated through our upbringing and socialization?

Ethical Argument

There is a better approach to ethical hard cases than any of the false starts canvassed above: we can *think* about them. We can consider the *reasons* for and against certain ethical evaluations. We can construct and evaluate *ethical arguments* and see in which direction the weight of reasons tilt.

You might not be accustomed to thinking of ethics as a subject we can reason about. After all, many ethical disagreements seem anything but reasonable: they are often passionately emotional and intractable. But this might simply reflect the fact that we are not prone to reason about ethics *well*. Really, this is not so surprising, since reasoning well

about any subject, and certainly a subject as complex and difficult as ethics, requires considerable experience.

A first step in learning how to reason well about ethical issues is to learn how ethical arguments work. One standard form of ethical argument seeks to derive *particular ethical judgments*—for example, the judgment that it would be wrong to kill Baby Theresa—from *general ethical principles*. A general ethical principle is a statement that says that a certain *kind of action* is ethical or unethical.

Here, for example, is a general ethical principle, which we may call the **Benefits-Without-Harm Principle**, or

BWHP: If an action will benefit people, without harming anyone, then it is ethically right.

BWHP identifies what philosophers call a *sufficient condition* for ethically right action. If an action benefits people without causing any harm, then that's enough – it's sufficient – to make that action ethically right, regardless of other features of the action or the circumstances in which the action is performed.

Suppose we find BWHP intuitively compelling. Does it shed any light on our question about whether killing Baby Theresa would be unethical? It might seem to, for one could appeal to BWHP in making the following ethical argument:

Argument 1 (A1)

- 1) If an action will benefit people, without harming

anyone, then it is ethically right.

- 2) Killing Baby Theresa will benefit people, without harming anyone.
- 3) Therefore, killing Baby Theresa is ethically right.

For the moment, never mind whether this argument is convincing. Rather, try to appreciate how this method of arriving at ethical judgments differs significantly from the false starts we considered above.

Evaluating Ethical Arguments

In evaluating a simple ethical argument like A1, there are two basic questions we can ask:

- 1) Is the general principle to which the argument appeals (in this case, BWHP) a plausible one?
- 2) Is the principle correctly applied to the case under consideration?

As for the first question, one common way to assess the plausibility of a general ethical principle is by using what philosophers call the *method of counterexample*. This involves searching for cases (real or imagined) in which the principle gives the intuitively wrong result. Let's illustrate this method by devising a possible counterexample to our sample principle, BWHP:

Benefactor. I am a very wealthy man in a small city with two hospitals. One hospital (Sunnyvale) serves the very rich and is decked out with all the latest and greatest medical equipment and is staffed by the most talented doctors and nurses. The other hospital (City General) serves the rest of the city (a majority of the population) and is badly under-equipped, under-staffed, and desperately in need of upgrades and repairs. Despite being aware of the dramatic inequality in the relative state of these two hospitals, I donate several million dollars to Sunnyvale and give nothing to City General. My reason is that I have been a patient at Sunnyvale several times in the past and am grateful for the treatment and care I received there.

Have I acted ethically right? Was giving several million dollars to Sunnyvale the *right thing to do*? BWHIP suggests that it was. After all:

Argument 2 (A2)

- 1) If an action will benefit people, without harming anyone, then it is ethically right.
- 2) Donating the money to Sunnyvale benefits people without harming anyone.
- 3) Therefore, donating the money to Sunnyvale is ethically right.

But suppose we disagree with the claim that donating the money to Sunnyvale is the ethically right thing to do. What I

should have done, we might argue, is donate the money to the hospital that needed it most—City General—where it could have done significantly more good. In our estimation then, BWHP yields the incorrect verdict in the case of *Benefactor*, and that’s a reason to doubt its validity.

Of course, counterexamples in ethics are never *conclusive*, since one always has the option to ‘bite the bullet’ and take on-board the counterintuitive ethical judgment. For example, a proponent of BWHP could give up the judgment that the money should have been donated to City General (and thereby state that giving it to Sunnyvale was the right thing) instead of giving up on BWHP. In ethics, counterexamples give us a choice: we can modify our principles to fit our ethical judgments, or we can modify our ethical judgments to fit our principles. Unfortunately, there is no algorithm for deciding when to do which. The best we can do is try to use good judgment and be on guard against various forms of bias.

In any case, let’s suppose that BWHP passes our tests. Let’s suppose we’ve considered a wide range of cases in which an action benefits people without harming anyone, and without exception we are disposed to judge these actions ethically right. When evaluating arguments like A1, there is still work to be done even if we find acceptable the general ethical principle to which the argument appeals. We need to ask whether the principle actually applies to the case under consideration. In evaluating A1, for example, we have to ask whether it is true that killing Baby Theresa would benefit people without

harming anyone. We may disagree about whether an individual like Baby Theresa is harmed by being killed. In evaluating A2, we might disagree about whether there can be circumstances in which not bestowing a gift constitutes a harm, and, if so, whether these circumstances obtain in *Benefactor*. Complex conceptual and empirical issues like these arise all the time when thinking about right and wrong and form a large part of the workload in philosophical ethics.

Other Important Argument Forms

Thus far we've looked only at ethical arguments in which a particular action is said to conform to a general ethical principle. These arguments have the following *form* or *pattern*:

1. General Principle: Actions of type X are ethically right (or ethically wrong).
2. Particular judgment: This action, *a*, is an X.
3. Conclusion: Thus, *a* is ethically right (or ethically wrong).

As you begin to read more widely in philosophical ethics you will notice that there are many different argument-forms that philosophers commonly employ. Learning these patterns will improve your comprehension of arguments in ethics and your ability to offer compelling support for your own ethical views.

Here we will cover two more forms: *arguments from analogy* and *arguments from inference to the best explanation*.

Arguments from Analogy

1. X is ethically right (or ethically wrong).
2. Y is just like X in all ethically relevant respects.
3. Thus, Y is ethically right (or ethically wrong).

Arguments from analogy are very common and can be very powerful. They derive their persuasive force from a basic principle of rational consistency stating that *we should treat like cases alike*.

A great illustration of this argument-form can be found in the philosopher Peter Singer's essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." In that essay Singer aims to show that people in an affluent society like ours have an ethical *obligation* to contribute money to charitable organizations working to help the global poor. In supporting this claim, Singer asks us to imagine that we are passing by a shallow pond in which a small child is drowning. Supposing we could save the child at little cost to ourselves, Singer thinks that

1. Nearly everyone would acknowledge that they have in these circumstances an ethical obligation to help the drowning child.

He then argues:

2. There are no ethically relevant differences between the situation of the drowning child and the situation of the global poor.

And so, Singer concludes:

3. We have an ethical obligation to help the global poor.

In evaluating any argument from analogy, Singer's included, the most important (but not the only) question to ask is whether it is true that there are no ethically relevant differences between the cases being compared. After all, if there are ethically relevant differences, these could justify reaching a different conclusion about the two cases (there is no principle stating we must treat *unlike* cases alike). And indeed this is the issue on which Singer and critics of his now classic essay have focused.

Arguments from Inference to the Best Explanation

1. X is ethically right (or ethically wrong).
2. The best explanation for why X is ethically right (or ethically wrong) is captured by a general principle P.
3. Thus, we should accept P.

4. But P implies that Y is ethically right (or ethically wrong).
5. Thus, Y is ethically right (or ethically wrong).

Another common argument-form in ethics, arguments from inference to the best explanation trade on the fact that when we accept an ethical principle we commit ourselves to accepting its implications. A great illustration of this argument-form can be found in Don Marquis' essay, "Why Abortion is Immoral." In that essay Marquis argues as follows:

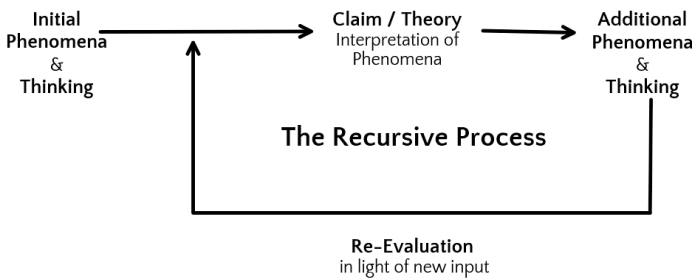
1. It is wrong to kill a normal, adult human being.
2. The best explanation for why it is wrong to kill a normal, adult human being is the Deprivation Principle: it is wrong to deprive an individual of a future-of-value.
3. Thus, we should accept the Deprivation Principle.
4. But the Deprivation Principle implies that abortion is wrong, since abortions deprive individuals (the fetuses) of a future-of-value.
5. Thus, abortion is wrong.

In evaluating arguments from inference to the best explanation, Marquis' included, the most important (but not the only) question to ask is whether the proffered explanation for the initial ethical judgment really is *best*. Perhaps there is an alternative principle that explains the initial judgment just as well or better, and which doesn't imply what the proffered

principle implies. And indeed this is the issue on which Marquis and his critics have focused.

Critical Thinking

By **critical thinking**, we refer to thinking that is recursive in nature. Any time we encounter new information or new ideas, we double back and rethink our prior conclusions on the subject to see if any other conclusions are better suited.⁵

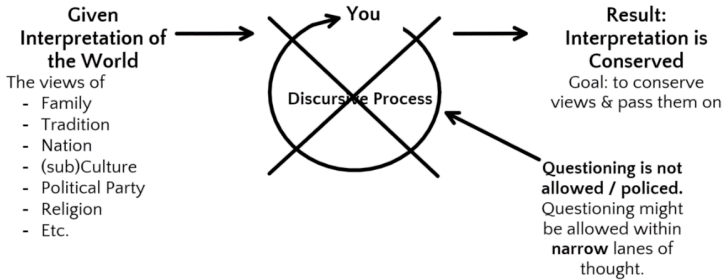


The recursive nature of critical thinking. Every idea, every interpretation — everything — is up for revision.

Critical thinking can be contrasted with **Authoritarian thinking**. This type of thinking seeks to *preserve* the original

5. This discussion of critical thinking is drawn from Professor Barrett’s critical thinking model. For more, see Mike Barrett, “Critical Thinking,” in *Reading, Thinking, Writing* (LOGOS Project at MACC, 2017).

conclusion. Here, thinking and conclusions are policed, as to question the system is to threaten the system. And threats to the system demand a defensive response. Critical thinking is short-circuited in authoritarian systems so that the conclusions are *conserved* instead of being open for revision.



Authoritarian thinking short circuits the recursive nature of critical thinking.

Humility and vulnerability are key to critical thinking. We might also frame critical thinking in terms of having an open vs. an arrogant mind. The Greek philosopher Plato used two terms that help us name poor thinking. In the dialog *Alcibiades*, Socrates accuses his friend of being both ignorant and foolish. ⁶ **Agnoeo (ignorance)** for Plato, is a *simple lack of knowledge* — something which can be fixed with ease. **Amathia (foolishness)**, on the other hand, is a *lack of*

6. Plato, "Alcibiades," in *Plato in 12 Volumes*, trans. Harold North Flower, vol. 1 (London: Harvard University Press, 1966), sec. 118b, <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg013.perseus-eng1:118b>.

*awareness of one's ignorance.*⁷ The opposite of *amathia* is not knowledge itself, but of an **awareness of one's ignorance**. Socrates, in *The Apology*, concludes his search for wisdom in realizing that he is ignorant.⁸ And so humility and vulnerability are key parts of critical thinking.

Liberation, not Banking — On Attitude and Practice

Ethics is more than just fact-learning, or a “history of ideas”. It is different from chemistry, mathematics, languages, theology etc. It is unique. Sure, it is important to learn some facts, and learn what others believed, but a successful student needs to do *more than simply regurgitate information*. One aim of this book is to aid you in engaging with a living discipline. Ethics is a live and evolving subject. When you study philosophy, you are entering a *dialog* with those that have gone before you and

7. Euripides, in *Bacchae*, invokes the idea of “willful blindness” with this term. See Robert Scott and H.G. Liddell, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945). and Euripides and T.A. Buckley, “Bacchae,” in *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850), l. 490, <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg017.perseus-eng1:476-518>.

8. Plato, “The Apology,” in *Plato in 12 Volumes*, trans. Harold North Flower, vol. 1 (London: Harvard University Press, 1966), secs. 20e–23c, <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg002.perseus-eng1:20e>.

those beside you. Learning about what various philosophers think will enable you to become clearer about what you think and add to that evolving dialog.

Ethics, like much of life, is more **developing an attitude** vs. accumulating facts. Paulo Freire develops the idea of the “Banking Model of Education” where facts, concepts, et cetera are deposited in the student by a learned master.⁹ Such a view considers education to be static and a mere tool in the accumulation of wealth. You may recall politicians on both sides talk about education primarily in terms of job-training. While this is a useful benefit of education, the primary goal of education is to transform an “empty mind into an open one.”¹⁰

Notice *the shift from banking to liberation* in the quote. The term “empty mind” implies the purpose of education is to fill the mind with facts, terms, procedures, and directions. But we are not robots whose function is to merely recall information and process orders! We are something else entirely. Just what will be explored throughout this course. An open mind is a liberated mind. The open mind searches for what is good and what is true for their own sakes, not because it will increase one’s bottom line.

9. Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 50th Anniversary Edition*, 4 edition (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), chap. 2.

10. Quote by Malcom Forbes as recorded in: Richard Lederer, *A Tribute to Teachers: Wit and Wisdom, Information and Inspiration about Those Who Change Our Lives* (Marion Street Press, 2011), chap. 9.

Freire contrasts the Banking Model of Education with what can be called a “Liberation Model of Education.” This approach to education places an emphasis upon the humanization of the self and the Other. The goal for the student and the teacher to partner together to solve the problems that face their communities. Sometimes this will involve unmasking the machines that govern our lives but remain hidden from public view. Other times it will involve imagining a more just society or efficient contraption. It might even involve naming and reckoning with current systems of oppression as well as coming to terms with how injustices of the past echo forward. It always resists demonizing the Other and refuses to turn the tables, allowing the oppressed to become the vengeful oppressors, as is the temptation.

The Liberation Educational model is able to simultaneously realize that in some ways we have been the *beneficiaries* of unjust social contracts, even though we have not been *signatories* to them. A Banking Model of Education is unable to evaluate the systems in which it is embedded because within it, all knowledge is stable and depends upon the legitimacy of the system for its stability. In contrast, in the Liberation Model of Education, we can question the systems themselves, demanding better and more just systems. We will talk about the connection between power, justice, and knowledge elsewhere in the course.

For Reflection and Discussion – Set 1

1. In your educational history, have you encountered something like the banking or liberation model?
2. If you have experienced both, which did you find more humanizing?
3. What problems face your community? How might you partner others to work on solving those problems?
4. In what ways might you be the beneficiaries of an unjust social contracts even though you are not signatories of the contract?
5. What sort of attitude is required in regurgitating facts vs. doing ethics?

Distinctions

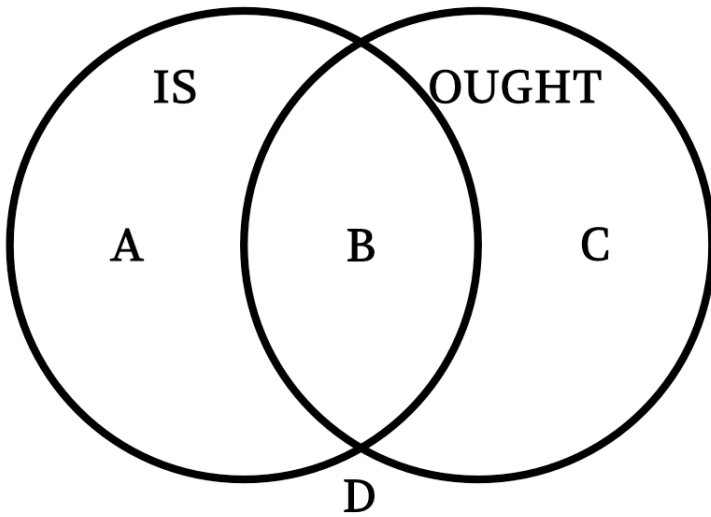
As we embark on our study of ethics, there are some concepts

we need to carefully keep separate. It will be easy to fall victim to these flaws in reasoning. The authors have been guilty of these things from time to time! Before we get to these distinctions, let us talk about one distinction we do not make. Some people distinguish between “ethics” and “morality”. We do not. For us, nothing hangs on the difference between them. In this book you will see us switching between the terms, so do not get hung up on this distinction.

Is vs. Ought – Hume’s Guillotine

David Hume famously pointed out that we cannot move from an **is** to an **ought**.¹¹ He notes that many systems of ethics do, but that he can find no reason that justifies such a transcendence of categories. While this separation of is and ought by Hume is used to argue in part for his skepticism of prescriptive ethical theories we can use the distinction more broadly to note that just because someone *is* doing something is not evidence that they *ought* to be doing something. We can illustrate the concept with the following diagram.

11. David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning Into Moral Subjects; and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Longmans, Green and Company, 1874), 245–46.



The relationship between all that is happening and all that should be happening.

Let's examine these regions:

- **Region A** – What people are doing, but should not be doing (These are the things we need to stop doing.)
- **Region B** – Those actions people should be doing and are doing. (This is the sweet spot.)
- **Region C** – Those hypothetical actions we should be doing, but are not doing. (Where we need to move.)
- **Region D** – Those hypothetical actions we are not doing and should not be doing. (Stay away!)

Consider some examples that concern what people are doing

(IS) and what they should be doing (OUGHT). Imagine the headline: “Scientists discover a gene explaining why we want to punch people wearing red trousers”. The article includes lots of science showing the genes and the statistical proof. Yet, none of this will tell us whether acting violently towards people wearing red trousers is morally acceptable. The explanation of why people feel and act in certain ways leaves it open as to how people morally ought to act.

For Reflection and Discussion – Set 2

1. What actions would you place within regions A, B, C, and D?
2. Discuss *why* you all placed those actions within their corresponding reasons.
3. What does your answer to #2 say about your ethical viewpoint?

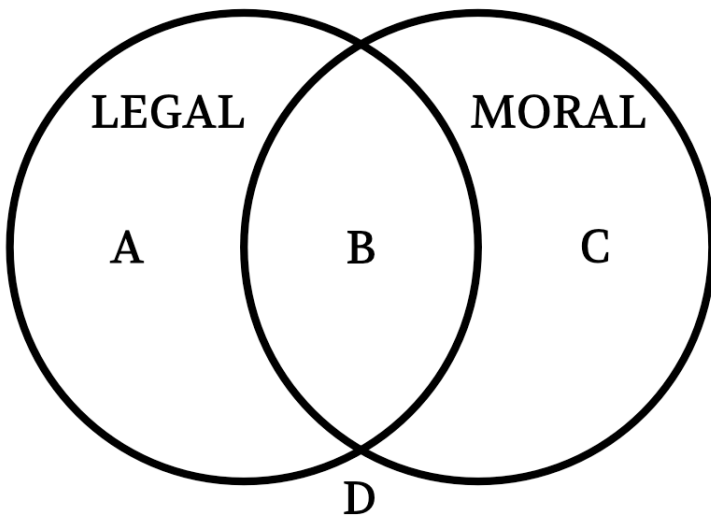
Consider a more serious example, relating to the ethics of eating meat. Supporters of meat-eating often point to our

incisor teeth. This shows that it is natural for us to eat meat, a fact used as a reason for thinking that it is morally acceptable to do so. But this is a bad argument. Just because we have incisors does not tell us how we morally ought to behave. It might explain why we find it easy to eat meat, and it might even explain why we like eating meat. But this is not relevant to the moral question. Don't you believe us? Imagine that dentists discover that our teeth are "designed" to eat other humans alive. What does this tell us about whether it is right or wrong to eat humans alive? Nothing.

Legal vs. Moral

It is easy for people to conflate that which **moral** with that which is **legal**. But, in fact, these are two very different categories, much like is vs ought. We can represent this with the following diagram.

The relation between the sets of actions that are legal (within a given jurisdiction) and the actions that are moral.



The relation between the sets of actions that are legal (within a given jurisdiction) and the actions that are moral.

In the figure above, the categories of actions that are legal overlap with the collection of actions that are moral, but they are not the same set of things. Once again, we have used the letters A, B, C, and D to denote positions in the diagram. Let us look at some possible examples for each of these locations:

- **Region A** – Legal but not Moral – Jim Crow Laws;
- **Region B** – Legal and Moral- Refraining from Killing the Innocent;
- **Region C** – Moral but not Legal – Breaking Jim Crow Laws; and
- **Region D** – Not moral and not Legal – Killing the

Innocent.

Using your knowledge of history or your googling devices, look up instances of immoral behaviors that have been legal in their local jurisdictions.

And so, we can see that we need to be careful when talking about issues of legality and morality. Just because something is legal does not make it moral. In fact, most of *the worst atrocities* we humans have inflicted upon ourselves have been *legal* within their jurisdictions. Similarly, we can identify instances of illegal behaviors which are, in fact, moral.

The Issue of Disagreement

Finally, we want to draw your attention to a common bad argument as we want you to be aware of the mistake it leads to. Imagine that a group of friends are arguing about which country has won the most Olympic gold medals. Max says China, Alastair says the US, Dinh says the UK. There is general ignorance and disagreement; but does this mean that there is not an answer to the question of “which country has won the most Olympic gold medals?” No! We cannot move from the fact that people disagree to the conclusion that there is no answer.

Now consider a parallel argument that we hear far too often. Imagine that you and your friends are discussing whether

euthanasia is morally acceptable. Some say yes, the others say no. Each of you cite how different cultures have different views on euthanasia. Does this fact — that there is disagreement — mean that there is no answer to the question of whether euthanasia is morally acceptable? Again, the answer is no. That answer did not follow in the Olympic case, and it does not follow in the moral one either.

So just because different cultures have different moral views, this does not show, by itself, that there is no moral truth and no answer to the question. If you are interested in the idea that there is a lack of moral truth in ethics, then Moral Error Theorists defend exactly this position in the chapter on Metaethics.

Summary

In this introduction, we have sketched out some basic ideas necessary to start the study of Ethics. We have examined the basics of critical thinking and discussed 3 methods of talking about ethics: Descriptive Ethics, Normative Ethics, and Metaethics. We also looked at the three major positions on the nature of Ethics itself: Nonrealism, Relativism, and Realism. We have signposted some errors to avoid when it comes to thinking about ethics, and some strategies to consider instead. It may be worth occasionally revisiting the ideas discussed here during your studies, to test your own lines of argument and evaluate how “thinking well” is progressing for you. This

would not be a weakness! The authors, and any honest philosopher, can reassure you — philosophy is hard, but it is worth it. We hope you find this textbook useful and rewarding in helping you on your own journey through Ethics.

For Reflection and Discussion – Set 3

1. What did you think Ethics and Philosophy were before you came into class? How about now?
2. What are the most pressing ethical problems facing you and your community?
3. Give examples of the is/ought and legal/moral distinctions. When have you or others conflated the them in the past?
4. Given what limited exposure you have had to the concepts, do you agree with the Nonrealist, Relativist, or Realist positions? Explain your reasoning and use an example to showcase your thinking.

Check Your Understanding

Select the best answer for each item.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://open.ocolearnok.org/ethics/?p=27#h5p-3>

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