A general introduction to Ethics

US275 Scientific Ethics
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ARCADIA
UNIVERSITY
SINCE 1853

Ethics

- How should we live?

- What is "good?"

- What is "right" and "wrong."

Ethos
credibility - trust

Logos
consistency - logic

Pathos
emotions - imagination
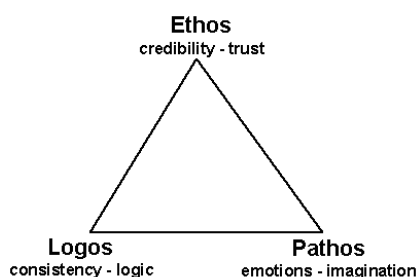
Ethics and Morals

- Ethics

  – *Ethos* (greek) meaning character

  – Acting consistent with accepted standard of conduct

- Morals

  – *Mores* (latin) meaning custom

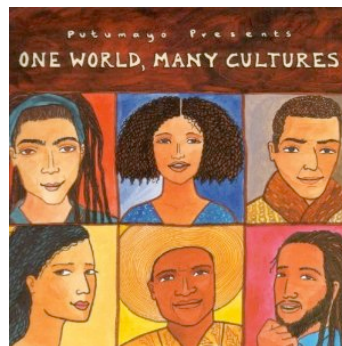 – Behaving in a way consistent with ethical judgment

Reality   **Ethics**

Morals

Actions

Divisions of Ethics

- Descriptive morality

- Moral philosophy

    - (ethical theory)

- Applied ethics

Descriptive morality

- Beliefs, customs, principles, and practices of people and cultures

- Key principles of the culture

Album cover
Putumayo

Moral Philosophy
(ethical theory)

- Concepts of "right" or "wrong,"

- Understanding moral concepts

    - To justify moral principles and theories

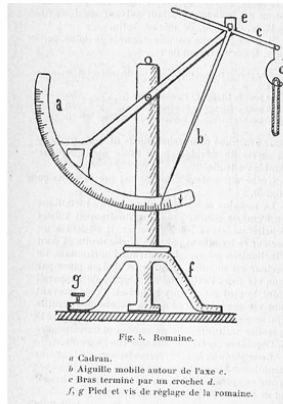- Decisions about what is permissible by individual or group

Applied ethics

- Using ethics to address moral problems

- Controversies

  – Abortion

  – Capital punishment

  – euthanasia

Why do we kill people who kill people to show killing people is wrong?

Normative principles

- Guidelines for acceptable behavior

- Morality/ethics

- Religion

- Law

- Etiquette

Fig. 5. Romaine.

a Cadran.
b Aiguille mobile autour de l'axe *e*.
c Bras terminé par un crochet *d*.
f, g Pied et vis de réglage de la romaine.

Balance dite romaine pour les essais sur les fils
Fibres animals et minerales, Encyclopedie-Roret, 1914

Morality/Ethics

- Rules based on reason and human experience
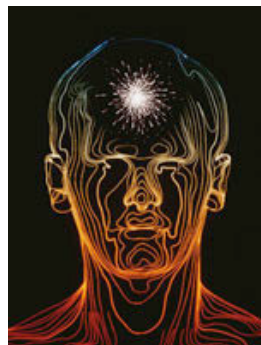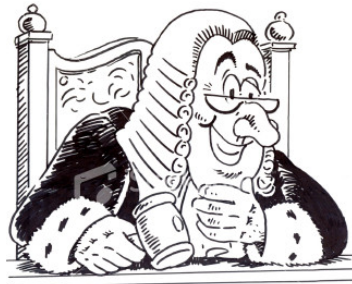
Religion

- Rules by divine authority
    - Revelation

- Religious teachings
    - Lead to moral principles

Religious Circle
Wikimedia Commons

Law

- Rules established and enforced by society

- Legal and moral
    - Hopefully most laws

- Legal, but immoral
    - Slavery in U.S. 1776 – 1865

- Illegal, but moral
    - Assisting Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933 - 1945

Etiquette

- Rules for acceptable, polite behavior

- Moral behavior
    - Be respectful to others

Traits of Moral Principles

- Prescriptivity

- Universalizability

- Overridingness

- Publicity

- practicability

Prescriptivity

- Action-guiding

- Advise people
    - Influence behavior

A traffic policeman directs traffic at a street crossing in the southwest of Linxia City (at or near Xin Xi Lu. Wikimedia Commons

Universalizability

- Consistency

- Appropriate behavior for you to treat all individuals
    - No preferential treatment

- Appropriate behavior for all individuals to treat you

Overridingness

- What principles are held at the highest level?

- Duty, Honor, Country

    – Motto of the
      U.S. Military Academy

Publicity

- Must be known in order to be followed

The relief "Town-crier"
Newbury Abbot Trent(1885-1963)

Practicability
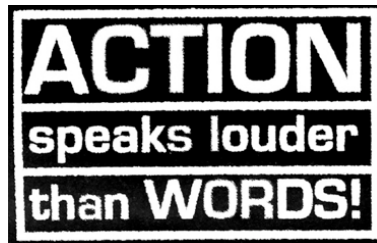
- Must be possible to follow the principles

Domains of Ethical Assessment

- Actions

- Consequences

- Character

- Motive

Actions

- Right act (permissible)

  - Obligatory act

  - Optional act

    - Neutral act

    - Supererogatory act

- Wrong act (not permissible)

Consequences

- What is the overall outcome of the action?
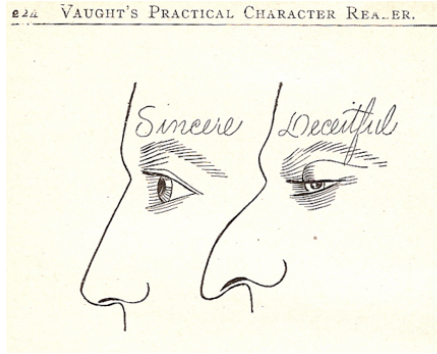
- Utilitarianism

  - Do that which will cause the most good

Character

- Virtues
  - Good character traits
- Vices
  - Bad traits

- Virtue Theory
  - Aristotle
  - Development of good character necessary to act appropriately

Vaught's Practical Character Reader, L.A. Vaught, 1902

VAUGHT'S PRACTICAL CHARACTER REA..ER.

Sincere / *Deceitful*

Motive

- What is the intent of the action?

Good intentions make the most noise.

Assignment

**Overriding principles:**

Watch the youtube video of Gregory Peck as General Douglas MacArthur addressing the Corp of Cadets in 1962.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A99ooAeN2Q4

In your discussion group:
Within your group, discuss what principles you think should be supreme and always followed. Are there any instances when even these highest principles should be set aside?

WIDESCREEN
GREGORY PECK
General Douglas
MacARTHUR
DVD
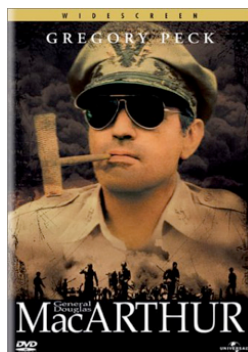
Readings

Chapter 1: What is Ethics

Pojman & Fieser,
Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong

Reading the Book 'The Three Kingdoms' at Midnight Scroll.
Yi Ming

Any Questions?

Email me at:
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