Unit 2:
Ethical Philosophies

US275 Scientific Ethics
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Arcadia University

Objectives:

- Identify and provide examples of how different ethical systems can contribute to different responses to the same situation.
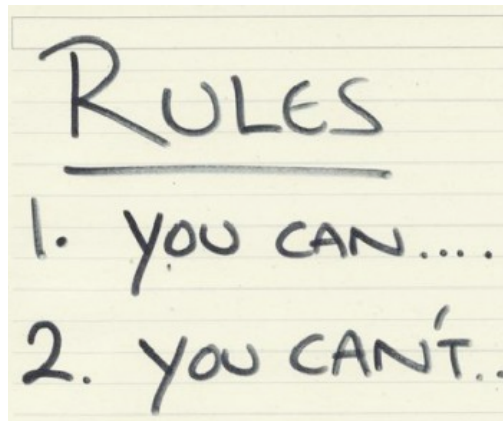
Ethical Relativism

- moral principles are created by humans

    - principles are <u>dependent</u> upon the <u>perspective</u> of the creators

Moral Objectivism

- belief in some universal or objective moral principles

    - for all people

    - in all social environments

8. Ethics and the world's oldest profession.

Prostitution is the providing sexual services in return for payment. The laws governing prostitution vary from society to society and even different locations within the same country (example: licensed prostitution in Nevada).

<u>In your discussion group:</u>
Discuss the arguments for and against prostitution from the different ethical perspectives of:
subjective ethical relativism
moral absolutism
conventional ethical relativism
moderate objectivism

The first person to post on the thread gets to choose their perspective. They should identify their perspective and argue from their ethical viewpoint. The other members of the group will choose from the remaining viewpoints, identify their perspective and contribute to the discussion.

This assignment will be graded based on maintaining your stated viewpoint throughout the discussion.
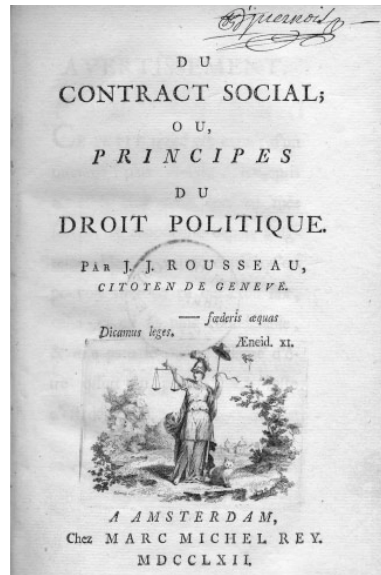
Value theory and the quest for good

- What is valuable?

  - money

  - joy

  - *"life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"*

Social Contract Theory

- people collectively agree to

  - behave morally

  - as a way to reduce social chaos

  - and create peace

Cover of Social Contract
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762.

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9. The Promise of Societal Values

<u>In your discussion group:</u>
What values are promoted in today's society? Should these values be elevated to rights that are provided by society (i.e. the government) to all citizens that follow the laws.

Egoism, Self-interest, and Altruism

- Interactions among individuals

Utilitarianism

- maximize goodness in the society

  - greatest good

  - for the greatest number

  - not the good of the individual

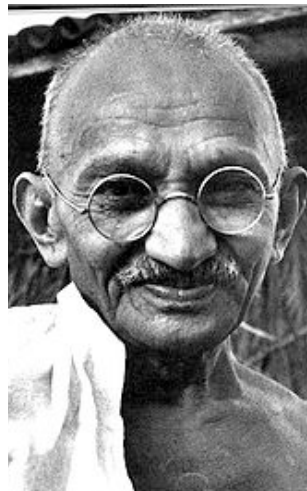# 10. Indentured servitude and surrogate motherhood.

Indentured servitude is the practice of contracting to provide a service for a fixed amount of time in exchange for food, clothing, and necessities during the indentured period. This is prohibited in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed in 1948. In surrogate motherhood, a woman contracts with a couple to become pregnant and provide the couple with the baby. Normally the contract provides a stipend to cover the mother's living and medical expenses.

<u>In your discussion group:</u>
What do the views of egoism and utilitarianism say about surrogate motherhood? Is surrogate motherhood a form of indentured servitude? Does paying the surrogate mother a salary make this better or worse?

Kant and Deontological Theories

- Kant

  - can use reason to work out

  - consistent, nonoverridable set of moral principles

- deontology

  - morality of the act

  - end never justifies the means

There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supercedes all other courts.
~ Mahandas Gandhi

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Virtue Theory

- trained behavioral qualities

  - result in habitual acts of moral goodness

  - restrain self desires

  - express kindness to others

- opposite of vice

Wisdom is knowing what to do next Virtue is doing it

DAVID STARR JORDAN

Assignment

11. The Basis of Character

"Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking. There are too many people who think that the only thing that's right is to get by, and the only thing that's wrong is to get caught" J.C. Watts

In your discussion group:
Discuss whether or not it is better to "do the right thing for the wrong reason" or to "do the wrong thing for the right reason."
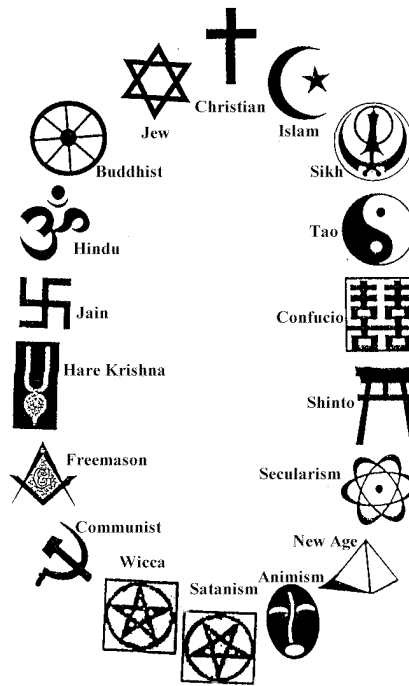
Religion and Ethics

"Do the gods love holiness because it is holy,

or is it holy because the gods love it?"

Plato's Dialogue the Euthyphro

Jew
Christian
Buddhist
Islam
Sikh
Hindu
Tao
Jain
Confucio
Hare Krishna
Shinto
Freemason
Secularism
Communist
New Age
Wicca
Satanism
Animism

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Fact-Value Problem

- How do facts relate to values?

- observations of specific facts

    - from statement of "what is"

- used to conclude statements about moral obligations

    - to statements of "You ought to..."

What Is → What Ought To Be

"That's just your opinion."

12. The God Particle and morality?

The Fact-Value problem examines the attempt to define and describe moral statements using an objective and quantifiable (i.e. a scientific) approach. Religion assigns moral views in a relationship through faith to their God. In the movie "Angels and Demons," scientists isolate the God Particle in an attempt to understand the origins of the universe (the moment of creation). There is much in the natural world that is not currently understood using a scientific approach and scientists have "faith" that they can learn the answers with additional observations of things such as subatomic particles or antimatter.

<u>In your discussion group:</u> In your small group, discuss whether or not it is possible to combine religious faith with scientific laws to provide the basis for morality.
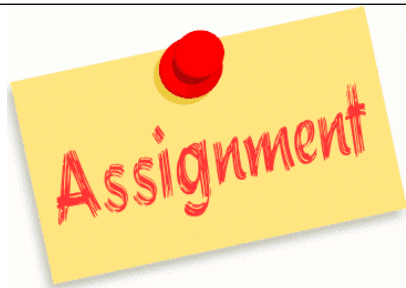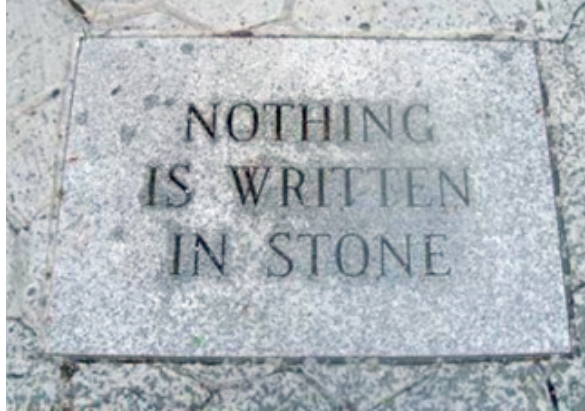
Moral Realism

- Moral facts exist

  - part of the fabric of the universe

  - exist <u>independently</u> of our thoughts about them

- Three components of moral realism

  - objective, cognitive, and metaphysical

Galileo Galilei displaying his telescope to Leonardo Donato 19th century

Moral Skepticism

- There no objective moral facts

    - moral statements have meaning within society

    - one ought to conform to the specific rules of life in which one takes part

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Assignment

13. Your personal ethical philosopy

We have covered a wide range of different philosophies over the first few weeks of the course. Review the basic concepts of the major ethical philosophies and then consider your own personal views.

Individually:
In a MS Word document that will be submitted via email to the course instructor at hoffmanj@arcadia.edu: This assignment should be a minimum of 250 words.

1. Identify the ethical philosophy/philosophies that are the closest fit with your personal view. Explain why you chose this/these ethical philosophies.

2. Identify which which of ethical philosophies that you would never find yourself considering in making decisions.

Any Questions?

Email me at:
hoffmanj@arcadia.edu