

STUDY GUIDE FOR
Ethics: Theory & Practice



Excelsior College Materials Development Committee in Ethics: Theory & Practice

Editor: Frederik Kaufman, PhD (University of Virginia, Philosophy, 1984)
Associate Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, Ithaca College

Wade Robison, PhD (University of Wisconsin, Philosophy, 1968)

Ezra A. Hale Chair in Applied Ethics, Rochester Institute of Technology

Paul Santilli, PhD (Boston College, Philosophy, 1976) Professor of Philosophy, Siena College

Douglas Shrader, Jr., PhD (University of Illinois at Chicago, Philosophy, 1979)
Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, State University of New York at Oneonta

David E. Brigham, PhD (Syracuse University, Instructional Design, Development and Evaluation, 1994)

Excelsior College Examination Development Committee in Ethics: Theory & Practice

Wade Robison, PhD (University of Wisconsin, Philosophy, 1968)
Ezra A. Hale Chair in Applied Ethics, Rochester Institute of Technology

Paul Santilli, PhD (Boston College, Philosophy, 1976) Professor of Philosophy, Siena College

Douglas Shrader, Jr., PhD (University of Illinois at Chicago, Philosophy, 1979)
Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, State University of New York at Oneonta

James H. Young, EdD (State University of New York at Buffalo, Educational Foundations, 1969)
Educational Consultant

Jeanne Finelli, MA (Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey, History, 1964)

12th Edition
August 2016

“No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.”

Copyright ©2016 Excelsior College.
“Excelsior College” is a registered servicemark of Excelsior College.
All rights reserved.

Welcome

Welcome to Ethics: Theory & Practice. Ethical questions are among the most challenging and engaging that you can encounter. Moreover, they cannot be avoided – just try reading a newspaper or listening to the news without making any moral judgments! How do you decide questions regarding the morality of war, abortion, care for the needy, environmental legislation, or medical resource allocation? On what basis do you make moral decisions about personal relationships? Are you consistent? Should you be? Does it matter?

Moral questions pervade our lives and quickly take us to the depths of philosophy. In this course of study, you will explore questions about right and wrong, questions that have occupied thoughtful people for millennia. You will examine classical and contemporary ethical theories and critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. You will also assess moral arguments on topical and controversial practical issues. In the process, you should become an astute moral reasoner who recognizes and respects sound moral arguments, particularly when they conflict with your own viewpoint.

Studying moral philosophy can have a profound effect on your life, for it will challenge your basic assumptions about right and wrong, the value of life, and the definition of being human. The potential for personal growth and enrichment is substantial. It is likely that, after completing this course of study, you will never view the world in the same way as you do now. We wish you success!

The Excelsior College Materials Development
Committee in Ethics: Theory & Practice

Contact Addresses

Test Administration

Excelsior College
7 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-5159
Phone: 888-647-2388 ext. 166
Fax: 518-464-8777
Email: testadmin@excelsior.edu
www.excelsior.edu

Excelsior College Bookstore

c/o MBS Direct
2711 W. Ash Street
Columbia, MO 65203
Phone: 800-325-3252
Fax: 800-325-4147
www.excelsior.edu/bookstore

Examination Registration

Toll free: 888-72EXAMS (888-723-9267)
www.excelsior.edu/examregistration

Note to Educators:

An institution wishing to license *Ethics: Theory & Practice* as part of its curriculum can obtain licensing information by contacting the Center for Online Education, Learning, and Academic Services.



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| Part I: Preparing for Study | 1 |
| Where Do I Begin? | 2 |
| Why Was This Course Guide Written? | 2 |
| What Will I Learn? | 2 |
| How Will I Be Evaluated? | 3 |
| What Study Materials and Resources Are Required? | 5 |
| What Additional Resources Should I Consider? | 5 |
| How Can I Create an Effective Long-term Study Plan? | 8 |
| What Learning Strategy Should I Use? | 10 |
| Am I Ready to Begin? | 12 |
| Policies and Procedures | 13 |
| Part II: Learning the Content | 15 |
| How Is the Content Organized? | 16 |
| How Can I Learn the Content? | 16 |
| How Should I Work Through a Study Session? | 18 |
| Part II Section A: Theory | 21 |
| Session 1: The Nature of Ethics | 23 |
| Session 2: Ethical Relativism | 33 |
| Session 3: Metaethics: Justification and Truth in Ethics | 39 |
| Session 4: Theories of Moral Right and Wrong | 45 |
| Session 5: Utilitarianism | 51 |
| Session 6: Deontological Theories | 57 |
| Session 7: Virtue Ethics: Plato and Aristotle | 65 |
| Session 8: David Hume and Communitarian Theories | 71 |
| Session 9: Religion and Morality | 79 |
| Session 10: Egoism | 83 |
| Session 11: Existentialism and Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals | 89 |
| Session 12: Justice | 95 |
| Session 13: Rights | 103 |
| Session 14: Liberty | 111 |
| Section A: Theory, Review Session | 115 |
| Feedback Form: Ethics—Section A: Theory | 122 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Part II Section B: Practice | 123 |
| Session 15: Abortion | 125 |
| Session 16: Euthanasia | 133 |
| Session 17: Animals and the Environment | 137 |
| Session 18: Personal Relations | 143 |
| Session 19: Equality and Discrimination | 149 |
| Session 20: Affirmative Action | 155 |
| Session 21: Free Speech | 161 |
| Section B: Practice, Review Session | 167 |
| Feedback Form: Ethics—Section B: Practice | 173 |
| Part III: Preparing for and Taking the Examination | 175 |
| How Should I Prepare for the Examination? | 176 |
| What Are Good Test-taking Strategies? | 178 |
| How Can I Tell if I Am Ready to Take the Examination? | 179 |
| Conclusion | 181 |
| Appendix | |
| A Examination Content Outline | 182 |
| B Sample Completed Time-Use Chart | 184 |
| C Blank Time-Use Chart | 185 |
| D Sample Examination Questions and Answer Rationales | 186 |
| E Self-Assessment Summary Chart | 194 |
| F Sample Question Table | 195 |
| G If You Are Having Difficulty | 196 |
| H Summary of Holmes' Overview of <i>Ethics of Ambiguity</i> | 198 |
| Index of Key Terms | 200 |
| Feedback Form | 202 |

Part I

Preparing for Study

Overview

Part I of this Study Guide introduces you to *Ethics: Theory & Practice*. This part tells you what to expect and how to successfully prepare yourself for study. You will find information that will help you create an effective long-term study plan, obtain required study materials, and select appropriate learning strategies. Part I also includes a general description of the examination and information on computer-delivered testing.

■ **Learning Outcomes**

After you have successfully worked your way through the required study materials, you should be able to:

Theory

1. Recognize the key attributes, strengths, and weaknesses associated with the ethical theories listed in the content outline.
2. Recognize and distinguish among the basic concepts listed in the content outline.
3. Recognize and distinguish among the metaethical concepts listed in the content outline.
4. Recognize and distinguish among principles of moral deliberation listed in the content outline.

Practice

Given a case study involving social and personal issues, medical issues, professional and business issues, or environmental issues, you should be able to:

1. Identify applications of ethical theories listed in the content outline.
2. Evaluate a person's course of action based on his or her ethical principles and knowledge base.
3. Recognize similarities and differences among moral arguments.
4. Identify common logical fallacies in a moral argument (e.g., the naturalistic fallacy).
5. Evaluate judgments in terms of the basic concepts listed in the content outline.

■ **How Will I Be Evaluated?**

Your mastery of the content specified in the examination content outline (Appendix A) will be evaluated by the UExcel Examination in Ethics: Theory & Practice. Excelsior College recommends granting three (3) semester hours of upper-level undergraduate credit to students who receive a score equivalent to a letter grade of C or higher on this examination.

Examination Length and Scoring

The examination consists of approximately 110 questions, most of which are multiple choice; for samples of all the item types on this exam, see the sample items in the back of this guide. Some items are unscored, pretest items. The pretest items are embedded throughout the exam and are indistinguishable from the scored items. You will have three (3) hours to complete the examination. Your score will be reported as a letter grade.

Examination Administration

The examination is administered by computer at Pearson VUE Testing Centers throughout the world. All questions regarding international administration of the examinations should be directed to the Test Administration office at Excelsior College. If you are requesting an accommodation due to a disability, download and complete a Request for Accommodation Form that can be accessed by visiting the Excelsior College website at www.excelsior.edu/disability_services.

Computer-Delivered Testing

At the Pearson VUE Testing Center, your exam will be delivered by computer. You will enter your answers on the computer using either the keyboard or the mouse.

The system used for our computer-delivered testing is designed to be as user-friendly as possible. We encourage you to take advantage of the online tutorial, (www.pearsonvue.com/excelsior), before you schedule your test. A tutorial will not be available at the test center.

Scheduling Your Examination

You should register online for your examination at www.excelsior.edu/examregistration as soon as you feel ready to test. After your examination registration has been processed by Excelsior College, you will receive an Authorization To Test (ATT) letter through your My Excelsior message center. Your ATT letter will indicate an approximate six-month test window which is the time period during which the examination must be taken.

To ensure a testing time that is convenient for you, be sure to reserve your appointment well in advance of the date you want to test.

■ What Study Materials and Resources Are Required?

Use the resources listed below and this course guide to learn the course content. If you have access to a computer and a connection to the Internet, you should consider joining an online study group for ethics. Each of these resources is described on the following page.

Textbooks

The Excelsior College Materials Development Committee in Ethics: Theory & Practice has identified three textbooks that best reflect the content of the examination. These textbooks complement one another and are necessary to cover all the course content. You can purchase these materials from the Excelsior College Bookstore.

- *Morality and moral controversies*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Cahn, S. M. *Exploring ethics: An introductory anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Holmes, R.L. *Basic moral philosophy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

Online Resources

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu>

■ **What Additional Resources Should I Consider?**

You should consider using several additional resources to facilitate progress toward your independent study goals and to deepen and enrich your knowledge of ethics. These include anthologies, introductory books, MyExcelsior Community, the Excelsior College Library, and online resources.

Anthologies

We recommend that you obtain an anthology concentrating in a specific area of applied ethics. This area may be related to your job or relevant to your life for other reasons. You may be able to purchase an anthology from a bookstore or borrow one from a library. The Committee recommends the following anthologies for the areas listed below:

Social and Personal Issues

Mappes, T.A., & Zembaty, J.S. *Social ethics: Morality and social policy*.
New York: McGraw Hill.

Medical Issues

DeGrazia, D., Mappes, T., Ballard, J. *Biomedical ethics*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Munson, R. *Intervention and reflection: Basic issues in medical ethics*.
Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Steinbock, B., Arras, J., & London, A.J. *Ethical issues in modern medicine*. Mountain View,
CA: Mayfield.

For Your Information

Additional readings are suggested throughout this guide.

Thomas, J., & Waluchow, W. *Well and good: A case study approach to biomedical ethics*. Ontario: Broadview.

Professional and Business Issues

The first two texts in this area should be used together to be most useful. The third text can be used by itself.

Beauchamp, T. *Case studies in business, society, and ethics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

DeGeorge, R. *Business ethics*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Shaw, W.H., & Barry, V. *Moral issues in business*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Environmental Issues

Armstrong, S., & Botzler, R. (Eds.). *Environmental ethics: Divergence and convergence*. New York: McGraw Hill. (out of print, not in EC Library)

Pojman, L. *Environmental ethics: Readings in theory and application*. Boston: Wadsworth

Community Resources

As an independent learner, you bear the ultimate responsibility for helping yourself understand course content; therefore, you should investigate possible sources of learning assistance available to you in your community and elsewhere. These resources can include noncredit courses, friends and family members, co-workers, other students, libraries, bookstores, government agencies, institutions of higher learning, and your place of employment.

Excelsior College MyExcelsior Community

MyExcelsior Community is a Web-based environment that enables currently enrolled Excelsior College students to interact academically and socially online. As a member of the Community, you will be able to identify students with common interests, participate in live chats and threaded discussion groups, exchange books and study materials, locate study partners, access career resources, or join an online study group. To find out more about MyExcelsior Community and how to access it, visit the Excelsior College website, login to MyExcelsior. Open the Resources tab, choose MyExcelsior Community, and then click on MyExcelsior Community Tools.

Excelsior College Library

The Excelsior College Library is an online library designed for distance learners. Created through our partnership with the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University and located at www.excelsior.edu/library (enrolled Excelsior College students, login required), the

library provides access to a broad array of resources such as journal articles, books, Web sites, databases, and reference services. These resources can help you prepare for Excelsior College courses and examinations, and you can use them to enhance your research activities as well.

Study Skills Books

If you would like to strengthen your study skills, visit a library or bookstore to obtain a book devoted to the subject. Before selecting a study skills book, you should spend a few minutes previewing it to ensure that it addresses the specific skills you want to strengthen and that it has been written for adults. You will find that while many study skills books are available for students who have recently graduated from high school, relatively few are available for adult learners who must divide their time among work, family, social obligations, and study. Check out Student Success Guide (<http://guide.excelsior.edu/>).

■ **How Can I Create an Effective Long-term Study Plan?**

A long-term study plan is a chart that contains well-defined learning activities and key dates covering the time period starting when you plan to begin study and ending on the date you plan to take the final examination. A well-designed study plan will provide you with a schedule that will enable you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the learning outcomes for *Ethics: Theory & Practice*. To create a personal long-term study plan, you must estimate the amount of time you will require to complete your preparation for the exam, the amount of time you will have available for study each week, and the learning activities you will undertake each week. The following six steps guide you through this process.

1. **Determine the time you will require to complete your preparation for *Ethics: Theory & Practice*.** As a general rule, you should plan to budget approximately 170 hours of study time for this course. About 135 of those hours should be spent on studying the content alone. Aside from this content review, you should then factor in sufficient time to search for and use other resources, and to complete the projects and assignments in Part III of this guide. (You should, however, tailor the amount of time you spend on Part III based on your own comfort with, and comprehension of, the material.) Totaled, this is approximately the amount of time students are expected to devote to a three-credit, campus-based course. The actual amount of time you require depends, in part, on your background in this subject. If your background is weak, you may need to set aside substantially more than 170 hours. If your background is strong, you may budget less time.

Take a few minutes to review the Content Outline (Appendix A) to assess your familiarity with the content. Then, in the space below, write the number of hours you will allocate to complete preparing for the exam.

Hours Required =

2. **Determine the time you will have available for study.** Construct a time-use chart to record your daily activities over a one-week period. The most accurate way to do this is to complete the chart on a daily basis to record the actual amount of time you spend eating, sleeping, commuting, working, watching television, caring for your children, reading, and everything else. However, if your schedule is regular, you might prefer to complete the chart in one sitting and, perhaps, by consulting your appointment book or planner.

After you have recorded your activities, you will be ready to schedule study periods around these activities or, perhaps, instead of some of them. In the space below, write the number of hours you will be able to set aside for study each week.

Hours Per Week Available =

3. **Divide the first number by the second number.** This will give you the number of weeks you will need to set aside for independent study. For example, if you think you will require 170 hours of study and you have 10 hours available to study each week, divide 170 hours by 10 hours and you will get 17. This means that you will need about 17 weeks to complete this course of study. However, you will also need to allow about a week for review and self-testing. Moreover, to be on the safe side, you should also add two weeks to allow for unforeseen obstacles and times when you know you will not be able to study (e.g., during family illnesses or holidays). So, in this case, you should allot a total of 18 to 19 weeks to complete your study.
4. **Schedule your examination to coincide with the end of your study period.** For example, if you plan to allow 18 weeks for study, identify a suitable examination date and begin study at least 18 weeks before that date. (The date you begin study assumes that you will have received all of your study materials by that time.)

5. **Format a long-term study plan.** You will need to use a calendar, planner, or some other tool to format and track your long-term study plan. Choose a method that is convenient and one that keeps you aware of your study schedule on a daily basis. Identify the days and exact hours of each day that you will reserve for study throughout your whole independent study period. Check to see that the total number of hours you designate for study on your long-term study plan adds up to the number of hours you determined you will need to complete this course (Step 1).
6. **Record in your long-term study plan the content you plan to cover during each study period.** Enter the session numbers, review, and examination preparation activities you will complete during each study period. In Part II of this Course Guide you will complete 21 sessions and two review sessions. While it is suggested that 170 hours of study is required for this exam, each and every student may require different timelines based on their comfort with, and comprehension of, the material.

You now have a tentative personal long-term study plan. Keep in mind that you will have to adjust your study plan, perhaps several times, as you study. It is only by actually beginning to work through the assignments that you will be able to determine accurately how long you should allow for each unit.

■ **What Learning Strategy Should I Use?**

Learning Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to help you acquire the knowledge and skills required for successful completion of *Ethics: Theory & Practice*.

1. **Approach learning with a positive attitude.** most students are capable of learning course content if they devote enough time and effort to the task.
2. **Diligently complete the assignments specified in this Guide.** This Guide has been designed for the specific purpose of helping you achieve the learning outcomes for this exam.
3. **Be an active learner.** You should actively engage in the learning process. Read critically, take notes, and continuously monitor your comprehension. Keep a written record of your progress, highlight content you find difficult to grasp, and seek assistance from someone in your learning community who can help you if you have difficulty understanding a concept.
4. **Be patient, you won't understand everything immediately.** When encountering difficulty with new material, be patient with yourself and don't give up. Understanding will come with time and further study. Sometimes you may need to take a break and come back to difficult material. This is especially true for the primary source material you will be asked to read. The study sessions will guide you through the material and help you focus on key points. You will find that many concepts introduced in earlier sessions will be explained in more detail in later sessions.

Learning Tip

It is better to write down too many hours than too few!

5. **Apply your learning to your daily life.** Use insights you gain from your study to better understand the world in which you live. Look for instances in society that support or contradict your reading on this subject.
6. **Accommodate your preferred way of learning.** How do you learn best? Common ways to learn are reading, taking notes, and making diagrams, by listening to someone (on tape or live) and others learn by doing. Do any of these descriptions apply to you? Or does your learning style vary with the learning situation? Decide what works for you and try to create a learning environment to accommodate your preferences.

Policies and Procedures

Academic Honesty Nondisclosure Statement

All test takers must agree to abide by the terms of the Excelsior College Academic Honesty Policy before taking an examination. The agreement will be presented on screen at the Pearson VUE Testing Center before the start of your examination. Once you accept the terms of the agreement, you will be able to proceed with your exam. If you choose not to accept the terms of this agreement, your examination will be terminated and you will be required to leave the testing center. You will not be eligible for a refund. For more information, review the Student Policy Handbook at www.excelsior.edu/studentpolicyhandbook.

Notes

Part II

Learning the Content

Overview

Part II shows how the course content is organized, suggests learning strategies, and contains a learning plan that guides you through the study materials.

■ **How Is the Content Organized?**

The content is divided into 21 study sessions and two review sessions. These sessions are contained in Section A: Theory, and Section B: Practice.

| Content Area | Study Guide Session Numbers |
|------------------------------------|---|
| I. Basic Theories, Basic Concepts | 1. The Nature of Ethics 5. Utilitarianism 6. Deontological Theories 7. Virtue Ethics: Plato and Aristotle 8. David Hume and Communitarian Theories 9. Religion and Morality 10. Egoism 11. Existentialism and Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals 12. Justice 13. Rights |
| II. Metaethics, Moral Deliberation | 2. Ethical Relativism 3. Metaethics: Justification and Truth in Ethics 4. Theories of Moral Right and Wrong |
| III. Social & Personal Issues | 14. Liberty 18. Personal Relations 19. Equality and Discrimination 20. Affirmative Action 21. Free Speech |
| IV. Medical Issues | 15. Abortion 16. Euthanasia |
| V. Professional & Business Issues | 20. Affirmative Action |
| VI. Environmental Issues | 17. Animals and the Environment |

Organization of Content

Section A: Theory
• 14 Sessions
• 1 Review Session

Section B: Practice
• 7 Sessions
• 1 Review Session

Section A: Theory

This section seeks to help you build a solid foundation in moral theory. Moral issues involve principles and ethical concepts that apply to a range of diverse and seemingly unrelated issues. The study sessions in Section A are designed to help you recognize how diverse situations can be brought under a few abstract moral principles. Just as a single principle of gravity can account for phenomena as diverse as the tides, your weight, and a cannon ball trajectory, so too in ethics you will see that behind apparently unrelated situations there are fundamental moral principles worthy of investigation.

Section B: Practice

This section provides you with an opportunity to explore a range of contemporary moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and the environment. You will examine opposing arguments and analyze and evaluate them in terms of moral concepts, principles, and theories. You will also consider issues that cut across practical situations and issues that apply only to particular contexts such as the environment.

■ **How Can I Learn the Content?**

The following five guidelines are intended to facilitate your study of ethics.

Approach ethics with a positive attitude.

The study of ethics can be interesting, useful, and enjoyable. While there is a lot to learn, you can learn the content if you devote enough time and effort to the task.

Be an active learner.

You must actively engage yourself with the content to learn it well. Conscientiously, do all of the activities in the study sessions as directed. Follow the advice on how to read, analyze, and evaluate philosophical essays; and on how to take notes, apply your learning, and assess your understanding.

Focus on Reasoning.

Moral philosophy is, first and foremost, a rational activity. Issues are not considered on the basis of feeling, emotion, authority, or popular opinion. The methodology of philosophy is based on the analysis of arguments and the assessment of reasons.

While you study, you are likely to encounter subjects that you find intensely personal and which arouse strong feelings. At times, you may be absolutely convinced that something is morally acceptable or morally unacceptable. But the mere fact that you strongly feel something is right or wrong is, by itself, irrelevant. As difficult as it may be for you to control your feelings, you must prepare yourself to investigate rationally some of your closest and least examined beliefs. Providing a rational defense for an ethical position may cause you discomfort; but it is a requirement of moral philosophy and, in fact, may also be necessary for personal growth.

Expect ambiguity.

Moral philosophy differs from disciplines in which there is an accepted body of knowledge to be mastered. In moral philosophy virtually everything is in dispute. At times, this uncertainty may cause you to feel you are not making progress. Just when it appears that a question has been answered or a theory established, you will read a devastating critique tearing the whole thing down. But this is progress. In philosophy, you make progress by grappling with tough questions.

The sessions in this guide do not, and cannot, provide you with definitive answers to questions that have occupied people for ages. But they can help you prepare yourself to enter the discussion about ethics and to think insightfully about some of the most profound questions of life.

Cultivate and expand your learning community.

Discuss your learning with interested family members, friends, co-workers, and others studying ethics. Explaining what you are learning to someone else is an excellent exercise for reinforcing complex concepts and organizing ideas in your mind. Sharing your learning with others also helps to establish a support network that will provide you with encouragement and emotional support to persist in your studies.

Take advantage of the resources in your community. A library is one of the greatest learning resources available to you as an independent learner. Your library may have books, readings, and other resources on ethics. If not, ask the reference librarian if the library can borrow the needed resource from another library. Other sources of information include government agencies, your place of work, educational organizations, newspapers, and other places or organizations that may be able to assist you. If you have access to the Internet, you will be able to participate in discussion groups and locate a wide range of resources related to ethics.

■ ***How Should I Work Through a Study Session?***

The 21 study sessions contained in this course guide provide you with carefully planned activities designed to help you learn the course content. Most students should expect to spend an average of about four to five hours on each session. However, you might need to spend substantially more or less time on individual sessions, depending on your background, interest, and your learning strategy.

Study sessions have been designed so that later sessions build on content learned in earlier sessions; therefore, you should start with Session 1 and work your way sequentially through the sessions. You should also do the review sessions as they appear: one after Session 14 and another after Session 21.

The structure of each session is similar. Each session contains an introduction to the topic for that session, a list of key terms, session objectives, learning tips, four types of activities (read, think, write, and apply your learning), a summary, and recommendations for additional reading. The following guidelines are intended to help you effectively work your way through each session.

Read the session title carefully.

Session titles accurately reflect the content of the session. Use them to help orient your thinking to the session. Ask yourself what you know about the topic you are about to study and what you would like to find out. Consider how each session relates to the sessions that precede and follow it.

Review the key terms.

About a dozen key terms are identified at the beginning of a session. By the end of each session, you will be expected to be able to define and distinguish among these terms. Begin focusing on them right away so that you can watch for them as you read the study session. You will need to use a system for learning and recording information about the key terms in each session.

Review the objectives.

The objectives for each session tell you what you should be able to do after you finish the session. By making yourself aware of the objectives, you will be able to target essential content and avoid spending excessive time on less important content. You will also need a system for recording and organizing information associated with the objectives.

Read the introduction.

The introduction to each session sets the stage for learning. This is accomplished in several ways, such as by piquing your curiosity by raising questions, relating content to everyday life, linking content to previous sessions, and providing an overview of the session.

Note the learning tips.

Two or three learning tips are usually provided at strategic points in each session to facilitate your learning. Learning tips may introduce a learning technique or remind you to use one that was introduced earlier. For example, one technique you will be encouraged to use throughout the sessions is to construct a question table to help you organize and integrate content.

Read with a purpose.

An excellent way to increase your comprehension and reading efficiency is to establish a clear purpose in your mind before you start a reading assignment. Sometimes the study session sets a purpose for your reading by asking you to pay attention to a particular aspect of the content as you read. However, if a purpose is not set for you, you will need to establish one for yourself.

Note: Reading assignments in each session refer to one of the three recommended textbooks by the editor's last name (i.e., Scalet, Cahn, or Holmes). The full citation is not listed.

Learning Tip

Session 1 describes a method for systematically learning key terms and recording information related to the objectives.

Learning Tip

One good way to establish a purpose for reading is to use the session objectives.

Answer the questions first; then compare your answer with the comments that follow.

Several times during a session, you will be asked questions and expected to think about or write out responses to them. The purpose of these questions is to help you construct your own knowledge base for ethics. The questions require you to process actively new ideas by connecting, organizing, and integrating them with your existing knowledge. Some questions are quite challenging and require you to evaluate critically information from several readings. To obtain maximum benefit from these questions, take the time to answer the questions as completely as you can before reading the comments that immediately follow the questions.

Learning Tip

Use an index card to avoid seeing the comments following the questions before you are ready.

The comments immediately following the questions are of various types. One type directs you back to the relevant section of the reading that addresses the question. Another provides information that you should have included in your answer, while a third provides a detailed sample response that you can use to evaluate your own response. Keep in mind that definitive answers to many questions are not possible in ethics. In fact, you may find that the comments following the questions occasionally contain a new question!

Read the summary.

Each session contains a summary that brings you back to the main points covered by the session. Use the summary as another means of measuring your progress. You should feel that you have a good grasp of the topics contained in the summary; if you don't, you should review the problem areas, and, if necessary, obtain help from your learning community.

Apply your learning.

Each session lists two or three ways you can apply the ethical concepts, principles, and theories to your life. These activities are designed to help you transfer your learning from an academic environment to a real-world environment. Do at least one of these activities for each session. You will find that these activities allow you to achieve a deep level of understanding of the content that will last well beyond the session and the examination.

Learning Tip

Measure your progress at the end of each session by carrying out the tasks listed in the objectives.

Note the suggestions for additional reading.

Each session contains suggestions for additional reading. These suggestions are provided to guide you to resources that will allow you to explore a particular topic in depth. These materials may include classic and contemporary writings.

Complete the self-assessment chart.

A self-assessment chart appears at the end of each session. Complete the chart as directed by rating yourself on your ability to meet each objective specified at the beginning of the session. Add aspects of the session that you think you need to review. These charts will become particularly valuable when it is time for you to prepare yourself for the examination.

Part II
Section A:

Theory

Session 1

The Nature of Ethics

In This Session

*This session addresses the questions “What is ethics?” and “What is morality?”
You will be introduced to concepts and positions on the study of morality
that you will explore in greater detail in future sessions.*

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 1.1. Outline a systematic approach to reading and analyzing philosophical essays.
- 1.2. Distinguish moral from social, political, and other kinds of issues.
- 1.3. Distinguish normative judgments from descriptive statements.
- 1.4. Answer the questions “What is ethics?” and “What is morality?”
- 1.5. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • <i>Argument</i> | • <i>Metaethics</i> |
| • <i>Premise</i> | • <i>Normative Ethics</i> |
| • <i>Assumptions</i> | • <i>Nonnormative Approaches</i> |
| • <i>Slippery Slope</i> | • <i>Utilitarianism</i> |
| • <i>Straw Man</i> | • <i>Deontological Theories</i> |
| • <i>False Dilemma</i> | • <i>Virtue Ethics</i> |
| • <i>Double Effect</i> | |

Introduction

This session (and those that follow) contains new and challenging content that you must acquire, integrate, and assimilate with your existing knowledge. You will find that using an organizing tool such as a question table (see Appendix E) can greatly facilitate your learning efficiency and long-term retention of content.

Reading Philosophical Essays

Does the process of reading philosophical essays differ from reading essays in another field? According to John Arthur, co-editor of *Morality and Moral Controversies*, it does.

According to Arthur, you should think of a philosophical essay as “an attempt to get you to either change your beliefs on an issue or to acquire new ones” (Arthur, 1996, p. 1). Viewed in this way, the philosophical essay becomes an argument designed to convince you to take a specific position (the writer’s) on an issue. Therefore, you will need to 1) identify the structure of the argument, and 2) critically evaluate the essay. The following table will help you do this.

Guidelines for Reading Philosophical Essays

| Step | What to Do | How to Do It |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Skim the essay to get a general sense of the writer's intentions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on the title of the essay. Does it give you a clue to the writer's viewpoint? How does this topic fit into the purposes of this ethics course? • Read the first paragraph. Does it identify the problem being addressed? Is the writer responding to someone who has already written on this topic? • Read the section headings. How is the essay organized? • Read the last paragraph. What is the writer's conclusion about the subject? What position does the writer want you to take? |
| 2 | Read the essay carefully until you fully understand what the writer is advocating and why. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assumptions or premises form the basis for the writer's argument or position? Do you accept the premises? • How does the writer go from the assumptions to the conclusion? What are the steps in the argument? (Is the writer using analogies, criticizing the positions of others, or appealing to principles the writer feels are true?) |
| 3 | Outline the essay or explain it to someone in your own words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a brief synopsis of the structure of the argument. List the premises, steps, and conclusion. • Summarize the writer's argument to someone who has not read the essay. If this is difficult, study the essay again until it becomes clear. |

Guidelines for Reading Philosophical Essays (continued)

| Step | What to Do | How to Do It |
|------|--|--|
| 4 | Reexamine the writer's premises. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they plausible? • Are they controversial? If so, does the writer adequately explain and defend them? |
| 5 | Determine if the argument is sound. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the premises really lead to the conclusion? • Would accepting the premises lead, in some situations, to unacceptable consequences (slippery slope)? • Are there any logical gaps in the argument? • If analogies are used, are they sound? • Are there counter examples to the principles used by the writer? • Has the writer used any logical fallacies such as creating a straw man or a false dilemma? |
| 6 | Determine how the argument could be made sound (if it is not). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would a change in a premise or a step in the argument strengthen the writer's position? • Can any of the weaknesses be addressed or fixed to establish the writer's position? |

If you are not familiar with the terms used for evaluating philosophical essays, or you have forgotten them, you will find them explained below.

Slippery Slope

The slippery slope is a logical fallacy in which a person asserts that some event (usually unacceptable) must inevitably follow from another event. The person using this fallacy typically ignores the series of steps or gradations that would almost certainly intervene between the event under discussion and the unacceptable event. The argument takes the form that if event X occurs (or were to occur), event Y would inevitably happen. The following statements illustrate the slippery slope fallacy: “If we send a few troops to fight overseas now, we will soon be sending thousands,” and “If we pass this new gun control law, citizens will soon have their guns taken away from them.”

Learning Tip

Each of these is a key term for this course.

Straw Man

A straw man is a logical fallacy in which a person misrepresents someone’s position so that it can be more easily attacked and torn down. The straw man technique is fallacious because an attack on a distorted position does not constitute a legitimate attack on the position itself. The argument takes the form that 1) person A has position X, 2) person B presents position Y, 3) person B attacks and destroys position Y, and 4) person B claims that person A’s position is incorrect. The following statements illustrate the use of the straw man fallacy: “My neighbor voted against the proposal to build a new high school. I wonder why he is against education,” and “Would you help with the dishes tonight, Fred?” “No, dear. I helped last night. I’m not going to do dishes every night.”

False Dilemma

A false dilemma is a logical fallacy in which a person argues that there are only two alternatives when, in fact, there are more than two. The following statements illustrate the use of the false dilemma strategy: “Look, you are going to have to buy this car now, or you will have to learn to get along without one,” or “We’ll have to cut military spending this year or we’ll have to live with a huge deficit.”

Double Effect

The principle of double effect recognizes that sometimes our actions have two effects: those that we intend and those that are foreseeable but which we do not intend. According to this principle, we are to be held morally accountable only for the effects that we intend. A common application of this principle occurs in the practice of medicine when a doctor who, in order to relieve the suffering of a terminally ill patient, prescribes a high dose of painkiller that the doctor knows will hasten the patient’s death. According to the principle of double effect, the doctor is not morally responsible for the patient’s death (a foreseeable outcome) because the doctor’s intent was to relieve the suffering of the patient.

What is Ethics?

Arthur's advice on reading philosophical essays lays the groundwork for the application of logic and the evaluation of controversial ideas. The following assignment builds on that foundation and attempts to answer the question "What is ethics?"



Read

Holmes, Chapter 1



Think It Over

Reflect on Holmes's account of the origins of morality. Do you find his account convincing? Why? Why not?



Write

Write concise definitions for each of the following terms and give a brief example that illustrates the definition: descriptive statement, normative judgment, value judgment, prescriptive judgment, moral judgment, and nonmoral judgment.

Consult Holmes to see if your definitions correspond to his use of the terms. The chart in chapter 1 provides a quick visual summary of the complex relationships among them.

Learning Tip

If a key term is still not clear, consult a good dictionary.



Write

How does normative ethics differ from applied ethics?

See how your answer compares to the one provided by Holmes. Additional readings (e.g., those in the next subsection) will help clarify the distinction and expand your understanding of these concepts.

Metaethics

In the following reading you will find that metaethics raises questions that are substantially different from the ones most people have in mind when they talk about ethics. They are questions which you will see again in subsequent readings; but for the time being, simply pause and think about them. What do you, personally, intend to convey when you use terms like “good,” “bad,” “right,” and “wrong”?



Read

Holmes, Review the section on “Metaethics” in the chapter that focuses on Justice.

What is Morality?

In the next reading Steven Cahn introduces the concept of morality.

As you read, note or highlight textbook information that will help you answer the question “What is morality?”



Read

Cahn, “Morality & Moral Philosophy,” which contains an excerpt by William K. Frankena.

Learning Tip

Use your outline of *Guidelines for Reading Philosophical Essays* (pp. 25–26 of the course guide) to read the two essays in this reading.



Write

Review and answer the Study Questions included at the end of Cahn's chapter on "Morality and Moral Philosophy."

Elements of Morality

The remaining reading assignments for this session continue to explore the concept of morality. You will be introduced to the concept of a moral code, and the object of morality. As you read, keep in mind that the purpose of these assignments is to provide a quick sketch of several positions which you will study in greater detail in future study sessions and not to have you intensively analyze the controversies under discussion.

What is a Moral Code?

The next reading, by Singer, focuses on the idea of a moral code.



Read

"World Hunger and Moral Obligation: The Case Against Singer" by John Arthur (www.food.unt.edu/arguments/singer_arthur.pdf).



Read

Holmes. Locate the below bolded terms in the readings in the Holmes text (you can do so easily by referring to the index).



Write

Write concise definitions for each of the following terms and include a brief example which illustrates the definition: **metaethics, utilitarianism, deontological theories, and applied ethics.**

Summary

You have only completed one study session, but in the process you should have accomplished a lot. You have begun a course of study which may well change the way you approach life itself. You should have a clearer understanding of the nature of ethics and the controversies concerning its major characteristics than you had before. You should be able to define and use terms like “slippery slope,” “metaethics,” “normative ethics,” “utilitarianism,” “deontology,” “virtue ethics,” “applied ethics,” and other words and phrases listed as key terms at the beginning of this study session.

Apply Your Learning

The following activities are designed to help you apply the information you have learned to the world in which you live. While you may choose to undertake these activities by yourself, you almost certainly would find them more enjoyable and valuable if you involve others. Electronic study groups with others who are preparing for this examination could be particularly beneficial.

1. Examine the new for a few days to see how many examples you can find of moral controversies. Pay particular attention to quotations. You may find people expressing views nearly identical to those which you have studied in this session.
2. Examine the editorial pages for arguments. Identify premises, conclusions, and any fallacies you may find.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 1

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 2

Ethical Relativism

In This Session

This session explores a metaethical theory called “ethical relativism.”

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 2.1. Identify the important issues raised by ethical relativism.
- 2.2. State the standard criticisms against ethical relativism.
- 2.3. State the standard responses relativists give to these criticisms.
- 2.4. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- Ethical Relativism*
- Cultural Relativism*
- Ethical Universalism*
- Ethical Absolutism*
- Naturalistic Fallacy*
- Subjectivist*
- Objectivist*

Introduction

Relativism is widespread. The United States is a free country, after all, and so, many think, anyone can believe whatever they wish. Some people believe that ethical judgments vary from individual to individual, while others hold that they vary from society to society. However, others believe that what is fundamentally right or wrong is the same for all people. Who is correct?

In this session, you will explore this question by examining ethical relativism and related concepts and issues. You will read arguments for and against the idea that relativism is true, and assess their soundness.

What is Ethical Relativism?

In the first reading assignment, Holmes describes ethical relativism and distinguishes it from ethical universalism and ethical absolutism. As you read, note the distinctions among these important concepts.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Ethical Relativism.



Think It Over

In this chapter, Holmes argues that it is helpful to distinguish among three theses:

- a. Moral beliefs vary from culture to culture.
- b. Morality depends upon human nature, the human condition, and specific social and cultural circumstances.
- c. What is morally right or wrong may vary fundamentally from culture to culture.

Do theses a and b support c (ethical relativism)?

Compare your answer with Holmes's explanation ethical relativism. You might have pointed out that thesis c implies that moral beliefs vary from culture to culture (thesis a) and that morality may be influenced by social and cultural characteristics (thesis b).



Write

Consider how ethical universalism and ethical absolutism relate to ethical relativity. Does each deny thesis a, b, and c? Write definitions for both terms in your question table if you haven't already done so.

Check your thinking and your definition against Holmes's analysis.



Think It Over

Arguments for cultural relativity rest on the claim that moral beliefs are dependent upon either culture or other contingent facts about human beings, such as their nature or their condition, as Holmes points out (thesis b, previous Think it Over section). How could moral beliefs vary from culture to culture without being relative to cultures?

If you have difficulty answering this question, compare it with the following question: How can driving on the left-hand side of the road be right in one country and wrong in another and yet both be consistent with some general principles about safe driving (such as that there should be some consistent rule about which side of the road motorists should drive on)?

Is Cultural Relativism True?

In the following readings the authors raise several issues and criticisms which challenge cultural relativism. Be sure to start with the Holmes reading as it nicely sets the stage for the readings that follow it in this session.



Read

Holmes, in the Ethical Relativism chapter, focus on the section about “What Difference Does it Make Whether Relativism is True?”.



Read

Read Mary Midgley, “Trying Out One’s New Sword.” (www.gchandchi.com/IONA/newsword.pdf)

In the United States, the Bill of Rights in the Constitution is supposed to elevate certain rights above the political fray. Even if the majority were in favor of suppressing freedom of speech, for instance, the First Amendment protects that right. The only way to deny freedom of speech would be to amend the Constitution, which requires more than a simple majority. Americans thus have a political system which protects certain rights so that what rights individuals have do not depend upon the political climate. Constitutional rights are not relative to what anyone — even the majority — wishes to believe.



Think It Over

Suppose moral rights functioned the way American Constitutional rights function. How would this affect the way Americans view cultural practices of other countries, and vice versa?

You should recognize that a rights-based approach to morality would enable countries to judge each other’s behavior according to common standards. Session 13 of this course guide is devoted exclusively to rights. You may want to skim it now to gain a better understanding of rights.

Learning Tip

Use your reading guide (Session 1) when you read the essays in this session.



Write

Reflect on Midgley’s essay. Is there, as Midgley’s example suggests, a right not to be used as the test subject for a samurai sword? Outline the argument you would use to justify your view.

Do you argue from a human rights perspective? If so, what was the basis of your argument? If you argued from a cultural relativity perspective, did you base your argument on Holmes’s theses? Or did you discover another line of argument?

Ethical Relativism and Moral Disagreements

How would things be different if moral relativism were true? How would you settle moral disagreements? The next two readings address this question.



Read

Holmes, in the chapter on Ethical Relativism, review the readings on Relativism and Moral Disagreements.



Read

Cahn, “How Not to Answer Moral Questions,” which is an excerpt by Tom Regan.



Think It Over

If someone believes that $10 - 4 = 3$ and has a right to believe that, then how can you object if you believe that $10 - 4 = 6$? How can disagreement be possible? What if someone believes that chocolate ice cream is best while you believe that vanilla is best? Does that disagreement matter? If it does can it be settled in the way we might assume that the disagreement about the total of $10 - 4$ might be settled? Are moral disagreements more like disagreements in taste or disagreements in mathematical judgments?



Write

Review and answer the Study Questions that accompany the Tom Regan essay in the Cahn textbook. Add them to your guide for reading philosophical essays so that you can refer to them as you analyze and critique essays appearing in future sessions.

Evaluating Ethical Relativism

In the next readings, the authors consider arguments for and against relativity. You may find sections of this material difficult to follow. However, keep your attention focused on identifying the basic arguments and issues.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Ethical Relativism



Read

Cahn, the chapter on “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism,” which contains an excerpt by James Rachels.



Think It Over

Review the criticisms of relativity and responses to the criticisms you have listed in your question table so far in this session. Have you been able to find a response to each criticism?

If possible, compare your question table with that of a fellow student.

Learning Tip

Focus on session objectives bulleted items 3 and 4.

Summary

Many moral disagreements in our society seem intractable. One need only think about the disagreements surrounding the morality of abortion or affirmative action, for instance. People disagree about these things, and there seems to be no way to resolve the disagreements. Someone might use the existence of such disagreements as evidence for moral relativity, but the disagreement is also consistent with our just not having thought through the issues carefully enough or with our not having powerful enough ethical theories. In the latter case, we are like mathematicians trying to prove a mathematical conjecture: we know that there is an answer, but we just do not yet know what it is. Moral relativists argue that morals cannot be like mathematics. The question to ask is, “How could they know?”

You should have now recorded in your question table the definitions of the key terms for this session and answered the questions based on the session objectives (in addition to any questions or terms you may have added). Check to see that you have completed these tasks. Review your question table to ensure the information you entered into your table is concise, clear, and complete.

Apply Your Learning

1. Try to apply your understanding of the concepts of ethical relativism and universalism to the world around you. Listen for instances of these concepts as people discuss moral issues. For example, you might overhear or be part of a discussion about abortion and someone might say, “I wouldn’t get an abortion, but I think it’s a matter of free choice.” Ask whether this is an instance of moral relativism or ethical universalism.
2. When you read the newspapers, see if you can find examples of arguments for moral relativism. The business section sometimes has arguments about practices which “are morally right in another country — bribery, for instance — that would not be right in ours.
3. Pick a right — of speech, of movement, of body — and consider what might result if extreme moral relativity were true. If you did not have a right to your own body, for instance, others could use it for whatever the culture you were in permitted. They could take your body parts to help others, or make you a slave. Work through this example, or another example, in detail.

Suggested Additional Reading

Scalet, read the excerpt entitled “Relativism in Ethics” by William Shaw.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 2

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 3

Metaethics: Justification and Truth in Ethics

In This Session

This study session explores abstract questions regarding metaethics; namely questions of justification and truth.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 3.1. Distinguish between normative ethics and metaethics.
- 3.2. Explain the naturalistic fallacy and its theoretical importance.
- 3.3. State answers that philosophers have given to the questions
Can moral principles be justified?
Why be moral?
Do moral judgments have a truth-value?
- 3.4. Identify the weaknesses of metaethical positions represented by intuitionism, naturalism, contractarianism, cognitivism, noncognitivism, emotivism, moral realism, and moral antirealism.
- 3.5. Define and distinguish between the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • <i>Justification</i> | • <i>Noncognitivism</i> |
| • <i>Intuitionism</i> | • <i>Emotivism</i> |
| • <i>Naturalism</i> | • <i>Open Question Argument</i> |
| • <i>Contractarianism</i> | • <i>Moral Realism</i> |
| • <i>Cognitivism</i> | • <i>Moral Antirealism</i> |

Introduction

When we make a moral judgment, what is the status of the judgment? That is, is the judgment either true or false; and, ultimately, can the judgment ever be justified? And when you get right down to it, why should we be moral? Morality can make demands on us that go against self-interest, so why do what being moral requires when morality and self-interest diverge? These are extremely difficult questions that make up a complex area of ethics called metaethics.

Metaethics is the philosophy of ethics. It is distinct from normative ethics because in metaethics we are not trying to figure out what we ought to do; rather, we are trying to figure out what it means to say that we ought to do something. (For a reminder of the basic areas of moral philosophy, see Session 1.)

The material for this study session is organized around three basic metaethical questions:

1. Can moral principles be justified?
2. Why be moral?
3. Do moral judgments have a truth-value (are they either true or false)?

These questions do not occur to us in our daily dealings with morality. In our ordinary affairs, we are concerned with figuring out what we ought to do, and moral philosophy has a lot to say about this; but when we have the occasion to think critically about ethics itself, we begin to wonder about the legitimacy of ethics and the status of the moral judgments we make.

Can Moral Principles Be Justified?

To justify a moral position one must present reasons for thinking it is so — this is moral reasoning or moral argumentation.

When we engage in moral argumentation, not only must we be concerned with logic and argumentative structure, but that the principles we employ require scrutiny. Different moral theories — as we shall soon see — employ different moral principles, making ultimate justification a difficult matter.

In the next reading, Holmes introduces several approaches to moral justification — intuitionism, naturalism, and contractarianism. These are each broad views about the nature of ethics (metaethical theories), and each gives an account of what constitutes moral justification.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Justification of Moral Principles

Learning Tip

Have you prepared a question table for the key terms and objectives?



Think It Over

How do the three basic attempts to justify moral principles discussed by Holmes, intuitionism, naturalism, and contractarianism, each purport to justify moral principles?

Intuitionism has long been suspect because it makes justification essentially a private matter: we each consult intuition to find out what is right or wrong. Naturalism avoids the privacy problem, but creates difficulties of its own. What makes particular natural facts moral facts? Who's to say that this or that natural fact (such as maximizing happiness or promoting survival) is what morality is all about? Contractarianism avoids all questions of moral facts, since morality is, on this view, a matter of agreement, or contract (hence the name). A question to keep in mind about this theory is, "Who is covered by the contract?"



Write

In your question table, describe how intuitionism, naturalism, contractarianism attempt to justify moral principles, and identify the weaknesses of each position. Which seems best to you?

Under contractarianism, did you include Rawls's "veil of ignorance" and the role it plays in the contractarian theory? (Refer to material in Session 6 for further help with Rawls. Check your question table against sections 12.1–12.7 in Holmes. Revise as required.)

Why Be Moral?

In the next reading you will consider the startling question, "Why be moral?" Suppose you know that it would be wrong for you to do something; why should that matter?



Read

Cahn, chapter on "Right and Wrong," an excerpt by Thomas Nagel



Think It Over

What is the difference between wondering about whether we should have the institution of morality and wondering whether I should be moral?



Write

Review and answer the Study Questions that accompany this selection by Nagel. Try to state in your own words what Nagel concludes about the answer to the question "Why be moral?"

In the next reading Holmes introduces cognitivism including its two main forms, naturalism and intuitionism. He discusses noncognitivism and emotivism. The reading includes a discussion of moral realism and antirealism.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Justification of Moral Principles and chapter on Nature of Moral Judgments. In the former chapter, review the section on Moral Foundationalism: Intuitionism and Naturalism. In the latter chapter, review the section on Moral Realism, Cognitivism, and Noncognitivism.



Think It Over

According to an emotivist, what is moral argumentation?



Think It Over

The current metaethical debate about the metaphysical status of ethics is often put in terms of moral realism versus moral antirealism. How do proponents of moral realism and moral antirealism differ on their view of moral facts?

Your answer should include the idea that moral realists argue that there are moral facts, whereas moral antirealists deny that there are moral facts. Reflect on what might constitute a moral fact. What do you think?



Write

What is the naturalistic fallacy, and how does the “open question” argument (Holmes, chapter on The Nature of Moral Judgments, sections about Naturalistic Fallacy and The Open-Question Argument) purport to establish that “good” cannot mean “natural property X”? Explain why adding a normative premise to a deductively valid argument avoids the “is/ought” problem.

Keep the idea of a naturalistic definition of “good” in mind as you study normative ethical theories, such as utilitarianism (Session 5).

Learning Tip

The material for this reading is very abstract and will probably be hard to comprehend on just one reading. Give yourself plenty of time to think through the issues and arguments and complete your question table as you work your way through the reading section-by-section.

Summary

This study session has examined some difficult questions of metaethics: Can moral principles be justified? Why be moral? Do moral judgments have a truth value? We have considered a range of positions and issues dealing with these questions: institutionalism, naturalism, contractarianism, cognitivism, noncognitivism, emotivism, the naturalistic fallacy, moral realism, and moral antirealism. Though these issues might seem remote from our everyday dealings with morality, their resolution is crucial for understanding what we are doing when we form moral judgments.

Apply Your Learning

Because the material for this session is so abstract, it will not apply to the “real world” in the straightforward way that normative theories apply to actual situations. Nevertheless, there are things you can do to explore the ideas at issue. For example, consider an actual moral judgment of yours in the light of each position discussed in this session. You should “try on” each metaethical position to see what it says about something you actually believe to be the case. Which position seems most plausible to you, when you apply it to an actual moral belief you hold? Why?

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 3

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 4

Theories of Moral Right and Wrong

In This Session

This session provides an overview of theories of right and wrong.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 4.1. Identify four ways value concepts may be related to deontic concepts (the relationship between “good” and “right”).
- 4.2. Compare the strong and weak forms of deontological and nonconsequentialist theories.
- 4.3. Compare theories of right and wrong in terms of the locus of the good, the relevance of bad results, and the relevance of consequences for various groups.
- 4.4. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • <i>Moral Legalism</i> | • <i>Axiological Theories</i> |
| • <i>Moral Particularism</i> | • <i>Deontological Theories</i> |
| • <i>Value</i> | • <i>Consequentialist Theories</i> |
| • <i>Deontic</i> | • <i>Nonconsequentialist Theories</i> |
| • <i>Entitlement</i> | |

Learning Tip

Try One of These Techniques:

- Use a question table.
- Use flash cards. List key terms on 3x5 cards with definitions on the back. Periodically test yourself.
- Use visual tools. Create cognitive maps showing how terms are related.

Introduction

To think clearly about ethical issues, we must form a theory about right and wrong. Over the past several thousand years, philosophers have identified a staggering variety of conflicting and competing theories. Fortunately, most theories can be classified as one of a few types (depending on the answers to a few questions).

Learning the number of theories, the distinctions among them, and the volume of terminology in this session can be challenging. Try to maintain a sense of perspective. You cannot learn everything at once, and you are not expected to. Each theory will be dealt with in greater detail in future sessions. What is important is that you develop a general familiarity with the terrain of ethics so that you will feel less lost when exploring particular features of the moral landscape.

Moral Legalism and Moral Particularism

The next reading focuses on two approaches to the evaluation of human conduct: moral legalism and moral particularism.

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Theories of Moral Right and Wrong

**Write**

What is the difference between moral legalism and moral particularism? Define and distinguish between these concepts and record this information in your question table.

Holmes describes moral legalism and moral particularism as ways that we may use to evaluate human conduct. Moral legalism assesses conduct in terms of various rules, while moral particularism assesses each act according to its own circumstances.

**Think It Over**

Are moral legalism and moral particularism as separate and distinct as they appear? Is there a way that we can accept the guidance of both without falling prey to the extremism of either?

Holmes provides an alternative in this chapter. He presents this alternative as a “middle ground” between the extremes. Basically, he suggests using rules when they apply but judging each case according to its circumstances when the rules don’t apply.

Value, Deontic, and Entitlement

As you continue reading Holmes, note the distinctions among the following key terms: value, deontic, and entitlement.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Theories of Moral Right and Wrong
Holmes, chapter on The Nature of Moral Judgments



Think It Over

Define and provide examples of value, deontic, and entitlement.



Write

List four possible relationships between value and deontic concepts (the relationship between “good” and “right”).

Compare your list to the analysis provided by Holmes in the chapter on Theories of Moral Right and Wrong. Note that Holmes suggests the connections might be causal, normative, conceptual, or nonexistent. Which strikes you as the most reasonable? Why?

Axiological and Deontological Theories

Holmes examines axiological and deontological theories and their weak and strong forms.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Theories of Moral Right and Wrong

**Think It Over**

Recall the distinction between axiological and deontological theories. Which do I presume if I maintain that “right” means “approved by my society”? What if I believe “right” means “promotes the greatest good for my society”?

Compare your answers with those provided by Holmes. In this section Holmes explains that axiological theories tend to emphasize evaluating, while deontological theories tend to emphasize prescribing. Thus, if you maintain that “right” means “approved by society,” you are expressing a deontological perspective; and if you maintain “right” means “promotes the greatest good for my society,” you are taking an axiological stance (you would have to evaluate the action you are considering in terms of its consequences).

**Write**

Both deontological and nonconsequentialist theories are subdivided into two forms: strong and weak. While the specifics differ, the logic is parallel. Define, as clearly as possible, the following terms: nonconsequentialism (general), weak nonconsequentialism, strong nonconsequentialism, deontologism (general), weak deontologism, and strong deontologism.

Compare your definitions to the ones provided by Holmes. You should have noted that the distinction between strong and weak forms centers on the difference between that which is relevant and that which is decisive (rendering all else irrelevant).

**Write**

As Holmes explains, axiological theories differ according to the way they answer questions about the locus of the good, the relevance of any bad results, and the relevance of particular consequences for specific groups. Prepare a chart in which you answer each of these three questions according to the standards of each of the following theories: consequential, nonconsequential, teleological, micro ethics, ethical egoism, utilitarianism, and macro ethics.

Compare your chart to the discussion provided by Holmes. Because the theories vary in their specificity and focus, your chart may have some very general answers, some fairly specific ones, and perhaps even some blanks. If possible, share your chart with someone else studying ethics.



Think It Over

Assume that you are a teleologist. Under what conditions might an action be right, but not obligatory? Could an action ever be obligatory, but not right? Why?

Note how the teleologist tries to weigh the balance of good and bad associated with alternative choices.

Ideas for Review

With a Question Table: Use your question table to quiz yourself on the terms and questions listed in the left column by covering up the right column. Or have a friend or family member quiz you on the questions. You may also want to compare your question table with that of another student. Discuss differences and see if you can come to an agreement on common definitions.

With Flash Cards: If you prepared flash cards, separate them into two stacks. Turn one stack over and shuffle the two together (some cards will have terms facing you; others, definitions). Have a friend or family member shuffle them again and then quiz you on the contents. They can then turn the entire deck over, shuffle it again, and repeat the process. Time yourself. See how quickly you can get through the deck without making any mistakes.

With Flash Cards: Shuffle your cards and sort them one at a time into categories based on their similarities. Try to go through all the cards with none left over. Try to subdivide larger categories and combine smaller categories until you feel you have a good grasp of the similarities and differences among concepts. This process is likely to uncover weaknesses in your understanding of the terminology, weaknesses that you can address by rereading. Compare the categories you created with those of another student. Discuss differences and see if you can agree on common categories.

Summary

You have now completed your overview of the dominant theories concerning the nature of right and wrong. You should have a working knowledge of the terminology and a general understanding of the basic taxonomy of ethical theories. In the sessions to come, you will acquire more details about ethical theories and concepts, allowing you to flesh out your preliminary sketches.

Apply Your Learning

Over the past few weeks you have probably had several discussions, read articles, and seen television shows or movies which explored conflicting positions about ethical issues (birth control, abortion, euthanasia, child abuse, welfare reform, income tax evasion, etc.). Think about the arguments which you or others used to support a particular view. While you may not have appealed consciously to any of the theories we have studied in this session, chances are fairly good that each of the participants in the exchange presupposed certain views about the nature of right and wrong. Using a question table or flash cards, identify instances in which people may have made implicit appeals to the standards and concepts you have been studying.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 4

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 5

Utilitarianism

In This Session

In this study session, you will learn about a major moral theory called “utilitarianism.”

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 5.1. Identify important issues or questions that guide utilitarian thinking.
- 5.2. Identify strengths of utilitarianism.
- 5.3. List several criticisms of utilitarianism, particularly with respect to justice and individual rights.
- 5.4. Describe utilitarian response to criticisms of utilitarianism.
- 5.5. Identify specific examples of utilitarian thinking about contemporary real-world issues.
- 5.6. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • <i>Utilitarianism</i> | • <i>Naturalistic Fallacy</i> |
| • <i>Principle of Utility</i> | • <i>Hedonism</i> |
| • <i>Consequences</i> | • <i>Act Utilitarianism</i> |
| • <i>Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value</i> | • <i>Rule Utilitarianism</i> |

Learning Tip

Resist the temptation to scan for key terms and copy down Holmes's definitions word for word into your question table. For a deeper and more durable understanding, read the chapter thoroughly and record the key points in your own words.

Introduction

As a major moral theory, utilitarian thinking pervades our moral deliberations. Traces of it can be found in virtually any moral discussion. The theory itself is straightforward and robust, and it has great resources for dealing with criticisms. As you work your way through the readings assigned for this session, keep in mind that utilitarianism is a vast theoretical structure; it is virtually a world view, and it has its own strengths and weaknesses. You should also keep in mind that the other moral theories you will soon be studying also have strengths and weaknesses. Only after you have considered the range of moral theories will you be in a good position to compare and evaluate them.

Overview of Utilitarian Concepts

You will find that most of the session objectives appear to be covered in the next reading. While this reading does not address these ideas deeply, it provides a concise, readable introduction to utilitarianism and establishes a nice framework for the readings which follow.

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Consequentialism

Now that you have finished the reading and filled in most of your question table, review the information you have entered. Assess how well you grasp each idea, and put a small question mark next to terms or ideas that you do not fully understand. As you work your way through the next reading, these question marks will remind you of areas on which you need to focus your attention to seek better answers.

A Closer Look at Utilitarianism

In the next reading, utilitarian concepts and principles are presented in depth. You will read excerpts from the original works of philosophers who support and criticize utilitarianism. At times, the discussions may be difficult to follow. However, keep in mind that it is not essential that you fully grasp all of the material. Allow your question table to help you focus on the essential concepts that you must master.

In the following reading, you will encounter excerpts from the classic expression of utilitarianism by John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). In his short work, *Utilitarianism*, Mill sets out the defining principle of morality as “the greatest good for the greatest number.” At first this principle seems an obviously correct one, perhaps even a mild truism. But a rigorous and consistent application of the theory has very radical implications, as you shall see.

**Read**

Cahn, “Utilitarianism,” by John Stuart Mill
or
Scalet, “Utilitarianism,” by John Stuart Mill

**Think It Over**

Consider Mill’s argument purporting to prove the principle of utility. Mill admits that ultimate principles are not subject to proof in the usual manner, but that such principles are still “within the cognizance of the rational faculty.” What does that mean, and how does his “proof” differ from other kinds of proofs?

Mill argues that just as the only proof possible to show that a sound is audible is that people hear it, so the only proof possible to show that something is desirable is that people desire it. What do you make of his argument? Is it apt to compare the criterion for “audible” to “desirable”?

**Write**

How does Mill describe the principle of utility? Review what you have recorded on your question chart regarding the principle of utility. Revise this information to account for Mill’s explanation of this principle.

You should have noted how Mill explains the principle of utility (the greatest happiness principle); right and wrong are defined with respect to pleasure and pain. Classical utilitarians (e.g., Mill and Bentham) accept an ancient theory of value called “hedonism.” Hedonism is the view that pleasure is the only intrinsic value; that is, pleasure is the only thing that is valuable in itself. Anything else of value is valuable merely as a means to obtain pleasure. So education is valuable as a means to promote pleasure, the sole intrinsic value. We can now see why utilitarianism is called utilitarianism—actions are judged according to their utility in bringing about pleasure.

**Think It Over**

Consider carefully Mill’s argument about kinds of pleasure. He argues that some pleasures are higher or better than others, so that a smaller amount of a higher pleasure is better than a greater quantity of a lower pleasure. Mill asserts that it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool (or pig) satisfied. Do you agree? Can Mill claim that a distinction among kinds of pleasure is consistent with the principle of utility?

**Write**

Despite its plausibility, utilitarianism generates serious questions—is it acceptable to maximize happiness for all concerned by sacrificing a few? Questions about individual rights and justice plague utilitarian thinking. Has Mill successfully defended utilitarianism against the charge? How does he connect utility and justice? Reread Mill and try to write a concise statement or two summarizing his response to this criticism of utilitarianism.

This is a difficult selection from Mill, so a few pointers might be helpful as you evaluate your statement. Notice how Mill says that to have a right is “to have something which society ought to defend me in the possession of”. When asked why society ought to do that, Mill says, “I can give him no other reason than general utility.” This is the key to Mill’s response to issues of justice and utility: principles of justice derive from utility. See if you can put Mill’s point in your own words.

The last reading for this session continues to explore utilitarian concepts and additional criticisms of several aspect of utilitarianism. As you read, focus primarily on the questions in your question table and integrate the information in this chapter with the information already in your table.



Read

Cahn, “Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism,” by Louis P. Pojman

Now that you have finished the reading, check your question table to see that you have included the following criticisms:

- How is it possible to measure goodness?*
- Does utilitarianism require too much from us?*
- Does utilitarianism permit too much?*
- Is utilitarianism inconsistent with individual autonomy?*

Compare these questions to your notes in the question table. Were you able to capture the criticism concisely? Use the same process to check your notes on the utilitarian responses to the preceding four criticisms.

Summary

You have now read and considered Mill’s classic statement of utilitarianism. The theory is powerful, straightforward, and surprisingly robust. Strains of utilitarian thinking pervade our ordinary reflections about right and wrong, as we shall see when we study questions in practical ethics and in the Applying Your Learning section immediately following this paragraph. (Note: Perhaps the best summary of the major features of utilitarianism can be found in your question table.)

Apply Your Learning

The following activities are designed to help you apply the principles and concepts of utilitarianism. While you may choose to undertake these activities by yourself, you almost certainly would find them more enjoyable and valuable if you involve others who are studying for this examination.

1. Find an example of utilitarian reasoning in a newspaper or magazine; see if you can determine whether it is best interpreted as rule or act utilitarian thinking. You may wish to share your example with another student or study group.
2. Try to give some examples of your own thinking that is utilitarian. Share them with other students to see if they agree that they are, in fact, utilitarian. Imagine what it would be like to be a thorough-going utilitarian; what would life be like? Might utilitarianism work best if one is not a self-aware utilitarian?

| Self-Assessment Chart: Session 5 | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|--------|----------|
| Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session. Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below. | | | | |
| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | | | Comments |
| 1 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |
| 2 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |
| 3 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |
| 4 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |
| 5 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |
| 6 | weak | satisfactory | strong | |

Notes

Session 6

Deontological Theories

In This Session

This session examines deontological theories, particularly those of Immanuel Kant, William David Ross, and John Rawls.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 6.1. Explain why Kant bases his theory and concepts on rationality.
- 6.2. Identify and describe the relationships among Kant's hypothetical imperatives, categorical imperatives, maxims, and duties.
- 6.3. Identify and explain three formulations of Kant's categorical imperative.
- 6.4. Describe how a Kantian would think through a moral problem.
- 6.5. Explain John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness.
- 6.6. Explain the pluralistic account of W. D. Ross.
- 6.7. Identify criticisms of deontological theories and responses to those criticisms.
- 6.8. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • <i>Kantianism</i> | • <i>The Original Position</i> |
| • <i>Maxim</i> | • <i>Justice as Fairness</i> |
| • <i>Hypothetical Imperative</i> | • <i>The Veil of Ignorance</i> |
| • <i>Categorical</i> | • <i>Prima Facie Duty</i> |
| • <i>Categorical Imperative</i> | • <i>Actual Duty</i> |
| • <i>Respect for Persons</i> | • <i>Beneficence</i> |
| • <i>Autonomy</i> | • <i>Nonmaleficence</i> |

Learning Tip

- Read this chapter straight through to get an overall sense of Kantianism.
- Highlight key terms and concepts as you read.
- Then reread to answer the questions in your table.

Introduction

Session 5 focused on utilitarianism, an approach that seems powerful and intuitively satisfying to some. But to others it seems artificially narrow and problematic. Many of its critics prefer a deontological theory.

Immanuel Kant's Deontological Theory

In the next reading Holmes provides an overview of what may be the most influential deontological (duty-based or nonconsequentialist) theory ever developed, that of Immanuel Kant. Subsequent readings provide a broader context for, and reinforcement of, the material you will encounter here.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Kantianism



Think It Over

Why, according to Kant, is it improper to base morality on the concept of happiness?

Review the account provided by Holmes. Did your answer agree with his comment that we can never know for sure how our actions will affect our happiness?



Think It Over

What, according to Kant, is the only thing that is good without qualification? Why?

Did you answer, "The good will?" If you did, what reason did you give for why that is the only thing that is unqualifiedly good? In this chapter, Holmes explains that Kant believes we must act from duty to have a good will which is "the only thing unconditionally good in itself."



Write

Why does Kant base his account of ethics on the concept of rationality? Describe in your own words Kant's reasons for doing so. State your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with his approach. (This is a challenging assignment. You may have to reread several sections of Holmes. But when you are satisfied with your ability to express and critique Kant's views in this way, you will have gained a valuable tool for evaluating almost any statement concerning the Kantian system.)

Now that you have finished your analysis, compare your answer with that of another person studying for this examination. Discuss similarities and differences in your responses. You might have noted Kant's criticism of desire as a basis for morality, aspects of our nature that enable us to make rational choices, and his notion of the good will and reasons for its goodness.



Think It Over

How do hypothetical imperatives differ from categorical imperatives?

You should have noted that hypothetical imperatives are based on desire, but categorical imperatives are not.



Write

Restate the three formulations of Kant's categorical imperative (as a principle of consistency, humanity, and autonomy) so that you capture the essence of each.

Note that categorical imperative 2, which Holmes refers to as a principle of humanity, may also be referred to by some as "respect for persons." Respect for persons implies that we should not treat people only as means to an end, but as ends in themselves. In other words, we should not use people solely to achieve our desires. Categorical imperative 3 (the principle of autonomy) emphasizes that when we make a moral decision (in the Kantian sense), we act freely. That is, an external source does not make the decision for us.

Deontological and Utilitarian Theories

The next short reading provides you with an excellent opportunity to apply your knowledge of both deontological and utilitarian theories. You will be asked to read a two-page description of an experiment conducted to determine how to protect people from plutonium exposure, and then to react to it and analyze it from deontological and utilitarian perspectives.



Read

Cahn, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics," by Onora O'Neil



Write

Review and answer the Study Questions that accompany this chapter's essay. In each case, write as though you were an ardent Kantian or utilitarian. State the basic positions, issues, and concerns that result from your adoption of each perspective.



Read

The next reading provides an excellent opportunity for you to consolidate and refine your knowledge of Kant’s theory. As you read, review the notes you have written in your question table and revise them accordingly.



Read

Cahn, “The Categorical Imperative,” by Immanuel Kant

John Rawls: Justice as Fairness

The following reading introduces you to John Rawls’s account of justice as fairness. While essential concepts are presented here, they are discussed in more depth in Session 12: “Justice.”



Read

Holmes, “Can Moral Principles Be Justified?,” focusing on John Rawls’ Theory of Justice

Cahn, “A Theory of Justice,” by John Rawls



Write

In your question table, prepare a concise summary of Rawls’s theory of justice. Define and distinguish between the original agreement, justice as fairness, and the veil of ignorance.

Reread the essay as needed to complete this assignment. Keep in mind that the original position refers to a hypothetical or ideal situation and is not intended to represent an actual situation.



Think It Over

Why is Rawls’s theory regarded as deontological?

William David Ross: Pluralistic Deontology

The following readings cover the important issues of prima facie and actual duties, as well as beneficence and nonmaleficence.

Learning Tip

Use your reading guide (Session 1) as you read this essay.

**Read**

Holmes, “Can Moral Principles Be Justified?,” focusing on moral foundationalism and W.D. Ross

Scalet, “Intuitionism,” by W.D. Ross

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “The Principle of Beneficence in Applied Ethics”

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Mill’s Moral and Political Philosophy”

**Write**

In your question table, write a concise summary of Ross’s pluralistic theory. Define and distinguish among prima facie duties, actual duties, beneficence, and nonmaleficence.

Review the reading as required to complete this assignment. Keep in mind that Ross is attempting to address what he sees as difficulties in Kant’s emphasis on absolute rules which may result in conflicting obligations in particular situations. Ross suggests that when obligations conflict, we should find the greatest balance of right over wrong. However, Ross notes that his theory also does not provide “a principle upon which to discern what is our actual duty in particular circumstances.”

**Think It Over**

Review Ross’s list of prima facie duties. Are there any that you think he should add to his list? Which ones?

Respect for Persons and Autonomy

In the following reading, Cahn focuses on concepts of respect for persons and respect for autonomy. As you read, be aware of your own developing concepts of “respect,” “person,” “autonomy,” and “human dignity.”

**Read**

Cahn, “The Categorical Imperative,” by Immanuel Kant

Holmes, “Kantianism,” particularly the section on The Will as Universal Lawgiver

**Think It Over**

Is your concept of respect for persons similar to Kant’s—that we should not treat persons as means to our ends? Is respect for persons a prima facie principle which you acknowledge along with others? You will find these concepts appearing in future sessions as they continue to play an important role in ethics.

Summary

You have now completed your consideration of deontological theories, especially those of Kant, Rawls, and Ross. You should have a working knowledge of the terminology, and you should be able to identify and discuss similarities as well as differences among deontological theories and utilitarianism, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Apply Your Learning

From newspaper and magazine articles, television, movies, or personal experience, find examples of people who approach an ethical issue from a deontological perspective. Share your examples with someone else.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 6

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 6 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 7 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 8 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 7

Virtue Ethics: Plato and Aristotle

In This Session

In this study session, you will consider an ethics of “being” rather than an ethics of “doing.” The emphasis will be on the character of people, not their actions.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 7.1. Distinguish between moral and nonmoral virtues.
- 7.2. Assess the conflict between an ethics of being and an ethics of doing.
- 7.3. Identify aspects of character that one ought to develop.
- 7.4. Explain Plato’s concepts of the virtuous person and the function of the soul.
- 7.5. Explain Aristotle’s conception of how to become a good person.
- 7.6. Define and distinguish among key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| • <i>Virtue</i> | • <i>Teleological</i> |
| • <i>Character</i> | • <i>Soul</i> |
| • <i>Motivation</i> | • <i>The Mean</i> |
| • <i>Eudaemonia</i> | |

Introduction

Think of someone you deeply admire. What is it about the person that you admire? You will probably list a number of character traits that you think it is good to have. You are inclined to say that the person you have in mind is a good person because of those character traits. You are thus evaluating the person. This is distinct from evaluating a person's actions. A person may have a good or a bad character, whereas a person's actions might be right or wrong.

The various ethical theories that we have studied so far have a lot to say about rules regarding behavior, but so far little has been said about what sort of people we ought to be. Yet this is a question of the utmost importance. Virtue ethics pays attention to the character of moral agents, rather than to their behavior. Of course, the two are linked, since a person with a particular kind of character will tend to act in certain kinds of ways.

The Concept of Virtue

Virtue ethics makes up an important aspect of moral philosophy though it is not so widely studied as some of the other areas of ethics. One question to keep in mind as you read is whether virtue ethics is a different kind of ethics or whether it is an aspect of the large ethical systems we have already encountered. Some philosophers think that virtue ethics is an independent area of moral inquiry, while others think that questions of character are derivative. A utilitarian, for example, would think that it is important for people to be trustworthy because this will contribute to overall happiness. On this view, trustworthiness is a virtue *because* it contributes to utility (it does not contribute to utility because it is a virtue).



Read

Cahn, "The Nature of Virtue," by Aristotle and "Virtue Ethics," by Julia Driver

What kind of a person do you want to be? Think about what the ethical egoist believes (see study session 10). Or, imagine that one of your closest friends is a committed utilitarian. As you do things together and enjoy one another's company, it comes out in conversation that your friend figures that having a good time with you is the best way to maximize happiness. You would begin to suspect, and rightly, that your friend doesn't so much care about you, but about some abstract moral principle. It is hard to see how you could consider your friend as a "good person." We think it not only important for a person to behave in certain ways, but for a person to have certain kinds of motives.



Think It Over

Can you describe situations in which people do the right thing but for the wrong reasons — or the wrong thing with good intentions?

Notice how this question distinguishes between two kinds of assessment: people and their actions. This is the basic difference between an ethics of being and an ethics of doing.



Write

In your question table, define “virtue,” and distinguish between moral and non-moral virtues.

Check your definition to see that you did not only give an example of a virtue, but that you actually defined what virtues are. Could there be bad virtues? What about the “virtues” of the criminal?

Plato: Virtue, the Soul, and Justice

Ancient philosophers gave more attention to virtue than contemporary moral philosophers. But there are some recent efforts to rethink the wisdom of the ancients on the topic of virtue and ethics in general. In the next reading, Holmes describes how Plato’s teleological conception of the world provides a basis for his concepts of virtue, the function of the human soul, and justice.



Read

Holmes, “Virtue in Ancient Philosophy”



Write

Try to adopt Plato’s perspective and write a paragraph describing the virtuous person. Identify the specific virtues that maintain inner harmony that leads to a life of happiness and morality.

Compare your answer with the last half of the section on The Soul’s Function. You should have identified the virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, which is associated with a state of harmony between each part of the soul.

Learning Tip

To review the teleological conception of the world see the Holmes chapter on Theories of Moral Right and Wrong, specifically the section on Consequentialist and Non-consequentialist theories.

Learning Tip

Be sure to read carefully the last paragraph of Arthur's essay, in Scalet, "Morality, Religion, and Conscience."

Aristotle: Virtue Ethics

Aristotle is the ancient philosopher most closely associated with virtue ethics. He attempted to articulate the good life for human beings as the attainment of eudaimonia, or happiness — the supreme good. Just as a good knife is one with certain characteristics that allow it to function according to its kind, so good people will have certain characteristics that enable them to function according to their kind. According to Aristotle, the proper functioning of a person is to act rationally and virtuously.

**Read**

Holmes, "Virtue in Ancient Philosophy"
Scalet, "Nicomachean Ethics," by Aristotle, particularly Book II: Virtue and the Mean

**Think It Over**

For Aristotle, moral virtues are acquired by habit—they can be cultivated. In fact, they must be acquired and developed by practice. This is good news, since we can all strive to be virtuous by our efforts. But how can we do that?

According to Aristotle, this can be done by acquiring practical wisdom by avoiding extremes of excess and deficiency. Aristotle's famous account of virtues as the mean Arthur, gives us a guide to performing acts in the appropriate manner. Notice that Aristotle is not referring to an absolute mean, but to the mean relative to ourselves and the situation.

**Write**

List the five most important virtues that you might like to cultivate. Illustrate how each, according to Aristotle, is a mean.

You might have identified courage, for example, as a mean between rashness and cowardice, or confidence as a mean between arrogance and self-deprecation.

Think It Over

Answer Scalet's review and discussion questions numbers 1–3. The following hints are intended to help guide your thinking in the right direction.



Question 1: Aristotle focuses on “activity of soul in accordance with reason”, which he says separates man from animals. You might consider how Aristotle would view the arguments of those who claim animals have rights, a topic explored in Session 17.

Question 2: Arthur asks two questions here. The second is the answer to the first. Aristotle explains that the highest (or supreme) good must be something final, an end, not a means to an end. He then attempts to show that happiness is an end in itself.

Question 3: Think about the distinction between means and ends.

Virtues and Obligations

Is virtue ethics independent of other ethical theories you have studied? Does it constitute a new kind of ethical analysis, one that can be undertaken apart from considerations of obligation, duty, and conduct?

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Virtue in Ancient Philosophy, particularly the sections on “Moral Virtue and Right Conduct” and “The Priority of an Ethics of Conduct over an Ethics of Virtue”

The basic problem a wholly independent virtue ethics has is in trying to explain why an aspect of character is a virtue. Unless a particular trait links up to conduct, why think it a virtue? So honesty is a virtue because it is good to be truthful, and the value of truthfulness is explained by a moral theory of conduct. Think of what a Kantian or a utilitarian would say about why honesty is a virtue. Without a moral theory of conduct, the virtues seem “blind.”

Learning Tip

Try answering each question before referring to the hints.

Summary

In this session we have considered virtue ethics. Virtue ethics emphasizes the character of people, rather than their actions. We have also looked at what a virtue is, and considered what Plato and Aristotle have to say about how we can become good people. Some philosophers hold that virtue ethics is independent of other kinds of ethical thinking, but this view makes it difficult to explain why something would be a virtue. In the end, even though the character of people is of the utmost importance, it seems that various traits of character will be good to have because of certain principles that can be justified by an ethics of doing.

Apply Your Learning

1. List what seem to you to be the virtues of someone you admire.
What makes the traits you listed virtues?
2. Read the obituaries in your local newspaper. Note the virtues associated with the people who have died.
3. Read Robert Fulghum’s poem, *All I really need to know I learned in Kindergarten* (www.les.rcs.k12.tn.us/TEACHERS/FergusonM/allireallyneededtoknowilearnedinkindergarten.pdf) What virtues are embodied in that short work?

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 7

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 6 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 8

David Hume and Communitarian Theories

In This Session

This session examines the moral theory of David Hume and recent versions of his communitarian views.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 8.1. Compare and contrast communitarianism, utilitarianism, and Kantianism.
- 8.2. Explain the relevance of virtue in Hume's theory.
- 8.3. Explain why Hume says that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions.
- 8.4. Explain why the "ethics of care" is thought to be a feminine conception of ethics.
- 8.5. Define and distinguish among key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Communitarianism*
- *Sympathy*
- *Virtue*

- *Moral Conservatism*
- *Ethics of Care*
- *Practice*

Introduction

Why do you suppose anyone does anything moral? Acting morally might be easy to explain if morality were always in our self-interest, but often it is not. We end up doing what we ought to do even though doing something else would actually benefit us more in a particular case. Do we do what we ought to do because being immoral is like denying that $2 + 2 = 4$? That is, is it our reason that tells us not to act out of self-interest when self-interest conflicts with morality? Or is it that we have a natural inclination to be moral when being moral conflicts with our self-interest? Utilitarian theory and Kant's theory give the former answer, in terms of reason, while Hume and other communitarian theorists give the latter answer — although none hold that inclination alone is enough to explain, or justify, moral action.

Reason and Sentiment

Think about the role of reason in determining what we ought to do. Why is it morally wrong for human beings to kill each other (except in self-defense or, some would argue, in a just war)? Is it wrong in the same way in which it is wrong that $2 + 2 = 5$? Reason tells us that $2 + 2 = 4$; we contradict ourselves if we deny that. Would we contradict ourselves if we asserted that it is morally permissible to kill other humans? If not, then if it is in some sense not unreasonable to kill others, why shouldn't we?

The first reading provides an overview of Hume's ethical theory. As you read, observe the role reason and sentiment (passion or desire) play in Hume's thinking.



Read

Scalet, "Morality is Based on Sentiment," by David Hume



Think It Over

Reflect on Hume's "Reason Subordinate to Emotion."
Can reason change our desires? Can you give an example?

You might think of how learning that something is bad for us that we thought was good may cause us not to want it any more. For years, people considered sunbathing a healthy outdoor activity. But now sunbathing is increasingly associated with skin cancer, a fact which causes many to limit their exposure to the sun and some to avoid exposure altogether.

If what motivates us to action is passion, and not reason, how can anything we do be reasonable or unreasonable? How can we assess what others do, except perhaps to say that they either did or did not fulfill their desires in what they did? We often seem to criticize others for acting on desire. For instance, we may criticize others for acting impulsively. When we do that, the criticism is that the person did not think through what he or she was doing, and so acted unreasonably. Is it possible to make such a criticism of Hume's view?



Write

Provide a description of something morally wrong that you find particularly heinous — a murder or an assault, for instance. Explain how Hume, in appealing to sentiment, would explain your judgment. Then imagine someone who does not feel your sentiment, but feels that nothing is wrong with what you describe or, even, that it is a good thing. Now write about what sort of person he or she must be as compared to you.

The Relevance of Virtue

We can observe, for instance, one person helping another who is about to fall. This appears to be a good act and the result of pure benevolence rather than any selfish motive. But if we are to understand how an act can be good, we must understand what a virtue is and that only motives can be virtues. Hume's theory says that an act is good only if it is done from a virtuous motive, a motive, that is, that would be approved by an impartial observer.



Think It Over

Do you think we should make moral judgments about people based on their actions? How might this approach create problems?

You might mention several potential problems in using this approach including the following: suppose a person fails to do what he or she meant to do, and causes harm. How are we to assess morally what happened? What is it we are to assess—what the person meant to do, what the person did, or what the motive really was? What was it about the person, or the circumstances, that caused him or her to fail to do what was intended? Why should we judge people not to be virtuous on the basis of acts that may not reflect their virtue?

Imagine a world in which people never succeeded in doing what they really meant to do: motive and action never matched up. This imaginary world would presumably be a far different world than ours. Is it a possible world? How could anyone ever walk, for instance, or go to sleep, or talk? The difficulty imagining such a world indicates how often, and how strongly, motives and actions are associated.

**Write**

Describe someone who is not doing what he or she meant to do, as when we see someone with an umbrella who is trying, unsuccessfully, to open it in a heavy rain. Describe how we tell that people are not doing what they meant to do.

Convention

For Hume, following the rules of the moral community are an essential aspect of morality.

**Read**

Scalet, “Morality is Based on Sentiment,” by David Hume

To illustrate how important the common practice or convention is in justifying what we do morally, consider the following scenario: suppose a physician is accused of malpractice. We can expect one of the lawyer’s first questions to be, “Did you follow common medical practice?” If the answer is “Yes,” the physician, and the physician’s lawyer, can breathe a sigh of relief: The physician did what every physician ought to do. But if the answer is “No,” the physician, and the physician’s lawyer, are going to have a difficult case. For the physician will have failed to do what every physician ought to do and, instead, acted on his or her own judgment about what is right.

Imagine defending a physician who did not follow standard practice for a case because he or she thought it would harm the patient but, instead, tried a different medication that might produce a better result. For example, a physician might give ibuprofen to a patient with Alzheimer’s disease to reduce inflammation associated with that particular disease. Would that be a morally defensible act if prescribing ibuprofen is not considered standard medical practice? Could Hume account for how someone could do this?

**Write**

As though you were the physician’s lawyer, outline the physician’s defense, listing arguments you could use to support the morality of your client’s actions, even though the treatment was not a conventional treatment—not, that is, what every physician “ought” to do.

Check your argument against the readings you have done for this session. Your outline should have taken into account Hume’s concept of virtue by illustrating that the physician’s motive was virtuous. You should have also taken into account the rules of the moral community. To which rules did you appeal?

**Write**

Contrast the well-articulated theories of utilitarianism and Kantianism with communitarianism. Describe the ways they differ in their overall approach to morality, the role of universal principles, rationality, and each theory's strengths and weaknesses.

In your written response, you might have pointed out that utilitarianism and Kantianism include a single unifying principle that tells us what we ought to and is rational. Hume objects to this understanding of what a moral theory is to do, and he argues instead that we are to find morality not in rational moral principles but in our sentiments and our practices. We find universal principles still, he argues, but they are principles that actually apply to particular cases because they are in the practices created by our responses to the moral cases we face.

The trade-off between the moral theorists Hume attacks and the Humeans is that the former have elaborate, well-articulated theories which seem to have little relevance to actual moral problems, and the latter have answers to specific problems, but are unable to argue that these answers are the rational ones. We seem caught between high abstract moral theory and low moral practice when what we need is a combination of the two—something that allows us to tell what we ought to do and also allows us to prove that it is what we ought to do.

The Ethics of Care

Some feminists have suggested that ethics has been developed by men for a man's way of looking at the world and that if we look at the world the way women do, we find a different moral universe. On this view, a woman's moral world is marked less by rules (like those for baseball) and more by relations of trust and caring (e.g., relations between parent and child).

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Feminist Ethics

As you have observed in your reading, Carol Gilligan's research suggests that the moral thinking of women and men tends to differ. Gilligan characterizes women's moral thinking as an ethics of care.

**Write**

Describe what is meant by "an ethics of care." Identify the specific features which distinguish an ethics of care from traditional ethical theories that focus on rights and obligations.

In your description of an ethics of care, you should have included features such as the following: a focus on contextually given relationships; a greater emphasis on responsiveness and responsibilities to others; and a greater focus on love, trust, and human bonding.

Summary

You should go back to your question table to be sure that you have answered all the questions you originally listed as well as any that you added while you were reading. You should also be sure you can define the key terms and distinguish among them.

Apply Your Learning

1. Select a topic (e.g., a health care or taxation policy) currently in the news. Critique the policy (or proposed policy) from a utilitarian, Kantian, and communitarian perspective. Exchange critiques with someone else preparing for this examination. Discuss similarities and differences.
2. Consider an intimate relationship you have with a family member. What do you think is morally required by the relationship? For example, if your brother asks you for money, are you morally required to give it? If your brother needs one of your organs to live, are you morally obligated to provide it? If your brother falls ill, is it morally acceptable not to be compassionate? Now consider the source of the moral requirements of these intimate relationships. Are they required by utilitarian theory, for instance, or do we have them even if they do not provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number? Work through Kantian and communitarian theories in the same way.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 8

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 9

Religion and Morality

In This Session

In this study session you will explore the difficult question of what connection, if any, there is between religion and ethics.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 9.1. Identify and assess several assumptions about the relationship between religion and ethics.
- 9.2. Evaluate the Divine Command theory of morality.
- 9.3. Define and distinguish between key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- God*
- Divine Command Theory*

Introduction

People often try to answer questions of morality by turning to religion. Why is this? Many people presume a connection between religion and ethics, but whether there is a connection and what it might be is far from obvious. In this study session we shall not deal with the question of whether God exists or what God might be. For our purposes, we shall suppose God exists and that God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and supremely good—in a word, perfect. We will make these enormous assumptions because the questions we shall consider about connections between religion and morality presuppose the nature and existence of God.

Obviously, if God does not exist then the connections often thought to hold between God and morality do not obtain. Our task is to consider what impact God's existence would have on morality, independent of whether, in fact, God exists.

Religion, Morality, and Divine Command

The readings for the relation between morality and religion tend to focus on what is known as the Divine Command theory of morality. But it should not be thought that this is the only possible relation between God and morality. Versions of natural law ethics, for example, give us a different account of the relation between God and the world. So do not think that because some accounts of the relation between God and morality have problems, all accounts of a connection between God and morality are problematic.

While it may be useful to distinguish between the question of the relationship of religion to morality, and the question of the relation of God to morality, except for a very brief discussion in Arthur on religion and morality, most of our reading will focus on the relation of God to morality (again, assuming just for purposes of philosophical exploration, that God exists).



Read

Scalet, "Morality, Religion, and Conscience," by John Arthur



Think It Over

In his essay, Arthur considers the issue of religion serving as a motive for moral behavior. Notice how Arthur argues that religion is not necessary for morality; he claims that we can imagine a society with religion and no morality; he presumably would also say we can picture a society with morality and no religion. Does this seem correct to you? Can you imagine a society without morality? Might there be certain moral practices that are necessary for a society even to exist as such? If so, what would this show about Arthur's argument?

**Write**

Answer Arthur's review and discussion questions numbers 2, 4, 8.
Try to answer each on your own before reading the following hints.

Question 2: Consider the basic problem of the Divine Command theory of morality: Does God command *X* because *X* is right, or is *X* right because God commands it? What is the difference between each question, and what are the implications of each? We will explore the implications of each question in the next reading.

Question 4: Use the problem posed in question 2 (above) as a basis for your answer to this question. If you have difficulty answering this question, review from the third paragraph after the dialogue (Copleston and Russell) through the second paragraph after the dialogue (Socrates and Euthyphro).

Question 8: Keep the question of animal suffering in mind because this issue will return in Session 17. Incidentally, would a "social" or "contractarian" account of ethics also have trouble making sense of whatever obligations we might have to animals or incompetent human beings?

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on The Divine Command Theory

**Think It Over**

Anyone who proposes the Divine Command theory of morality must face enormous problems. Remember, we are putting aside questions of the existence of God; but even allowing God's existence, how does one know that whatever commands one says come from God do, in fact, come from God? (Surely the Devil could give us commands, too, and he would no doubt hide that fact by saying that they come from God. Or maybe we just misheard God's command.) Moreover, could God command us to do what seems clearly wrong, such as torture a small child to death?

**Write**

How does Aquinas argue that God cannot command us to do what is wrong? (see Holmes) Do you agree with Holmes when he says that in order to understand the relationship between God and morality we have to consider the possibility of God's commanding us to do outrageous things? Explain.

Summary

You have now considered questions about the relationship between religion and morality, and the Divine Command theory of morality as one answer to that question. You have seen that the Divine Command theory leads either to a morally arbitrary God or to a God bound by morality like the rest of us. But the latter possibility need not be so bad because God's being bound in various ways does not have to be an attack on omnipotence. If God is limited by what is logically possible, for example, then He cannot make a triangle that does not have three sides; but this is no slight on His omnipotence.

The problems faced by the Divine Command theory of morality suggest that morality is independent of God. An analogy: if God says $2+2 = 4$, does $2+2 = 4$ because God says it does, or does God say it does because it is so? If the former, then $2+2$ could be 5; if the latter, then mathematics is independent of God.

Apply Your Learning

If you have a particular religious background, what does your religion say about moral matters? Does it have anything to do with God's commanding or willing something?

Suggested Additional Reading

Brody, B. (Ed.). (1974). *Readings in the philosophy of religion*.
New York: Prentice-Hall.

Plato, *Euthyphro* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyfro.html>)

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 9

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 10

Egoism

In This Session

This study session explores basic questions of human nature and human motivation as they relate to egoism. Deep down, are we selfish?

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 10.1. Explain the difference between ethical egoism and psychological egoism.
- 10.2. State the main arguments for and against ethical and psychological egoism.
- 10.3. Explain why the irrefutability of an allegedly empirical position constitutes a problem for the position.
- 10.4. Assess the claim that “ought implies can” within the context of psychological and ethical egoism.
- 10.5. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| Key Terms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Psychological Egoism</i>• <i>Ethical Egoism</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ring of Gyges</i>• <i>Empirical Theory</i> |
|------------------|---|--|

Introduction

Morality can be rather harsh—it can demand that you do things that go against self-interest. It requires, for example, that you return a wallet full of money you have found to its owner. At first this behavior may seem crazy; you can use the money, so why should you let morality interfere in the pursuit of your interests? But as you sit there holding the wallet, another thought comes to your mind: maybe your interests do lie in returning the wallet; maybe that is the course of action which will actually help you the most in the long run. After all, people will think highly of you for returning the wallet, and if you lose your wallet some day, you will want someone to return it to you.

This way of thinking is egoistic because it attempts to answer the question of what to do by assessing where your interests lie. According to one theory, this is how we are programmed to think; namely, we are psychologically constituted to seek to promote our own interests exclusively. A more startling theory—ethical egoism—says that is how we ought to think! As a matter of morality, we ought to seek to promote our own interests exclusively.

Psychological and Ethical Egoism

In the next reading Holmes provides an overview of two theories: psychological egoism and ethical egoism. Psychological egoism is not a moral theory, but rather, as the name implies, a psychological theory. It is a theory about motivation (why people act). Ethical egoism is a moral theory; that is, it purports to tell us what we ought to be doing, rather than describe what we are doing. It is possible, for example, that we are genuinely moved for altruistic reasons to help others (that is, psychological egoism might be false). But if ethical egoism is the correct moral theory, then we do wrong when we act in a truly altruistic manner.

Learning Tip

Don't forget to construct a question table before beginning to read.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Ethical and Psychological Egoism
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Callicles and Thrasymachus”



Think It Over

How might egoism be a threat to morality?

Egoism is a threat to morality because morality says that we ought to be impartial. However, egoism says either that we cannot be impartial—psychological egoism—in which case it makes no sense to say that we ought to be impartial, since we cannot be expected to do what is impossible for us to do; or that we ought to be partial to ourselves—ethical egoism—again going against the requirement of impartiality that one finds in morality.

At this point, we need to consider first whether psychological egoism is true, because if it is, morality would be pointless. Even ethical egoism would be pointless, since to say that we ought to pursue our own interests presupposes that it is possible for us not to do so. The truth of psychological egoism would thus not give any support to ethical egoism. But is psychological egoism true?



Think It Over

What does the story of the Ring of Gyges purport to show?



Think It Over

Consider the argument that if everyone seeks to promote his or her own interests, we will all somehow benefit: Is this an argument for ethical egoism or for another ethical theory? If so, which one?

Did you observe that rather than being an argument for ethical egoism, this is, in fact, an argument for utilitarianism (Session 5)? Notice the emphasis on consequences and maximizing the greatest good.



Write

Why does ethical egoism give incompatible moral advice in situations of moral conflict? Does this make the theory inconsistent?



Think It Over

Is ethical egoism immoral? Why, or why not?

Consider the following: If you refrain from robbing banks because you might get caught, does it mean you are basically immoral?

Notice how, once again, there is the problem of just what ethical egoism says. Holmes considers why it is important not to mix up arguments for ethical egoism with arguments for utilitarianism.



Write

Put into your own words Holmes's objection number 3. Is Holmes correct to suggest that relationships which depend upon trust would be in jeopardy? Would the ethical egoist car salesman give you bad advice? Explain.



Think It Over

Holmes attempts to show the deeply paradoxical nature of ethical egoism. Evidently, if everyone were an ethical egoist, he or she wouldn't be maximizing their individual good. Is Holmes's argument a good one?

Might it be that if everyone were an ethical egoist (and perhaps everyone is!) each person would be maximizing his or her own good under the circumstances? Maybe your good would be greater if you were the only ethical egoist among a group of altruists, but the fact that your good would be greater under those circumstances doesn't show that you are still not maximizing it (even if it is less) under conditions where all are ethical egoists. However, this might be what Holmes is getting at earlier when he talks about the difficulty of formulating ethical egoism as a moral theory. From your point of view, as an egoist, it is best to live in a world full of altruists; the problem is expressing the view so that all can follow it. If not everyone can follow it, in what sense is it prescriptive?

Holmes also undertakes a critique of psychological egoism, which he characterizes as the idea that self-love is the sole motive governing all voluntary human conduct.



Write

Explain the following:

- a. Why sometimes acting contrary to your own good does not refute psychological egoism.
- b. Why sometimes knowingly acting contrary to your own good does not refute psychological egoism.
- c. What Holmes thinks we need to show in order to refute psychological egoism.

Compare your answers with Holmes's comments.



Think It Over

As stated earlier in this session, if psychological egoism were true, morality would be pointless. What if ethical egoism were true? Would that make psychological egoism pointless? What if we could only do as we ought?

Summary

We have considered two theories: psychological egoism and ethical egoism. One is a theory of human motivation, and the other is a moral theory.

Psychological egoism poses a distinct threat to morality, though this in itself is no reason to think it false. It turns out that psychological egoism is irrefutable because any evidence brought against it is explained away, thus making its status as an empirical theory questionable. Ethical egoism, on the other hand, is a moral theory; it tells us what we ought to do.

Ethical egoism is troubling because it flies in the face of what we, at least publicly, think we ought to do: it tells us that we each ought to promote our own interests. It thus stands as a challenge to the idea of impartiality, something thought to be central to any adequate moral theory. Moreover, as a moral theory, ethical egoism would be suspicious if it led us into paradox; if all followed it, individual good might not be promoted.

Apply Your Learning

Play the “Egoist Game.”

1. Whenever somebody does something that appears altruistic, see if you can give a plausible redescription of the motivation in egoistic terms.
2. Read an account in a newspaper regarding altruistic actions. Play the role of a psychological egoist and think up a self-centered reason for why the person acted as he or she acted.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 10

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 11

Existentialism and Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals

In This Session

In this study session you will consider a few basic ideas about existentialist ethics from the perspective of Simone de Beauvoir. You will also be introduced to the concept of a genealogy of morals by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 11.1. Distinguish between Simone de Beauvoir's two kinds of freedom.
- 11.2. Recognize the sense in which existentialists believe that values are created.
- 11.3. Compare the infantile and serious persons in de Beauvoir's philosophy with those under a slave morality in Nietzsche's thought.
- 11.4. Distinguish between a slave morality and an aristocratic or noble morality.
- 11.5. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Noble and Slave Ethics*
- *Genealogy of Morals*
- *Rancor and Resentment*

Introduction

Most moral philosophers believe that rational thought is capable of defining universal moral principles or general moral virtues appropriate for all human beings. But the thinkers you will look at in this session do not believe that moral values are rooted in reason. Nor do they think such values come from God or nature.

Existentialist thinkers, like Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre are atheists. They also believe that human beings create moral values freely. A genealogical thinker like Nietzsche believes morality is rooted in the psychological history of human beings. As you work your way through this session, ask yourself how convincing it is that free will or psychological drives, rather than rational thought, create our morality.

Existentialism

The first reading is a summary of Holmes' overview of highlights of Simone de Beauvoir's book *Ethics of Ambiguity*. As you read, ask yourself how freedom can be a thing given to each of us and also be something we have to strive for.



Read

Course Guide, Appendix H



Think It Over

In what sense are we “condemned to be free”? Do you agree? De Beauvoir speaks of two types of freedom. What distinction does she make between freedom in the sense of free will and creative freedom?



Write

Look at the story presented by another existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre, cited by Holmes in his chapter on The Nature of Ethics. Refer to your notes on “seriousness” and “authenticity” and describe how a “serious” person might resolve the conflict. How might a more authentically existentialist individual handle the young man's dilemma of whether to stay with his mother or join the army?

Compare your answer with the advice Sartre gives to the young man in the story above. Look up the essay “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” by Jean Paul Sartre, to find out what Sartre says.

Learning Tip

To locate a copy of “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” on the Web, enter the title into a search engine such as www.google.com.

**Think It Over**

Holmes wonders whether there is something like a Kantian universal principle at work in the existentialist idea of freedom as a supreme end. Do you see a similarity between Kant and existentialism?

Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals

In the next reading, Holmes introduces key aspects of Nietzsche's beliefs, including his concepts of master (noble or aristocratic) and slave morality. Nietzsche believes there has been a shift from master to slave morality and that humanity is worse off for it. As you read, note the virtues Nietzsche associates with the two types of morality and their origins.

**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Virtue and Happiness, specifically the section on Nietzsche's Master and Slave Morality

**Write**

List and analyze the virtues Nietzsche associates with master morality and those he associates with slave morality. How do they differ? Which type does Nietzsche prefer? Why?

You should have noted that many virtues such as "pride" versus "humility" and "cruelty" versus "compassion" are virtually opposites. Nietzsche prefers values associated with master morality since he believes these virtues will enable humanity to flourish.

In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche traces the history and origins, or genealogy, of values he associates with slave morality and contrasts them with those he associates with the nobility. He asserts that the word *good* in various languages ultimately refers to *noble* as in the sense of the ruling class and that the nobility, in fact, defined what was good. They associated good with themselves, their high rank, and their actions. On the other hand, their subjects (commoners) were thought to be low-minded and plebian. Nietzsche claims that the distance between the rulers and those ruled allowed the nobility to develop values and name them. He saw this as a manifestation of position and power of the nobility. Those who were ruled such as Christians and Jews resented the power of the ruling nobles (e.g., the ancient Romans) and began to champion an opposite set of values; good began to be associated with altruism, humility, peace, and equality, values which Nietzsche associates with the weak and poor. Thus, he asserts that slave morality was born from resentment and vengeance.

**Think It Over**

Do you see similarities between those operating under Nietzsche's slave morality with the infantile and serious persons in de Beauvoir's philosophy? Compare de Beauvoir's comments about American slaves and women (Holmes) and Nietzsche's views on slave ethics and slave values.

Learning Tip

At first, this reading may seem dense and difficult to follow. You may have to read it more than once and refer to the previous reading.

Summary

You now should be able to define and distinguish among the key terms as they are used in existentialism and genealogy, and carry out the tasks specified in the session objectives.

Apply Your Learning

1. Ask yourself: Am I a serious or an authentic person by de Beauvoir's criteria?
2. Think about the values that tend to prevail in modern culture—as seen on television and the other media. What do you think Nietzsche and the existentialists would say about them?
3. What advice do you think an existentialist would give someone who faces decisions about assisted suicide, crime, divorce, or abortion? Is Nietzsche's philosophy useful for these kinds of decisions?
4. Consider the problem of raising children from an existentialist point of view. How can one educate children into values that will, on the one hand, help them live decent, happy lives and get along with other people without, on the other hand, depriving them of the opportunity to choose their own standards and values in life, that is, to allow them to mature out of their infantile mode of consciousness, in de Beauvoir's terms? No easy feat!

Suggested Additional Reading

De Beauvoir, S. (1962). *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. New York: Citadel Press.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 11

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 12

Justice

In This Session

This study session introduces you to the principles of justice, particularly those associated with distributive justice.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 12.1. Explain the formal principle of justice.
- 12.2. Explain the differences between the various principles of procedural justice.
- 12.3. Apply material principles to an aspect of your life.
- 12.4. Explain the two principles of Rawls's equalitarian theory of justice.
- 12.5. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • <i>Formal Principle of Justice</i> | • <i>Fair Opportunity</i> |
| • <i>Desert</i> | • <i>The Veil of Ignorance</i> <i>(Session 6)</i> |
| • <i>Distributive Justice</i> | • <i>The Original Position</i> <i>(Session 6)</i> |
| • <i>Retributive Justice</i> | • <i>Impartiality</i> |
| • <i>Universalizability</i> | |
| • <i>Procedural Justice</i> | |

Introduction

How a society distributes such “goods” as opportunity, liberty, wealth, and income makes an enormous difference to one’s life prospects. If you are born poor, with little or no opportunity for education, you will have little or no chance of becoming whatever you wish. On the other hand, if you are born wealthy, with every opportunity, you can generally become whatever you wish.

We can readily imagine a world in which people would have an equal opportunity to develop their own life prospects, no matter how rich or poor they were at birth. However, our visions would differ. These differing visions of what is possible depend upon different conceptions of what we think is just. To talk of the different conceptions of justice is to talk of social justice.

But justice permeates the most minute features of our everyday lives, not just the broad scope of such public goods as opportunity and liberty. We have all had the experience, as little children, of wanting something others also want—cookies that our parents say we all must share, for instance. To figure out how to distribute the cookies is to determine a principle of distribution. As we know from experience, people can disagree about what distribution is fair. Should the oldest child get more cookies? The largest? Should the cookies be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis? Each of these principles, as well as others, has advocates.

Distributive Justice

The first two readings introduce the concept of distributive justice. Note the distinction made between distributive justice, which will be addressed in this session, and retributive justice, which will not.



Read

Holmes, chapter on Justice



Think It Over

Think about things that are distributed which might be subject to principles of justice. What about parking spaces in an employee parking lot? And when would it be appropriate to concern oneself with the just distribution of something? Only when there were not enough spaces to go around? What about designating spaces for disabled employees? How many should there be? Suppose there were only five parking spaces to distribute and fifty employees with cars. Could there be a just solution to the problem of who gets a parking space? If so, what would it look like, and what would make it just?

Learning Tip

Remember to construct a question table before you proceed.



Think It Over

Does the formal principle of justice help to explain why employees would be upset in the following situation. If so, how?

Situation A: In order to complete project A before deadline, an employer pays employees from one department overtime but for no apparent reason decides not to pay overtime to employees from another department within the same company. Employees who are not receiving overtime pay protest.

Situation B: An employer decides to pay employees according to the number of products they produce each day. However, some employees are equipped with new, highly efficient equipment, while others struggle with old, inefficient equipment. Employees with the old equipment protest.

You should recognize that demand for justice is a demand for consistency: like cases ought to be treated alike, and unlike cases unlike. This is the formal principle of justice, and though it does not tell us what counts as a like case, or an unlike case, it does tell us that however we determine what is like and unlike, we should be consistent.

Material Principles

If the formal principle of justice does not tell us what to count as relevant similarities and dissimilarities when we distribute benefits and burdens, then we will need material principles of justice that tell us what to count. Material principles are principles which provide a basis for distributing benefits or burdens. There is wide disagreement, however, about what is the proper basis for determining who gets what.

You can get a sense of how much disagreement there might be by considering how a teacher ought to determine grades. On merit? But then what about those who try hard, but started worse off than others in terms of what they knew for the course? So should the basis be effort? But what about those who, try as hard as they can, do not improve? So should the basis be improvement? In such a case, some who know little at the end of the course would get better grades than those who know a lot, if those who know a lot knew a lot to begin with.

As you can see, there could be wide disagreement about how to distribute even what might seem such a simple thing as grades. It is no wonder there is disagreement about how to distribute the important social goods of wealth, income, opportunity, and liberty. The following two readings provide several material principles that are sometimes used to distribute justice.

**Think It Over**

Imagine a world in which everyone is treated equally in the sense that everyone gets the same thing—one loaf of bread for each person, for instance—and now imagine a world in which everyone is treated equally in the sense that the effects of the treatment are equal—everyone gets the amount of bread they need to thrive, some thus getting less than one loaf and some getting more. (see Holmes, for this distinction.) How would these worlds differ?

It might be easier to give one loaf of bread to each person, no matter what his or her needs, but it also might cause complaints. But deciding who needed exactly what might be so time-consuming that the gains might not be worth it.

**Write**

On what basis would you like your salary or wages to be distributed? On the amount of time you spend on the job? On the amount of effort you expend at work (no matter how effective you are)? On the basis of your qualifications? By the amount of revenue you bring in? On the basis of your production? On the level of responsibility you assume? On the basis of your economic needs? Justify your answer by appealing to one primary material principle of justice and explain why that principle is better in this case than any other.

Procedural Justice

One way out of the difficulties posed by trying to determine the proper basis for distributing social and private benefits and burdens is to devise a procedure that, when followed, distributes things for you. We use this device when we run races or play games. Whoever wins the race deserves the prize, and it is far easier to determine who is the fastest by having a race than it is to try to determine that on other grounds. So many social theorists have argued that we ought to distribute social benefits and burdens by appealing to a procedure to distribute goods. The free-market system is such a procedure. Robert Nozick is the contemporary moral philosopher most identified with this view.

Holmes identifies and distinguishes among three types of procedural justice: imperfect, perfect, and pure.

**Think It Over**

Monopoly is a game in which all start off with the same amount of money, no property, and all the same rules of throwing the dice to determine who lands where. The usual end of the game is that one person wins everything. Is this game fair? If it is, why is the end so unequal? Could people survive in this world if the market economy worked the way Monopoly works? If the game is unfair, what makes it unfair?

**Write**

How might you criticize the libertarian view that “people should receive economic benefits in proportion to how much they freely contribute to production in an open marketplace.”

One criticism you might make is that we are all born with different innate characteristics that will predispose us to develop in certain ways. Differences in our life circumstances will make a difference in our ability to compete in a market-economy. Those born into wealthy families can attend better schools, travel, learn more about life outside their immediate environs than others, less well-situated. Those naturally endowed with the traits essential to competitive practices, and those socially endowed with the ability to learn how to compete in the marketplace, are far better positioned to do well than those who are not so blessed. Therefore, libertarian theory makes distribution of social benefits and burdens contingent on factors for which we are not responsible. It can therefore be considered unjust.

Egalitarian Theory**Read**

Holmes, chapter on Justice, specifically, the section on Three Conceptions of Distributive Justice

Cahn, “A Theory of Justice,” by John Rawls

**Think It Over**

How does the veil of ignorance assure impartiality?

**Write**

Rawls identifies two principles of justice. State each principle and indicate which takes precedence over the other.

Learning Tip

If you have difficulty recalling Rawls’s theory of justice, return to Session 6 and your notes to refresh your memory.

Summary

We have considered many aspects and principles of justice. You should now review your question table to be sure that you have answered all the questions you originally listed as well as any that you added while you were reading. You should be sure you can define and distinguish among the key terms.

Apply Your Learning

1. Think about the heavily contested 2000 U.S. presidential election. What are the principles of justice that the various sides to this dispute assumed? Is there any situation where they assumed the same theory of justice, but disagreed because they disagree on the facts? If they disagree in principle, how are we to know what is moral in such a case?
2. Think back to some incident in your life in which you felt you were being treated unfairly, or in which you now think you treated someone else unfairly. What principle of justice was at issue? What could have been done differently that would have prevented the injustice.

Suggested Additional Reading

Scalat, "Real World Justice," by Thomas Pogge

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 12

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 13

Rights

In This Session

In this study session you will consider the concept of rights — what they are, how they function, and how they are related to ethics. You will examine different kinds of rights and explore the relationships between rights and obligations.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 13.1. Explain why rights are best understood as valid claims.
- 13.2. Explain the correlativity thesis.
- 13.3. Distinguish between strong and weak versions of the correlativity thesis.
- 13.4. Refute a proposed analysis of a concept by using counter examples or cases.
- 13.5. Assess the claim that there are natural or human rights.
- 13.6. Define and distinguish among key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • <i>Rights</i> | • <i>Conventional Rights</i> |
| • <i>Obligations</i> | • <i>Positive Rights</i> |
| • <i>Correlativity Thesis</i> | • <i>Negative Rights</i> |
| • <i>Absolute Rights</i> | • <i>Natural Rights</i> |

Introduction

“You don’t have the right to do that!”; “I have a right to do what I want with my property”; “People have the right to decide when and how to end their lives”; “Women have a right to equal treatment”—and so it goes. Much of our public debate about one issue or another is framed in terms of rights. It is common to hear people refer to a right to life, a right to die, a right to privacy, and, more generally, to human rights.

But what are rights, and how does the language of rights function? Is talk of rights connected with moral theory, or are rights something distinct? Political documents found in many societies assert that people have certain rights. Does this mean that rights are based solely on convention, or can we separate rights from a society’s conventions and speak of them as “natural” or “human” rights applicable to all societies? (Note: This issue was also discussed in Session 2: Relativism.)

Rights as Valid Claims

The concept of rights is complex and worthy of analysis, since so many controversial moral issues are expressed in terms of rights. People are quick to assert (or claim) a right to something, and an assertion of a right can be a powerful point in a moral argument. But to evaluate the worthiness of a rights claim, you should identify exactly what kind of right is being asserted and how claims to the right might be defended.

The first reading for this session defends the idea that rights can be understood as valid claims or entitlement. From this perspective, rights are typically expressed in terms that you have encountered in earlier sessions, namely obligation or duty.



Read

Holmes, chapter on The Nature of Moral Judgments, specifically the section on Rights



Think It Over

If rights entail obligations, and obligations hold only where you can possibly meet the obligation (“ought implies can”), does someone in a famine have a right to food?

If I have a right to be treated with respect, does this entail any obligations on your part? Do you have an obligation to adopt a certain attitude toward me?

**Think It Over**

Look up “inalienable” in a good dictionary; see if you can define an “inalienable right” (as in the phrase from the Declaration of Independence, “endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights ...”). If the right to life is inalienable, can a person ever be legitimately killed?

Types of Rights

The next reading from Beauchamp distinguishes several types of rights and explores the obligations that might be entailed by them. It also considers the question of natural or human rights, that is, rights that allegedly obtain independent of political and social institutions.

**Read**

“World Hunger and Moral Obligation,” by John Arthur, specifically (www.food.unt.edu/arguments/singer_arthur.pdf, starts on page 845 of PDF.) the section on Rights and Desert, which defines positive and negative rights

**Think It Over**

How can we distinguish between positive and negative rights?

Positive and negative rights are distinguished by the obligations which they entail. It is important to be as clear as possible about whether a right is positive or negative, since the obligations at issue are different. However, some rights can be considered complex. For example, a woman has a (Constitutional) right to an abortion (see Session 15), but is the right positive or negative?

**Write**

Are the following rights best understood as positive or negative rights, or both? Classify each right and briefly note the reason for your classification.

- a right to privacy
- a right to life
- a right to health care
- a right to work
- a right to worship
- a right to education
- a right to drive a car

(Note: The right to drive a car is often said not to be a right, but a privilege. What could that mean? What arguments can be made to show that it is indeed a right?).

**Write**

In your question table, distinguish among legal, conventional, and moral rights.

Check your question table to see that you have made the following distinctions: legal rights obtain simply because you are covered by a particular legal system. For example, your legal rights in New York might be (somewhat) different than your legal rights in California.

Conventional rights are similar to legal rights in that they, too, depend upon your belonging to one institution or another. If you are an Excelsior College student, for example, you have certain rights that pertain to Excelsior College, such as the right to march in the graduation ceremony and receive a diploma at the successful completion of your studies. Someone unaffiliated with Excelsior College does not have those rights.

By contrast, moral rights do not depend upon a particular legal system or institution. If 200 years ago someone asserted that women have the right to vote in the United States, legally that would be false. But the assertion is most plausibly understood as a moral right — meaning women would have a valid claim to vote irrespective of whether or not this claim is recognized by the legal system.

**Think It Over**

Controversy often develops about overriding a right. Consider what must be taken into account when wondering whether a right can be legitimately overridden. If there are such things as absolute rights, can they be legitimately overridden? Is there a difference between fundamental and absolute rights?

**Think It Over**

People have long thought that there are natural or human rights that all persons have by virtue of their common humanity. These rights are thought to be universally valid, that is, they stand apart from government or society. But noble as this tradition appears, it raises significant philosophical questions about the source of such rights. Are you satisfied with natural law theorists who assert that natural laws are discoverable by rational human beings? Do you agree with critics who wonder why natural rights proponents tend to differ on which rights qualify as natural?

**Write**

What do you think utilitarians make of the notion of individual rights? Why? Describe how the rule and act utilitarians give different accounts of the nature and value of individual rights. (Review the discussion of this issue in Session 5.)

Summary

We have considered many aspects of rights, various distinctions among kinds of rights, and the relationship between rights and moral theory. The issue of rights is fascinating, and because of the power of rights claims, rights will continue to play an important role in our public deliberations about how we ought to organize our society.

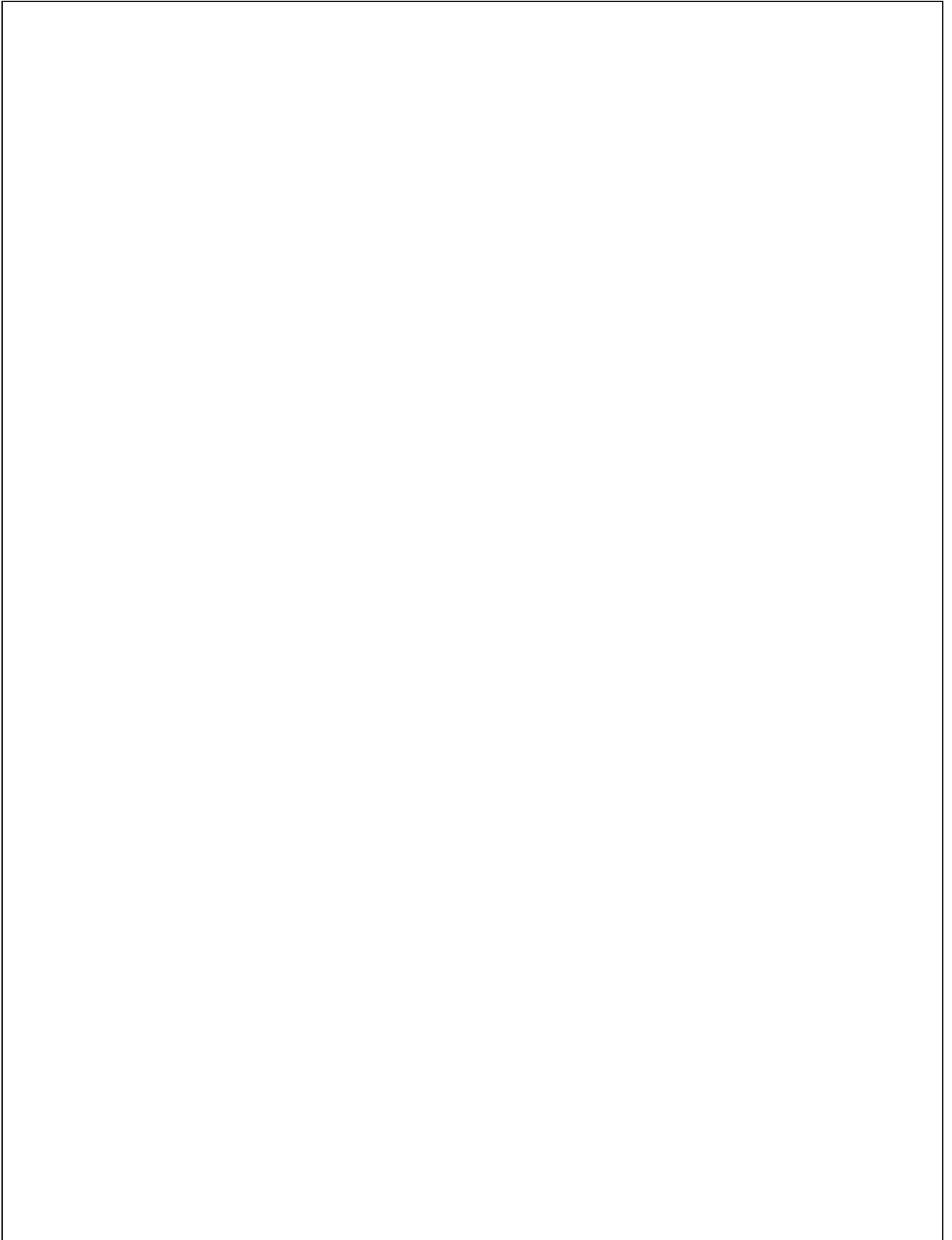
Apply Your Learning

1. Read letters to the editor in a local paper that assert one right or another. See if you can determine what kind of right is invoked. Apply the correlativity thesis and see if you can determine what obligations are at issue.
2. Review the Bill of Rights from the Constitution of the United States of America. Classify each according to the concepts presented in this session.
3. Read the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and classify them according to the concepts presented in this session. (www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/)

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 13

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 6 | weak satisfactory strong | |



Notes

Session 14

Liberty

In This Session

Sessions 12 and 13 explored the concepts of rights and justice. In this study session, you will examine the concept of autonomy and its relationship to liberty.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 14.1. Describe the conditions necessary for autonomy to occur.
- 14.2. Explain what principles can justifiably limit liberty.
- 14.3. Define and explain the key concepts for this session.

Key Terms

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| • <i>Autonomy</i> | • <i>Paternalism</i> |
| • <i>Liberty</i> | • <i>Legal Moralism</i> |
| • <i>Informed Consent</i> | • <i>Offense Principle</i> |
| • <i>Coercion</i> | |

Introduction

You may assume in American society that you are virtually free to do as you wish. But, in fact, you are often not free if what you mean is that you act autonomously, for many of us act sometimes without thinking fully about what we are doing. We sometimes act in situations where we do not have complete free choice, or we act while under the influence of factors that can impede our capacity to act freely—from having too much coffee to not having enough sleep.

Even if we could act autonomously, laws prohibit and constrain our choices. We cannot legitimately act in ways that harm others, for instance, and sometimes the state makes us do what we might otherwise not do, such as fasten our seat belts.

Learning Tip

Remember to construct a question table before you proceed.

Autonomy

In this section, you will examine the conditions under which we are free in the sense of having political liberty, that is, freedom unimpeded by state prohibition or regulation. But before you can consider political liberty, you must consider autonomy. It would do no good to be free from state interference if we can never really be free to act because something about us or the conditions under which we act limit our actions.

**Think It Over**

There is a joke, which asks, “If five frogs are sitting on a log and three decide to jump off, how many frogs are left on the log?” Before you answer, remember that deciding to do something and doing it are two different things. So more than intending is required for autonomy, though that is required, too. What else is required?

**Write**

One condition that must be satisfied for an act to be autonomous is that the person acting be free of control. List as many different kinds of controls or constraints on free action that you can think of, drawing from your own experience when you can. Include sorts of constraints that are external (e.g., someone grabbing your arm to prevent you from moving it) and those that are internal (e.g., taking medication that interferes with your capacity to think clearly.)

Liberty

Society would not long exist if there were no laws to regulate people's behavior. Too often our self-interest conflicts with the interests of others, and if there were no regulations prohibiting us from acting in certain ways, and regulating how we are to act, the social norms that make life possible would break down. Consider how essential it is that we have traffic regulations about which side of the road to drive on. Without these laws, our freedom to drive where we wish would be curtailed by our uncertainty about how others are driving. So some laws are essential to liberty.

But even essential laws curtail liberty to some extent. Laws specifying which side of the road we are to drive on prohibit driving on the wrong side, and the state is justified in punishing us if we decide to do that anyway. Some laws that curtail liberty are justifiable and some are not. The question to ask is whether there are principles that tell us which ones are and which ones are not.



Write

Consider each of the following liberty-limiting principles: harm, offense to others, paternalism, and legal moralism. For each principle, write the answer to the following questions in your question table:

- a. What is the principle:
- b. How is it justified?
- c. What issues arise that can make it problematic?

For instance, no one seriously debates that the state is justified in regulating behavior that is harmful to others; but they do debate what behavior is harmful to others. The disputes about whether the state should regulate smoking in the vicinity of others, when the others have no choice about whether to inhale the smoke or not, is a debate about whether smoking is harmful to others and about whether, even if it is, the state is justified in regulating it. So you should consider examples for each of the principles and be sure that you understand why someone might think it a good example of what the state is justified in regulating and others might disagree. If you can think of no good reason why anyone could disagree about the example you have chosen, pick another.

Summary

In this session we have examined the concept of autonomy and its relationships to liberty. You should go back to your question table to be sure that you have answered all the questions you originally listed and any that you added while you were reading. You should be sure you can define and distinguish among the key terms.

Apply Your Learning

1. Pick a regulation that you think is unjustifiable — having to wear helmets while on a motorcycle, for instance. Determine what liberty-limiting principle the regulation falls under, and then assess whether it is justifiable or not.
2. Think of the ways in which, in your own life, you exercise less than fully autonomous choice. How can you improve your autonomy? You might consider what you do when you purchase products, for instance. Is there something you can do to make yourself more fully informed? Are there things you can do to ensure that you are not deciding in coercive situations? Things you can do to ensure that you are clear on what your intentions are?
3. Consider what laws you think are absolutely essential for a state to exist. Is a law against murder necessary? Is a law prohibiting selling liquor at specific times necessary? Sketch out what you take such a minimal state to be.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 14

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Section A: Theory

Review Session

In This Session

This review session provides you with an opportunity to assess your understanding of many important ideas you have encountered in Section A (Sessions 1–14). The questions contained in this session are not exhaustive of all the material contained in sessions 1–14; however, they do cover key concepts that you should master before moving on to Section B (Sessions 15–21) in this course guide. Any question that gives you difficulty (whether or not you happened to select the correct answer) will indicate an area you need to address before moving ahead in this course guide.

Directions

Answer the following questions in one sitting under test-taking conditions. As you answer the questions, put a check by difficult questions. Use the answer key at the end of the session to correct your responses. Return to the relevant study sessions to address areas that caused difficulty.

Learning Tip

Mark your answers on a separate piece of paper. Then you can use this review session again when it is time to prepare for the examination.

1. Which theory is most concerned with duty?
 - 1) communitarianism
 - 2) existentialism
 - 3) Kantianism
 - 4) utilitarianism

2. Which theory is primarily consequentialist in orientation?
 - 1) cultural relativism
 - 2) emotivism
 - 3) Kantianism
 - 4) utilitarianism

3. Where does a slippery slope argument typically lead to?
 - 1) a questionable analogy
 - 2) an unacceptable consequence
 - 3) a straw man
 - 4) a false dilemma

4. Which approach to ethics is most concerned with the philosophy of ethics?
 - 1) metaethics
 - 2) normative ethics
 - 3) descriptive ethics
 - 4) applied ethics

5. What is the primary focus of virtue ethics?
 - 1) sympathy
 - 2) character
 - 3) autonomy
 - 4) justice

6. Which concept is most compatible with ethical relativism?
 - 1) absolutism
 - 2) naturalism
 - 3) subjectivism
 - 4) eudaemonia

7. Which statement best describes contractarianism?

Right and wrong are

 - 1) inwardly known.
 - 2) determined by agreement.
 - 3) determined by the facts of the world.
 - 4) determined by God's will.

8. How do emotivists tend to view moral arguments?

As expressions of

 - 1) convention
 - 2) desire
 - 3) self-evident truths
 - 4) virtues

9. According to Ross, what is a *prima facie* duty?
 - 1) an absolute duty
 - 2) a duty that must be met unless an equal or greater obligation intervenes
 - 3) a duty that remains after other competing obligations have been weighed
 - 4) a duty that must be met in combination with competing obligations

10. What principle could someone appeal to if they acted out of good intentions while foreseeing harmful consequences of their actions?
- 1) the formal principle of justice
 - 2) the principle of double effect
 - 3) the principle of legal moralism
 - 4) the principle of respect for autonomy
11. What does it mean to say that something has “extrinsic value”?
- 1) It can be used as a means to an end.
 - 2) It has lasting benefit.
 - 3) It is good in and of itself.
 - 4) It has moral worth.
12. When would an act utilitarian be most likely to come into conflict with a rule utilitarian?
- 1) when a relevant rule is not applicable to a situation
 - 2) when more than one rule is applicable to a situation
 - 3) when a rule cannot be verified
 - 4) when applying a rule would lead to more harm than good
13. What does “categorically” mean?
- 1) relatively
 - 2) unconditionally
 - 3) consistently
 - 4) rationally
14. How do hypothetical imperatives differ from categorical imperatives?
- Hypothetical imperatives
- 1) depend on desire.
 - 2) depend on reason.
 - 3) do not depend on consequences.
 - 4) cannot be verified.
15. What does Kant call the practical rules that people use to guide their daily conduct?
- 1) formulations
 - 2) maxims
 - 3) imperfect duties
 - 4) rational imperatives
16. According to Kant, what is the only thing that is good without qualification?
- 1) God
 - 2) a good will
 - 3) happiness
 - 4) perfection
17. According to Kant, what must we do to derive moral worth from an action?
- 1) succeed
 - 2) promote the greater good
 - 3) act consistently
 - 4) do what is right because it is right
18. According to Aristotle, to what is choosing according to the mean likely to lead?
- 1) wisdom and virtue
 - 2) mediocrity and blandness
 - 3) a good will
 - 4) unhappiness
19. According to Aristotle, what is the supreme good?
- 1) justice
 - 2) happiness
 - 3) morality
 - 4) truth

20. According to Aristotle, where do virtues come from?
- 1) They are acquired and developed by practice.
 - 2) They are present as conventions in society.
 - 3) They are learned through instruction.
 - 4) They occur naturally at birth.
21. According to Hume, what is the basis for morality?
- 1) fairness
 - 2) rationality
 - 3) rights
 - 4) sympathy
22. What is most closely associated with communitarian conceptions of justice?
- 1) reparation and fairness
 - 2) convention and tradition
 - 3) equal opportunity
 - 4) impartiality
23. Which statement is most compatible with Divine Command theory?
- 1) God commands something because it is right.
 - 2) Something is right because God commands it.
 - 3) Everyone must obey what God commands.
 - 4) God would not command something that is wrong.
24. If psychological egoism could be proven to be true, what would be the impact on ethical egoism?
- Ethical egoism would
- 1) need to be revised.
 - 2) become irrelevant.
 - 3) have broader utility.
 - 4) be validated.
25. With which statement would Nietzsche clearly disagree?
- 1) The virtues of superior people include power, cruelty, and pride.
 - 2) Happiness is not central to understanding morality.
 - 3) The virtues of obedience, sympathy, and humility will help humankind flourish.
 - 4) People are the creators of their own values.
26. According to Nietzsche, the rancor and resentment of the weak for the strong allowed the slave morality to replace the master (noble) morality. Why does Nietzsche view this reversal of values as bad?
- 1) He believes the values of slave morality foster mediocrity.
 - 2) He believes slave morality lacks stability and durability.
 - 3) He believes that master morality would have self-destructed.
 - 4) He believes that master and slave morality could have naturally fused.

27. What does someone do who commits the naturalistic fallacy?
- 1) assumes the strong will dominate the weak
 - 2) violates the distinction between what is and what ought to be
 - 3) uses a key term one way in one context but another way in a different context
 - 4) fails to accurately describe a position and then attacks it
28. Which statement best expresses the formal principle of justice?
- 1) People should be treated similarly unless morally relevant differences apply
 - 2) Benefits and burdens should be distributed equally to all people.
 - 3) Distribution of benefits should be based on individual need.
 - 4) People should be treated as they deserve to be treated, in accordance with their behavior.
29. What is the purpose of Rawls's veil of ignorance?
- 1) to prevent people from promoting principles of justice that are biased
 - 2) to ensure that people will be protected by the concept of desert
 - 3) to maximize the benefits people can derive from the principle of utility
 - 4) to promote the distribution of justice based on natural differences
30. Which of Rawls's two principles of justice takes precedence over the other?
- 1) Everyone should have a right to as much liberty as is compatible with liberty for others.
 - 2) Social and economic inequalities should be arranged so that they are to everyone's advantage.
 - 3) A community must advance the good of the whole of society to the greatest extent possible.
 - 4) Undeserved inequalities call for redress and compensation.
31. Which statement best expresses the correlativity thesis regarding rights?
- 1) Rights entail obligations and obligations entail rights.
 - 2) People must acknowledge certain inalienable rights.
 - 3) Rights and obligations are relative to the situation.
 - 4) Rights imply entitlements which must be acknowledged.
32. What do negative rights imply?
- 1) conventional rights
 - 2) inalienable rights
 - 3) someone to meet an obligation to provide something
 - 4) someone to refrain from interfering with those rights

33. What type of rights are persons said to have by virtue of their common humanity?

- 1) intrinsic
- 2) legal
- 3) natural
- 4) positive

34. What is necessary for a person to act autonomously?

- 1) beneficence
- 2) compassion
- 3) humility
- 4) rationality

35. Which liberty-limiting principle is almost universally accepted as a valid autonomy-limiting principle?

- 1) the harm principle
- 2) the principle of paternalism
- 3) the principle of legal moralism
- 4) the offense principle

Key to Section A—Review Session Questions

| Question | Key | Session Number ¹ | Question | Key | Session Number ¹ |
|----------|-----|-----------------------------|----------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 3 | 6 | 19 | 2 | 7 |
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 1 | 7 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 21 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 2 | 8 |
| 5 | 2 | 7 | 23 | 2 | 9 |
| 6 | 3 | 2 | 24 | 2 | 10 |
| 7 | 2 | 8 | 25 | 3 | 11 |
| 8 | 2 | 3 | 26 | 1 | 11 |
| 9 | 2 | 6 | 27 | 2 | 2 |
| 10 | 2 | 1 | 28 | 1 | 12 |
| 11 | 1 | 5 | 29 | 1 | 12 |
| 12 | 4 | 5 | 30 | 1 | 12 |
| 13 | 2 | 6 | 31 | 1 | 13 |
| 14 | 1 | 6 | 32 | 4 | 13 |
| 15 | 2 | 6 | 33 | 3 | 13 |
| 16 | 2 | 6 | 34 | 4 | 14 |
| 17 | 4 | 6 | 35 | 1 | 14 |
| 18 | 1 | 7 | | | |

¹Session Number refers to the location of the question topic in the study sessions.

Part II
Section B:

Practice

Session 15

Abortion

In This Session

In this session you will analyze philosophical literature on one of the most controversial moral issues today—abortion.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 15.1. Carry out a rational, systematic analysis of a highly emotional issue.
- 15.2. Identify and explain key questions and concepts that must be considered when discussing abortion.
- 15.3. Summarize the main arguments of three well-known philosophical discussions on abortion.
- 15.4. Recognize that actual moral problems are not mechanical applications of theory.
- 15.5. Recognize links between the issues and questions that arise in abortion and other practical moral topics.
- 15.6. Identify and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Moral Status of the Fetus*
- *Roe v. Wade*
- *Concept of a Person*
- *Rights*
- *Direct Killing*
- *Self-defense*
- *Good Samaritan*

Introduction

Perhaps more than any other contemporary moral issue, abortion has been the subject of intense public debate. The debate seems interminable, and people are sometimes reluctant even to engage in discussion about abortion because it is so divisive a topic. But the issue of abortion raises profound moral questions and forces us to be clear about fundamental moral concepts.

While philosophy is often accused of being remote and of no practical use, it has much to contribute to this and other practical moral issues. In fact, we will see that the concepts and arguments that play a role in discussions about abortion apply to a whole range of other practical moral issues. This means that what we say about abortion will have implications for a range of other issues.

Since abortion is such a controversial issue, you should try to get some distance from your own convictions. Unlike some of the more theoretical topics which, frankly, may seem dry or dull, practical moral questions often excite people very much. These are, after all, the things we actually argue about. Your task is to explore, as rationally and as systematically as you can, a genuine moral controversy. By doing so, you will come to understand the relevant questions and arguments that can be made for and against a position, and, ultimately, to be much better equipped to examine your own views. Moral philosophy is challenging in many ways, and one of the most serious challenges it puts to us is to examine critically our own moral beliefs.

Learning Tip

You should begin with Arthur's introductory discussion for this selection and remaining readings.

Roe v. Wade

The first reading is the famous Roe versus Wade US Supreme Court decision that guarantees women the right to an abortion. The Roe versus Wade decision has had an enormous impact on our society, and it is the duty of any responsible citizen to read it carefully because it plays such an important role in the political arena.

If you have never had the opportunity to read a judicial decision about a moral issue before, it may come as some surprise to see that judges engage in reasoning. Decisions must be justified, not just handed down by fiat.



Read

Scalet, The Constitutional Right to Abortion, *Roe v. Wade*

**Think It Over**

One aspect of the Roe v. Wade decision that has caused a great deal of controversy is what the justices say about the bounds of the right to privacy. They assert, “This right of privacy ... is broad enough to encompass a woman’s decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy” (Arthur). Justice White complains, in his dissenting opinion, that the decision represents “an improvident and extravagant exercise of the power” of the Court.

**Write**

Answer Arthur’s Review and Discussion Questions numbers 2 and 3. Try to answer each question on your own before reading the following.

Question 2: *Note how the judges run together the question of “when life begins” with the issue of personhood. If someone asks the question, “When does life begin?” what do you think is being asked? Is this the best way to put the question? Is Constitutional personhood the same as personhood? At one time in the United States, slaves were not regarded as persons under the Constitution.*

Question 3: *The trimester approach relies on fixing the bounds of the state interests alleged to be at stake. Why, according to Roe, does the State have no legitimate interest in prohibiting abortion during the first trimester? (p. 209) Is this interest compatible with the State interest, also claimed in Roe, in protecting what the judges call “potential human life”? Note how the judges frequently refer to the pregnant woman as the “mother.” Is this a question-begging description?*

Defending Abortion

The next article is one of the most widely read pieces of contemporary philosophy. The analogies are rich, and like all good philosophical discussions, this article raises many questions. Its author, Judith Jarvis Thomson, separates questions about the moral acceptability of abortion from questions about the moral status of the fetus. On her view, even if the fetus has full moral status, i.e., it is a person, abortion is still morally acceptable, at least in some instances.

**Read**

Scalet, “A Defense of Abortion,” by Judith Jarvis Thomson

Learning Tip

You may find that some of the analogies discussed in the articles are far-fetched. Very often philosophers proceed by “thought experiments.” These are rather (sometimes extremely!) unlikely scenarios, but they are designed to make a point. So do not dismiss an apparently unrealistic story as absurd, that is to miss the purpose of the story. Our task is to see how the story relates to whatever philosophical claim the author is making about abortion.

**Write**

Answer the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 2, and 3. Try to answer each question on your own before reading the following comments.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: Thomson argues that the right to life does not mean simply a right not to be killed, but something more complicated. Given her understanding of the right to life, even if the fetus is a person and has a right to life, it does not follow that killing it violates its right to life.

Question 2: Would letting the violinist use your kidneys for five minutes require you to be a good Samaritan? Consider the implications of your answer.

Question 3: If you are having difficulty answering this question, you might want to read Warren's discussion of Thomson's essay (the reading after the next) and then return to write your answer.

Opposing Abortion

Dan Marquis attempts to respond to Thomson's claim that one may justifiably cause the death of the violinist on grounds of self-defense and then presents his own position on why abortion is wrong. In short, he suggests that abortion is wrong because it deprives a person of a future. As you read, look for the reasons Marquis does not accept Thomson's defense of abortion and for reasons he thinks his own view is correct.

**Read**

Scalet, "An Argument That Abortion is Wrong" by Don Marquis

**Think It Over**

Why do you think Marquis says that "abortion is wrong for the same reason as killing a reader of this essay?" Why do you suppose he referred to "a reader" of his essay rather than to "a person"?

**Write**

Answer the review and study questions numbers 1, 2, and 3.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: Marquis argues that when viewed as a conflict of rights, the fetus would experience a greater loss (life) than the woman (temporary use of her body). However, Marquis states at the end of his critique of Thomson's position that Thomson was not addressing "a general moral permissibility of abortion." Did Marquis commit a logical fallacy (discussed in Session 1 of this course guide) by saving this statement until the end of his critique instead of informing the reader right away?

Question 2: Marquis argues that killing a human being (including a "human in development") is wrong because it deprives a person of a future.

Question 3: Check your response by re-reading Marquis' four arguments.

In the next reading, Mary Anne Warren takes a different approach to the issue than Thomson or Marquis. Warren argues that Thomson's "defense" of abortion is not much of a defense. (Can you see why?)

**Read**

Scalet, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," by Mary Anne Warren

Recall that Thomson argues that the moral status of the fetus is not central to the morality of abortion; Warren disagrees. She argues that it is central, and that the concept of a person entails that fetuses are not persons. She maintains that we should distinguish between being a member of the species *Homo sapiens* and being a person, in the moral sense of the word. Does this seem like a plausible distinction to you?

**Write**

Write answers to the review and discussion questions numbers 3, 4, and 5. Try to answer each question on your own before reading the following comments.

Comments on Questions

Question 3: *Biologists can genetically identify members of the species *Homo sapiens*. This is the genetic sense of the word “human.” However, Warren suggests that the moral sense of “human” depends on satisfying the primary criteria of personhood, which serve as a basis for recognizing full moral rights.*

Question 4: *You should have noted that Warren’s evaluation of the human fetus against her criteria of personhood does not support assigning human status (in a moral sense) to a fetus.*

Question 5: *If Warren is right about her example of the space traveler, would this have implications for questions about rights of future generations? You may want to keep this in mind when you consider environmental issues (Study Session 17).*

Summary

You have now worked through some very influential legal and philosophical discussions of abortion. Even if the articles haven’t settled the issue—perhaps you are now even more confused—nevertheless, you have gained a better understanding of the kinds of issues that must be settled before we can make a moral judgment regarding the morality of abortion. We need, among other things, a theory about the nature of persons, an account of a right to life, a definition of the moral community, and an adequate conception of self-defense. All tough questions, and questions which lead us deeper into moral philosophy.

Apply Your Learning

1. Read letters to the editor on abortion in your local newspaper. See if you can identify the writer’s position on such things as the nature of self-defense, the moral status of the fetus, the concept of a person, and the right to life. Imagine what each of the philosophers we have read might say to the letter writer.

2. Identify several other moral questions which will be affected by what one says regarding the concepts and arguments you have studied in connection with abortion. For example, suppose one agrees with Warren that fetuses aren’t persons, and that “the moral community consists of all and only people. What does this imply about the moral status of brain-damaged individuals or animals? What about future generations?

3. Write an essay which expresses your current views on abortion. Address each of the key issues and construct a well-reasoned argument.

Suggested Additional Reading

Pojman, L.P. (Ed.). (1994). *The abortion controversy*. Cengage Learning Higher Education.

A textbook on medical ethics will have a whole section on abortion.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 15

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 5 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 6 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Notes

Session 16

Euthanasia

In This Session

This session examines euthanasia. You will examine a series of conflicting views about the rights of individuals, the interest of the state in the lives of its citizens, and the circumstances and conditions under which life is best relinquished.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 16.1. Identify and explain moral issues involved when considering euthanasia for defective newborns.
- 16.2. Define and distinguish between the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Active Euthanasia*
- *Passive Euthanasia*

Introduction

It is not uncommon to think in terms of extremes. For many, the term “ethanasia” will conjure up images of Jack Kevorkian and his suicide machine. However, as you will discover in this session, there are several medical, moral, and legal distinctions that combine to separate euthanasia into a series of identifiable types. It is possible to support some, but reject others. For many, the question of euthanasia is not so black and white as an analysis of the extremes might suggest.

Passive and Active Euthanasia

In the next essay, the author adamantly rejects all forms of active euthanasia though he does acknowledge “the freedom of patients who are incurably ill to refuse interventions that prolong dying and the freedom of physicians to honor such wishes”.



Read

Scalet, “An Alternative to the Ethic of Euthanasia,” by Arthur J. Dyck.



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 2, and 5. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: *Dyck identifies several practical difficulties, including the difficulties of dealing ethically with comatose patients; the problem of doctors assisting in euthanasia, thereby violating a medical principle not to harm patients; and the problem of parents deciding to abort defective children who may, in fact, have defects which are correctable.*

Question 2: *Dyck argues that suicide is morally wrong because it harms oneself and repudiates the worth of human life. Dyck also describes the ways in which suicide harms those loved ones left behind.*

Question 5: *James Rachels addresses this issue in the next reading. Note your thoughts on this question and compare them with Rachels’s as you read.*

In the next reading, Rachels disagrees with Dyck, the American Medical Association, and perhaps the common sense views of the American public as well. He argues that the common distinction between killing and letting die carries little, if any, moral relevance.



Read

Scalet, “Active and Passive Euthanasia,” by James Rachels

Learning Tip

The writing exercises in this session lend themselves particularly well to a question table format.



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 3, and 4. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: *You should have noted Rachels's explanation that we are often exposed to reports of killing associated with criminal activity. However, we rarely hear of cases of letting someone die. Therefore, we tend to think of active killing as worse than letting someone die.*

Question 3: *Unlike the drowning-child case, in euthanasia cases doctors are not acting out of self-interest, and they are not trying to destroy healthy people.*

Question 4: *Share any arguments you may identify with someone who is preparing for this examination. Be sure to examine Rachels's assumptions and examples carefully. Did you discover any counter examples?*



Write

In your question table, summarize, as clearly as you can, the distinction between active and passive euthanasia. List the arguments provided by Dyck and Rachels for and against each of the two forms. Leave enough room on your chart to include additional arguments which may occur to you as you continue to examine this important issue.

Summary

You have now completed the readings for this session. You have explored the common distinction between active and passive euthanasia; and encountered some of the many difficulties which arise concerning issues of consent, self-determination, and active versus passive euthanasia.

Apply Your Learning

1. Identify at least three cases in which euthanasia is discussed as an option (use the newspaper, magazine articles, television, movies, electronic discussion groups, or personal experience). Prepare a chart in which you compare those cases to that of Nancy Cruzan (www.nytimes.com/1990/12/27/us/nancy-cruzan-dies-outlived-by-a-debate-over-the-right-to-die.html). What, if anything, do you think we can learn from heart-wrenching cases such as these?
2. Write an essay which expresses your current views on euthanasia. Address each of the key issues and construct a well-reasoned argument. You may want to review the guide to reading philosophical essays (in Session 1 of this course guide) before beginning. Consider asking someone who is preparing for this examination to critique your essay.

Suggested Additional Reading

Beauchamp, T. and Veatch, V. (1996). *Ethical issues in death and dying*.
New York: Prentice Hall.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 16

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 17

Animals and the Environment

In This Session

In this session you will consider challenging issues about human beings and their relationship to the non-human world. The question you will be exploring in this session is this: Can we have moral obligations to non-human entities?

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 17.1. Assess arguments for the moral significance of animals.
- 17.2. Compare and contrast anthropocentrism and eco-centrism.
- 17.3. Explain the differences between various competing criteria for moral standing.
- 17.4. Define and distinguish among key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Anthropocentrism*
- *Speciesism*
- *Sentience*
- *Land Ethic (eco-holism)*
- *Ecocentrism (bio-centrism)*
- *Instrumental*

Introduction

People have long pondered questions about how they ought to relate to one another, but recent concern over the environment has raised questions about how we ought to relate to various non-human entities, such as animals, plants, and even entire ecosystems. Is it possible for us to have moral obligations to non-human entities?

To address this question, we need to distinguish between two kinds of moral obligations: direct and indirect. Do I have a moral obligation not to kick your car? I clearly have a moral obligation to you not to damage your property, but can I have an obligation to your car not to kick it? It is hard to see how a car could be the object of moral obligation. If the only reason that it is wrong for me to kick your car is that it harms you, then I have only an indirect obligation to your car not to kick it; it is to you that I have the direct obligation. But what about your cat or dog? Do I have an obligation not to kick your pet? Would you give the same explanation that you gave for why I shouldn't kick your car? If it is wrong for me to kick your pet over and above whatever harm it causes you (or me), then I have a direct obligation to your pet.

The readings for this session address several central issues in environmental ethics. In the Arthur text, Singer and Steinbock explore the moral standing of animals; and Baxter defends an anthropocentric (i.e., human-centered) environmental ethic which, in his view, means that all our direct obligations are to human beings only. In the last reading for this session, Callicott argues that we have direct obligations to ecosystems.

Speciesism and Sentience

In the first reading, Peter Singer presents a case for applying the notion of equality to animals. Pay particular attention to how Singer argues for what he calls "speciesism." Is speciesism analogous to racism or sexism?



Read

Scalet, "All Animals Are Equal," by Peter Singer

Singer argues for an extension of the principle of equal consideration of interests beyond the species boundary. Note his account of interests. Singer accepts a sentience (the capacity for suffering) criterion for moral significance. Based on Singer's argument, what moral theory is he likely to support?

You may have recognized that Singer's view about how we should treat animals is a straightforward application of utilitarian thinking: pain is an evil, irrespective of the creature that experiences it. (If you did not make this connection, return to Session 5 for a review of utilitarianism to see if you agree.)

**Write**

Answer the Review and Discussion Questions numbers 2, 3, 5, & 6. Compare your written responses with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 2: *Can the idea of equal consideration of interests be stopped at the species boundary? Is it unacceptably arbitrary to do so? (Isn't this the basic claim of speciesism?)*

Question 3: *Consider practices that place trivial human interests over significant animal interests; e.g., consider what it takes to produce pale tender veal. (You may want to research this issue a bit.)*

Question 5: *Here is a great chance for you to recall Kant. See Session 6. (Focus on Kant and rationality.)*

Question 6: *This question ties several issues together, and it is a good example of how what we say in one area of moral philosophy has implications for a whole range of other questions. (Think about what it means to have interests, according to Singer.)*

In the next reading, Bonnie Steinbock takes issue with Singer's argument and identifies important human capacities which she believes make human interests more significant than non-human interests.

**Read**

Scalet, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality," by Bonnie Steinbock

**Think It Over**

Steinbock argues that human interests are more important than animal interests. Even though human beings have some interests that animals don't have, does Steinbock successfully show that where our interests overlap with an animal's interests, ours take precedence? Does she offer an effective counterargument to Singer's?

Note that Singer is not claiming that any animal's life is as valuable as any human's life, although this is a frequent misunderstanding of his position. Equal consideration does not imply equal treatment.

Learning Tip

Try answering each question on your own before referring to the following comments.

**Write**

Answer the Review and Discussion Questions numbers 3 and 4. Compare your written responses with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 3: *Steinbock identifies capacities that she claims make our lives more valuable than animals' lives.*

Question 4: *This is a crucial question. Has Steinbock convincingly shown why we ought to take defective human interests more seriously than similar non-human interests? How is the fact that we might give precedence to the defective human's interests over non-human interests relevant to Singer's claim about the equal merit of the interests?*

Learning Tip

Read the introduction with care.

Anthropocentrism

In the next reading, William Baxter argues that only human interests should count morally when addressing issues involving nature and the environment. He does not recognize the moral significance of animals and the environment.

**Read**

Scalet, "People or Penguins," by William F. Baxter

**Think It Over**

Is Baxter's argument for anthropocentrism sound?

Consider Baxter's four criteria for assessment, and notice what he says about why penguins are important. (Recall the distinction between direct and indirect moral significance.)

**Write**

Answer the Review and Discussion Questions numbers 3 and 4. Compare your written responses with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 3: *By favoring "optimal" pollution, rather than zero pollution, Baxter has a clear sense of what level of pollution would be good for us. Might Baxter's view turn out to be compatible with that of a radical environmentalist, at least with regard to what practical changes need to be made in our way of life?*

Question 4: Focus on what Baxter has to say about penguins. Keep Singer's sentience criterion of moral standing in mind as you assess Baxter's argument on pages about volcanos and other natural changes. What is the critical issue that separates the two views?

Ecocentrism

The last reading for this session lays out the philosophical grounds for the dispute between the animal welfare people (like Singer), anthropocentrists (like Baxter), and eco-holists (like Callicott and Leopold).



Read

Scalet, "The Land Ethic: Animal Liberation and Environmentalism," by J. Baird Callicott

Note how the dispute between the three groups—anthropocentrists (ethical humanism), animal welfare (humane moralism), and eco-holism (ecocentrism)—hinges on what one takes to be the appropriate criterion of direct moral significance.



Write

Answer the Review and Discussion Questions numbers 1, 3 and 6. Compare your written responses with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: Think about the conditions for direct moral significance. Callicott is proposing that ecosystematic integrity is a criterion for direct moral standing.

Question 3: Think about what it means to be sentient. Doesn't this apply only to individuals? Is the ecosystem sentient?

Question 6: Review Callicott's discussion about the numbers of human beings alive today. Also think through the discussion on domesticity included in this essay.

Summary

We have explored several philosophical positions revolving around the question of direct moral significance. This question is of deep theoretical importance since what we take to be a criterion of direct moral significance will determine the range of things to which we can have moral obligations.

Apply Your Learning

1. Obtain information from an animal rights group. See if you can identify the arguments and assess the moral claims made. You may wish to review Session 13 on rights before beginning this activity. Does the specific issue of animal rights cover the question of the moral significance of animals?
2. Write an environmental protection group or your state’s environmental protection agency (or the EPA in Washington) for literature on environmental protection. What justifications are typically given for the various programs and initiatives?

Learning Tip

Return to Session 9 and check your answer to the review and study question number 8 to see if your thinking about this issue has changed.

Suggested Additional Reading

Animal Rights: Singer, P. (1977). *Animal liberation*. New York: Avon Books.

Land Ethics: Callicott, J.B. (1989). *In defense of the land ethic*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.

Leopold, A. (1949). *Sand county almanac*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 17

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 4 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Session 18

Personal Relations

In This Session

This study session explores moral aspects of personal relations. While many topics fall under this broad category of personal relations, this session is limited to date rape and parenthood.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 18.1. Analyze Pineau's communicative model of sexual behavior.
- 18.2. Analyze English's argument that obligations between parents and grown children should be based on friendship.
- 18.3. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| Key Terms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Consent</i>•<i>Unnatural</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•<i>Debts</i>•<i>Friendship</i> |
|------------------|---|--|

Introduction

Morality often seems focused on large social questions and issues of public policy, and the various moral theories that we have encountered can seem quite remote from our everyday lives. After all, how often in your dealings with friends and family do you reflect on objectivism or subjectivism? But, as you may have already begun to suspect, moral concerns can be found in even the most intimate of our personal relations. In fact, a moral dimension can be found in any context in which people interact.

This study session will consider the moral aspects of intimate personal relations. Keep in mind that just because something is intensely personal, that does not mean it is beyond moral, that is, rational assessment. We sometimes think that questions of sexuality or marriage, for example, because they are so intimate, are not subject to rational scrutiny. But even if someone else has no business making moral judgments about your sexual life, it doesn't follow that your sexual life is morally acceptable. In this way, morality runs through the most intimate aspects of our lives.

Date Rape

Rape is uncomplicated morally: it is deeply wrong because it violates a person's will in a fundamental way. Date rape should be equally uncomplicated from a moral point of view, but difficult questions arise about consent. Did the woman consent to sex? (We will consider date rape among heterosexuals, but similar issues could arise among homosexuals as well.)

In the first reading, Lois Pineau argues that traditional myths about male and female sexuality make consent especially difficult to ascertain; therefore, it is virtually impossible for the law to get involved in a meaningful way with the problem of date rape. She proposes a remedy that she feels more appropriately addresses the problem of consent.



Read

"Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis," by Lois Pineau (http://theaetetus.tamu.edu/phil-111/notes/Pineau-Date_Rape.pdf)



Think It Over

Describe the model Pineau proposes as a better basis for testing consent than the current contractualist model.

According to Pineau, we should change the paradigm of sexual interaction from a contract to a communicative model. Moreover, sexual behavior, suggests Pineau, functions like a language. In this respect it is not an irrational activity beyond the control of the participants. Pineau argues that a communicative model of sexual behavior will serve as a background for generating the mens rea (guilty mind) needed for legal involvement.

Write

Answer the review and discussion questions numbers 2 and 5.
Compare your written responses to the comments below.



Comments on Questions

Question 2: *Imagine that you are a lawyer. How would you handle questions of evidence in deciding whether an allegation of rape was indeed rape?*

Question 5: *In what way is sexual behavior like a language? Does Pineau claim that sexual behavior really is a language, not just like one?*

Parents and Grown Children

The relationship between parents and children is another area for moral reflection. Parents sometimes make demands on their grown children by pointing out all the things that they have done for them over the course of their children's lives. Is this a good argument? What (if anything) do grown children owe to their parents? In the next reading, Jane English addresses this question.



Read

"What Do Grown Children Owe Their Parents?," by Jane English

This site lists what libraries have in their holdings the book, "Having Children" edited by Onora O'Neill and William Ruddick, New York: Oxford Press 1979, which contains English's article. (<http://www.worldcat.org/title/having-children-philosophical-and-legal-reflections-on-parenthood/oclc/299370156/editions?referer=di&editionsView=true>)



Think It Over

English argues that children owe their parents nothing. Why does English reject the debt metaphor?

The debt metaphor is misplaced, claims English, because whatever filial obligations exist are based on friendship between parents and children, not past sacrifices of the parents. Parental sacrifices tend to play only a causal role in creating the friendship; so it is a mistake, according to English, to think that the parental sacrifices are the source of filial obligations. If the relationship between grown children and their parents is one of friendship, then the filial obligations derive from friendship; and the obligations of friendship are based on mutual good will, not reciprocity for favors performed.



Write

Answer Scalet's review and discussion questions numbers 1 and 4. Compare your written responses to the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: *This question asks about the difference between the mutual good will of friends and a relationship in which “score” is kept of what one does for the other. Think about how you might become indebted to your neighbor. Compare that relationship to one you have with a close friend. From Scalet & Arthur: pg 367 8th ed, “What differences does English find between duties to friends and the obligation to repay debts?”*

Question 4: *“Suppose a parent has not been a friend to the child, but instead has been strict, remote, and uncompromising but also self-sacrificing. Does the adult child then owe the parent nothing?” Scalet, p 367, 8th ed.*

This is a good question. English says that the obligations between grown children and their parents come from friendship, so English would have to agree with the question. Is this plausible? Might you have even minimal obligations to your parents that you would not have to a complete stranger just because of the special biological relationship that holds? But the question here is not even so minimal: maybe the parents’ aloofness was their best guess at how to be good parents. Maybe they even wanted to become your friends but didn’t quite know how. Minimally, it seems that English has a lot of explaining to do to make it plausible that the only source of filial obligations is friendship.

Summary

We have examined several aspects of our private and personal lives from a moral point of view. The articles we read for this session have made it clear that careful moral thinking must take place even in the most intimate of our personal relationships.

Apply Your Learning

1. Some television dramas and news magazines often explore the lurid details of personal relationships. Watch or read a few. Why is there such fascination with this material? Identify the moral issues, like deception or promise-breaking, discussed in this session.
2. Some religious television shows often consider moral aspects of personal relationships. Watch a few and see if you can identify issues discussed in this session. Try to analyze whatever arguments you hear. (You might want to review Session 9 for this exercise.)

Suggested Additional Reading

Scalet, "Licensing Parents," by LaFollette and other readings on family in the Personal Relationships section.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 18

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Notes

Session 19

Equality and Discrimination

In This Session

This session explores moral, social, and political issues concerning the relationships between men and women.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 19.1. Identify issues associated with contemporary views on sexual equality, and discrimination.
- 19.2. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

•*Discrimination*

•*Empowerment*

•*Dominance*

•*Equality*

Introduction

Although men and women have been living together in social relationships for thousands of years, in many ways we remain strangers to one another. The readings for this section demonstrate that we have gradually become more aware and less tolerant of gender inequity. Ironically, in the process of eliminating boundaries and barriers we have also eliminated reference points which once defined relationships between men and women and permitted predictable social exchange.

The Subjugation of Women

The first essay was originally published in England in 1869. While the social conditions it describes have changed, the essay's moral and social arguments are as relevant now as they were then.



Read

Scalet, "The Subjection of Women," by John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 2, 3, 4, and 6. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 2: Consider how this situation might have developed differently if men did not value women or if women had possessed greater physical strength than men.

Question 3: Note that the authors deny that women are naturally inferior and point out that many women have protested against the rule of men over women.

Question 4: Contrast the authors' descriptions of women living unjustly as the "bond servant" of men to the benefits gained by having women living justly with rights and opportunities equal to men.

Question 6: This is an intriguing question. Reread Utilitarianism. Note his comments on the connection between justice and utility.



Write

As a utilitarian, Mill naturally associates moral worth with social utility. Describe the benefits he and Taylor expect to accrue from changes like those they propose.

Compare your answer with the discussion questions that accompany this essay. You should have noted (1) “the advantage of having the most universal and pervading of all human relations regulated by justice instead of injustice” and (2) “doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity.”

Racism and Sexism

In the next reading Richard Wasserstrom examines the similarities and differences between racism and sexism and discusses types of racism and sexism. He then explores the question of how race and gender would exist in an ideal society. As you read Wasserstrom’s essay, note the similarities and differences between racism and sexism he identifies and the three ideals he discusses.



Read

Scalet, “On Racism and Sexism: Realities and Ideals,” by Richard A. Wasserstrom



Think It Over

Reflect on Scalet’s Review and Discussion Questions numbers 3, 4, and 6.

Comments on Questions

Question 6: *The three ideals you should have identified are the ideal of assimilation, diversity, and tolerance.*

Sexual Equality

On the surface, we might think it fairly easy to give a definition of gender-based discrimination. But as the final selection for this session demonstrates, that clarity is more apparent than real.



Read

Scalet, "Sexual Equality and Discrimination: Difference vs. Dominance," by Will Kymlicka



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 2, and 3. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: Consider how Kymlicka thinks the problem should be defined.

Question 2: Review Kymlicka's discussion of the difference approach. Does your example show that gender-neutral rules have been violated?

Question 3: Focus on what each approach identifies as the problem and the solution. You should consider discrimination and domination.



Write

Kymlicka concludes: "Since the problem is domination, the solution is not only the absence of discrimination, but the presence of power." Do you agree? Why? Write an essay which addresses issues of dominance, discrimination, and power contained in this statement.

Note: This is an opinion essay. The examination will not expect you to adopt one stance rather than another. But it will expect you to recognize similarities and differences between positions. In some cases you may even be asked to evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of a position. Thus, for an essay like this one, you should examine the issues and express your arguments and reasons as clearly as possible.

Summary

The issues involved in this session are far too broad for us to expect resolution on the basis of three readings. Even so, the exercise should have given you a better sense of the history of the matter, the standards by which federal courts determine sexual harassment, and the enormous difficulties which still remain.

Apply Your Learning

Make a list of the ten people you most admire. Next to their names list the qualities or activities which earn your positive appraisal. Then list qualities or activities of which you disapprove.

Now examine your list to see how many of the ten are men and how many are women. Examine your lists of qualities and activities (both pro and con). Do you find gender-based patterns? If so, what explanation do you believe accounts for these patterns? Do you believe your list would be typical of other people in your society? Why?

Suggested Additional Reading

Bushnell, D.E. (Ed.). (1995). *"Nagging" questions: Feminist ethics in everyday life*. Latham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 19

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Notes

Session 20

Affirmative Action

In This Session

This study session examines a controversial social issue—affirmative action. Is it morally acceptable to give preference to members of racial or ethnic minorities and women for admission to colleges and graduate schools, employment, and other positions of power in society?

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 20.1. Explain why affirmative action raises questions of justice.
- 20.2. Assess arguments for and against affirmative action.
- 20.3. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

Key Terms

- *Affirmative Action*
- *Reverse Discrimination*
- *Justice*
- *Social Utility*
- *Desert*

Introduction

Affirmative action policies in employment and college admission require that organizations give preference to members of minorities (and women) that have been historically discriminated against. The intention of affirmative action policies is to ensure that individuals from under-represented groups make their way into the various professions and higher education. Are such policies justified? After all, giving preference to someone because of his or her skin color or gender seems to violate a fundamental principle of justice — equal consideration.

The arguments for and against affirmative action are numerous, and you will be able to touch upon only a few of them in this session. One line of argument for affirmative action involves the concept of reparation, an aspect of justice. If a wrong has occurred, reparation requires that compensation be made. The problem lies in trying to determine whether or not affirmative action constitutes reparation for previous wrongs. There may be some wrongs for which there is no just compensation. Another argument for affirmative action does not turn on considerations of justice, but on social utility. This argument may acknowledge that preferential treatment violates equal consideration, but appeals to a greater good of social utility. In other words, it might be argued that we should temporarily suspend equal consideration in the name of the social good to be achieved by affirmative action. (This reasoning assumes, of course, that good consequences will follow. What if they don't?)

A common misunderstanding about affirmative action should be cleared up at the start. Sometimes opposition to affirmative action is argued on the grounds that it will admit unqualified people to colleges, graduate schools, and professions. The mistake is in thinking that “less well qualified” means “unqualified.” Regrettably, many members of previously discriminated against minorities and women do have less impressive credentials than the white males against whom they compete. But the fact that one person is less qualified than another does not mean that he or she is unqualified. Affirmative action programs do not advocate giving special consideration to people who are unqualified. Of course, what counts as a minimally acceptable level of qualification, and even what constitutes being qualified, are subjects of considerable controversy.

Learning Tip

Review your notes for Session 12. Pay particular attention to consistency and the formal Principle of Justice.

Reverse Discrimination

In the first reading James Rachels argues that affirmative action can be supported on two lines of argument: social utility and justice. But he regards the question of social utility as debatable, and he concentrates on the more fundamental question of justice. Rachels raises the important question of how a person acquired qualifications. Given that someone has impressive qualifications, does that person deserve them?



Read

Scalet, “Reverse Discrimination,” by James Rachels

Notice how Rachels distinguishes between “affirmative action” and “reverse discrimination?” The terms “affirmative action” and “reverse discrimination” cause a lot of controversy. The term “discrimination” has a very negative connotation. But we should try to understand the terms apart from the public rhetoric that surrounds them.

Sometimes discrimination is a good thing; for example, we praise someone who has discriminating tastes. The sense of discrimination that is at issue in “reverse discrimination,” however, is quite different. The basic idea of discrimination in this sense involves making decisions about people on morally irrelevant grounds, such as skin color or gender. But the claim of affirmative action is that we are justified in using these morally irrelevant grounds in a particular instance (that is, we are justified in discriminating) in order to reverse previous discrimination. This might not be an entirely satisfactory way of resolving the dispute about the terms because someone might argue that discrimination is necessarily unjustified, so reverse discrimination is likewise unjustified. Perhaps the best way to proceed is not to worry too much about what to call a policy of giving preference to women and members of minorities previously discriminated against. Irrespective of what we call it, our concern is whether or not such policies are justified.



Think It Over

Why does Rachels feel it is important to look at how a person acquired qualifications?

Rachels argues that how a person acquires qualifications is important in deciding whether or not they are deserved. If you don’t deserve your outstanding qualifications, then it is unfair for you to profit from them. This means that when your qualifications are judged against the lower qualifications of someone else, the mere fact that yours are higher doesn’t mean that you should get the position because you might not deserve your higher qualifications (or some proportion of them), whereas the other person might deserve his or hers.

**Write**

Answer the Review and Discussion Questions numbers 3 and 4. Compare your written responses with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Questions 1 and 2: Consider these two questions that ask you to weigh the potential advantages and potential costs to society of affirmative action, according to Rachels.

Question 3: Rachels gives us an account of how people come to deserve things; it is apparently by their efforts. The idea of desert is an aspect of justice, because not to give someone something deserved is to do an injustice.

For further reflection, consider that if Rachels is right that people come to deserve things because of their efforts, how is it that some people are better able to “make the effort” than others? Does someone deserve his or her ability to work hard? If not, then how can Rachels claim that people deserve the results of their hard work? Isn’t this just like his argument about whether or not one deserves one’s high qualifications?

Question 4: Rachels would agree, right? The analogy between the horse race and preferential treatment is worth thinking about, however. How does the idea of desert fit into the analogy? How can we tell whether or not the race has been fair?

Learning Tip

You may wish to refer to Session 13.

Summary

We have considered an article about affirmative action. Rachels argues in favor of affirmative action largely on grounds of justice. This is a bit unusual because most opposition to affirmative action stems from a concern with justice, namely, equal treatment. We hope that you are now better able to participate in this important moral discussion.

Apply Your Learning

1. If you work for an institution of some kind, write the personnel department (or whomever) for a statement of the institution's position on affirmative action.
2. Listen carefully to the public rhetoric on affirmative action by political commentators; do they use various code words designed to influence your reaction in one direction or another?

Suggested Additional Reading

Fullinwider, R. & Littlefield (1980). *The reverse discrimination controversy*.
Totowa, NJ: Rowman.

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 20

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.

Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Notes

Session 21

Free Speech

In This Session

This session explores the power, importance, and problems associated with freedom of expression.

Session Objectives

At the end of this study session, you should be able to

- 21.1. State and explain the principles on which John Stuart Mill defends freedom of opinion and freedom of expression of opinion.
- 21.2. Identify moral and legal principles in the included court cases.
- 21.3. Define and distinguish among the key terms for this session.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Key Terms | • <i>Symbolic Expression</i> | • <i>Hate Speech</i> |
| | • <i>Free Speech</i> | |

Introduction

Citizens of democratic countries typically regard freedom of opinion as the most fundamental of all human rights. No one, they argue, should be allowed to dictate the thoughts and opinions of another. Those who control public opinion, control the public. If we surrender title to our own opinions, we surrender title to ourselves.

Closely connected to freedom of opinion is the freedom to express and share that opinion with others. Though logically distinct, controlling expression of opinion is an effective means for controlling opinion. Yet it is also true that some expressions of opinion (in some cases, even the opinions themselves) are objectionable (possibly even harmful) to others. The conflicts are real and the stakes are high.

Mill on Free Speech

The first reading is another selection by John Stuart Mill. As you read his defense of free speech, try to place his position within the context your other readings have established. Is this, for example, the sort of position you would have expected from a utilitarian?



Read

Scalet, “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion,” by John Stuart Mill



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Questions

Question 1: *You should have noted that, according to Mill, free speech sometimes allows a truth or part of the truth to become known, and that free discussion and debate encourage the establishment of a rational basis for the truth and helps keep it vital and meaningful.*

Question 2: *Mill suggests that silencing false speech would deprive us from a clearer perception of the truth “produced by its collision with error”.*

Question 3: *You should have noted that no matter how certain we are of our opinion, there is always the possibility that we could be wrong. Censoring speech suggests there is such a thing as absolute certainty when there is not.*

Question 4: *You may have noted the third and fourth of Mill’s grounds for establishing freedom of speech in the last paragraph of the reading.*

**Write**

Mill defends “freedom of opinion, and freedom of expression of opinions, on four distinct grounds”. List the four arguments which Mill uses, stating each as clearly as possible.

Compare your list to the summary in the final three paragraphs of Mills’ essay and revise it as required. Go back through the reading to identify the extended presentation and discussion for each argument.

Symbolic Expression

Mill’s arguments are persuasive, but desires to ban some forms of expression are powerful as well. Should flag burning be constitutionally protected? This question is addressed in the following reading.

**Read**

Scalet, “Flag Burning as Constitutionally Protected” *Texas v. Johnson*

**Think It Over**

Reflect on the review and discussion questions numbers 1, 2, and 4. Compare your thoughts with the comments below.

Comments on Reading

1: You should have extracted the facts of this case from the first paragraph and listed the legal issues including whether or not flag burning is protected by the U.S. Constitution.

2 & 4: You should be able to explain the reasoning behind the two dissenting opinions.

Hate Speech

In an issue closely related to the court case you have just reviewed, our society frequently debates and passes regulations designed to limit what is often termed “hate speech.” In the reading which follows, this topic is addressed.



Read

Scalet, “Organized Protests and Free Speech,” *Snyder v. Phelps*



Think It Over

Reflect on the review and discussion questions.



Write

Briefly summarize the ruling in this case, and compare the arguments made by the majority of the court against the dissenting opinion.

Summary

You have now completed the final set of required readings for this course of study. You have examined John Stuart Mill’s classic arguments supporting freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. You have explored several dimensions to related challenges to those ideals. As with previous sessions, you may (and should) continue to have a fair amount of ethical uncertainty concerning some of these issues. But you should have developed a clearer understanding of the principles upon which our disagreements are based. By reflecting carefully upon the principles and the arguments used to support the various positions, your confusions will gradually give way to greater and greater clarity.

Learning Tip

Use a question table format for the next assignment.

Apply Your Learning

1. Search newspapers, magazines, and other resources to find two examples of each of three areas of conflict represented by this session (hate speech, pornography, and the multicultural curriculum). Compare the arguments of participants in those debates with the ones you have explored here. If the issues are similar, chances are good that you will find several identifiable patterns in the discussion.

2. Select one area such as hate speech, pornography, multiculturalism, or religion and write an essay which expresses your current views. Address each of the key issues and construct a well-reasoned argument. You may want to review Arthur’s guide to reading philosophical essays (session 1 of this Course Guide) before beginning.

Suggested Additional Reading

The first reading for this section, by John Stuart Mill, is a brief excerpt from an essay which has become a classic. To read the full essay: Mill, J.S. (1978). *On liberty*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. (available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm>)

Self-Assessment Chart: Session 21

Step 1. Carry out each objective listed at the front of this session.
 Step 2. Rate your performance on each objective on the chart below.

| Session Objectives | Performance Rating (Circle one) | Comments |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 2 | weak satisfactory strong | |
| 3 | weak satisfactory strong | |

Notes

Section B: Practice

Review Session

In This Session

This review session provides you with an opportunity to assess your understanding of many important ideas you have encountered in Section B: Practice of this course guide. Please note that questions contained in this review session are not exhaustive of all the material contained in Section B. However, they do cover key concepts that you should master before moving on to Part IV of this course guide. In addition, these questions also assess your ability to apply some of the ideas introduced in Section A: Theory. Any question that gives you difficulty (whether or not you happened to select the correct answer), will indicate an area you need to address immediately.

Directions

Answer the following true/false questions in one sitting under test-taking conditions. You will note that the format of this review session departs somewhat from the format of Review Session 1. Unlike Review Session 1, a context has been provided for each set of questions. You should read the context and then answer the questions that refer to it. As you answer the questions, put a check by difficult questions. Use the answer key at the end of the session to correct your responses. Return to the relevant study sessions and textbooks to address areas that cause difficulty.

Learning Tip

Mark your answers on a separate piece of paper. Then you can use this review session again when it is time to prepare for the examination.

Session 15**Context: Abortion**

Bonnie has just learned that her fetus has multiple birth defects which will ensure that upon birth her child will require permanent institutional care. Nearing the end of her first trimester of pregnancy, Bonnie considers having an abortion. Her husband, Frank, and their children, Eric and Megan, disagree on what action, if any, Bonnie should take.

True/False

1. According to *Roe v. Wade*, the State's interest in protecting the "potential of human life" is compelling beginning in the second trimester.
2. According to *Roe v. Wade*, Bonnie could elect to have an abortion without interference from the State until the second trimester of her pregnancy.
3. If Frank were to argue that the emotional and financial costs of caring for a child with multiple birth defects outweigh the benefits of proceeding with the pregnancy, his argument would be utilitarian.
4. If Megan were to argue that her mother should first and foremost do what her mother thought was in her own best interest, Megan's argument would be essentially Kantian.
5. If Eric were to argue that his mother should not have an abortion because her fetus is a human being and has a basic right to life, his argument would be compatible with act utilitarianism.

Session 16**Context: Euthanasia**

Stephanie and Jonathan are a married couple who signed a legally binding statement that would prevent artificial life support systems from being used to sustain their lives in the event an illness or accident reduced their existence to a permanent vegetative state.

They hope to make their intentions "clear and convincing" while they are legally competent so that their wishes will be honored.

True/False

6. If the feared tragedy were to befall Stephanie or Jonathan, a doctor carrying out their wishes would be practicing a form of active euthanasia.
7. If a doctor were to refuse to honor Stephanie and Jonathan's statement preventing the use of artificial life support systems, the doctor would be violating Stephanie and Jonathan's rights as autonomous persons.

Session 17**Context: Animals and the Environment**

A state legislature is deciding whether or not to approve plans for a new superhighway which would greatly improve the traffic flow between metropolitan areas. However, the proposed highway would run through a tract of land inhabited by a large population of white-tailed deer disrupting their feeding and migrating patterns and threatening their access to water.

True/False

8. The thinking of legislators who discount the moral significance of animals and focus primarily on the concerns of people is best described as anthropocentric.
9. Legislators who extend the principle of equal consideration to the deer population and argue against the construction of the highway because of the negative impact on the deer are essentially making a utilitarian argument.
10. “Sentient” means showing the capacity for understanding.

Session 18**Context: Personal Relations**

Marian and Rowland are preparing to retire. They are planning to sell their home in Vermont and move to a retirement community in Florida where they will spend nine months of each year. However, they would like to spend summers in Vermont with their children. They have asked their children, Keith and Carolyn, if they could spend one summer living with one of them and the next summer living with the other. Marian and Rowland have offered to pay for room and board and respect their children’s privacy.

Keith reluctantly agrees to let his parents live with him. Although he has had minimal contact with his parents during adulthood and is no longer emotionally close to them, he feels indebted to them for the help they have given him in his childhood, particularly for the sacrifices they made to send him to an expensive private college. On the other hand, Carolyn is looking forward to having her parents live with her. She has maintained frequent contact with her parents and has cultivated a deep friendship with them. Even though she appreciates her parents support during her childhood, she doesn’t feel indebted to them. She is truly happy to share her home.

True/False

11. According to Jane English, Keith should feel obligated to repay his parents for at least part of their sacrifices.
12. According to Jane English, Carolyn has an obligation to let their parents live with her.
13. According to Aristotle, since Carolyn is Marian and Rowland's child, she may have obligations to her parents in addition to those associated with friendship.

Session 19**Context: Equality and Discrimination**

In several countries of the world, women are not provided basic rights enjoyed by men. The rights of women to hold public office, vote, transfer property, or even drive a car may be restricted or denied outright. In these countries, men and women clearly exist in a state of inequality.

True/False

14. According to Mill and Taylor, the source of the inequality of rights between men and women is that men have greater physical strength.
15. Mill and Taylor do **not** rely on utilitarian arguments to advance the rights of women in the Subjection of Women.

Session 20**Context: Affirmative Action**

A search committee at Price College is meeting to make a recommendation to hire a new Dean of Education. The finalists Burke, a white male, and, Thompson, a Native American are both qualified for the position. However, Burke is better qualified in terms of his experience and training. Price College has recently been criticized for having an administrative staff that is not as diverse as other colleges. The leadership of Price College would like to increase the diversity of its staff.

True/False

16. A committee member who argues that experience and training not racial or ethnic background should constitute the criteria for hiring is concerned with impartiality.
17. A committee member who argues that Thompson should be hired primarily to increase the diversity of the administrative staff is violating the Kantian principle of respect for persons.
18. A committee member who focuses on the amount of effort each candidate has invested to obtain his qualifications is concerned with desert.
19. A committee member who argues that Native Americans have been historically discriminated against, and that therefore Thomas should be hired to correct past wrongs expresses a concern for retributive justice.

Session 21**Context: Free Speech**

A radio talk show host, Veronica Scott, has invited a controversial guest, Martin Spilker, to appear on her afternoon talk show. Spilker has written a book whose central thesis is that the Holocaust never took place. Spilker has appeared on talk shows throughout the U.S. to promote his book and antisemitic ideas. Veronica, the station manager, and Sarah, a member of a local Jewish organization, meet to discuss whether to go ahead with the show.

True/False

20. If Veronica were to explain that she had invited Spilker primarily to raise her talk show's ratings and to generate publicity for the station, she would be violating Kant's principle of respect for persons.
21. If Veronica were to explain that she had invited Spilker to contest his ideas in open debate, her explanation would be compatible with Mill's position on free speech as expressed in his work *On Liberty*.
22. For Sarah to argue that Spilker's ideas are offensive to Jewish people and therefore he should be barred from appearing on the show is sufficient grounds for preventing his appearance.
23. If the station manager argues that as a general principle it is better for society to protect someone's free speech even when the short-term consequences may create more harm than good, he would be taking the approach compatible with rule utilitarianism.

Key to Section B – Review Session Questions

| Question | Key | Comment |
|----------|-----|---|
| 1 | F | The compelling point is at viability of the fetus to live outside the mother's womb. |
| 2 | T | |
| 3 | T | |
| 4 | F | Individual desire is not a consideration in Kantian ethics. |
| 5 | F | An act utilitarian would not focus primarily on rights but the consequences that result from a particular decision. |
| 6 | F | The doctor would be withholding treatment at the patient's request, a form of passive euthanasia. |
| 7 | T | |
| 8 | T | |
| 9 | T | |
| 10 | F | "Sentient" refers to the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment. |
| 11 | F | English's essay suggests Keith has no obligation to repay his parents for their sacrifices since his parents sacrificed out of friendship. |
| 12 | T | |
| 13 | T | |
| 14 | T | |
| 15 | F | Mill and Taylor articulate gains to human nature resulting from justice and gains to society from "doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity." |
| 16 | T | |
| 17 | T | |
| 18 | T | |
| 19 | F | This committee member would be concerned with reparation or distributive justice. |
| 20 | T | |
| 21 | T | |
| 22 | F | The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects free speech, even if some people find the content of the speech offensive. |
| 23 | T | |

Part III

Preparing for and Taking the Examination

Overview

Congratulations! You have successfully worked your way through a challenging set of study materials and persisted despite many obstacles that you undoubtedly had to overcome along the way. By completing the 21 study sessions and two review sessions, you have already taken the most important step in preparing for the examination: learning the content. You are now ready to focus your attention specifically on preparing for and taking the examination.

■ **How Should I Prepare for the Examination?**

When you created your long-term study plan (Part II), you designated the last two weeks before the examination as a review period. The purpose of the review period is to:

- Review and consolidate your learning.
- Practice answering examination style questions.

Learning Tip

Be sure you have completed all of the study sessions before starting Part III.

Review and consolidate your learning. As you worked your way through the study sessions in this course guide, you focused your energy on mastering specific ethical concepts, principles, and theories. You focused on one content area at a time until you were required to consolidate what you had learned up to that point by doing a review session. This approach should significantly reduce the amount of time that you will require to prepare for the examination.

The task at hand is to review and consolidate your learning for the 21 sessions as a whole. Reviewing will help you pull everything together so that you can see the “big picture.” It will also refresh your memory of concepts, principles, and theories that you may have partially forgotten, particularly those from earlier units.

The following guidelines will help you plan an effective review.

- 1. Review selectively.** Given the large amount of content in the study materials, you will not be able to review everything. Set priorities by identifying areas that you still do not fully grasp. Refer to the self-assessment chart on the last page of each study session. There you have rated your ability to meet each objective. Select the objectives you need to review and record them on the Self-Assessment Summary Chart (Appendix D). You should also check your performance on review sessions, your notes, and your responses to the writing assignments.
- 2. Create a review plan.** Create a review plan by making a list of sessions, objectives, and areas you want to review. Record on your long-term study chart the course guide session numbers, objectives, or topics you will review. Reserve four or five time slots for creating and practicing examination-style questions described in the next section.
- 3. Use stress positively.** It is normal to feel a sense of urgency and stress as you review difficult content. Use this stress to focus your attention on the task at hand, but do not let it interfere with your review. Keep the examination in perspective. Remember that the worse thing that could happen (and it probably won't) is that you may obtain a lower score on the examination than you would like.

Learning Tip

When selecting content to review, remember that two-thirds of the examination questions are on practical ethics.

- 4. Focus on performance.** The examination will ask you to demonstrate what you have learned. Spend most of your review time on consolidating your understanding of ethical concepts and applying them to real-world situations. You will need to be able to recognize and critique various types of ethical thinking in new contexts.
- 5. Practice answering examination-style questions.** Try to obtain as much practice as possible answering examination-style questions before taking the examination. Becoming familiar with the style of examination questions will boost your confidence during the examination, reduce the possibility of your being confused by the way a question is asked, and increase your chances of doing your best.
- 6. Purchasing the practice exam** for Ethics: Theory & Practice is a good way to get familiar with computer testing and identify any areas of weakness that you should address before taking the exam.

The following suggestions are intended to help you practice answering examination-style questions.

- 1. Create a self-testing plan.** Designate at least four or five personal study sessions for self-testing.
- 2. Practice under examination conditions.** Arrange sessions so that you can work for a continuous, uninterrupted period of at least one hour. Clear your desk of all study materials except pencil, practice examination questions, and paper.
- 3. Do the sample questions during your first self-testing session.** The sample examination questions (Appendix C) are designed to give you a feel for the format of the questions. They are not intended to assess your readiness for the examination and do not represent the full range of difficulty of the examination.
- 4. Create or locate new questions.** Review the content outline and try to create questions for each content area. Use the sample examination questions as a model for writing your questions. You will find writing your own case studies time-consuming and difficult to create; but if you belong to a study group, you can each write a case study for one of the content areas, trade questions, and discuss the answers.

■ What Are Good Test-taking Strategies?

Consider using the following test-taking strategies. Once the examination begins you should:

Orient yourself to the examination.

- Read the examination directions carefully and thoroughly.

Focus on the question stem. Read the stem of the question carefully. Don't add information to the stem or make assumptions about information that is not given. You will not be given trick questions, so don't approach a question in that way. The test writers have crafted each question to assess specific knowledge. Reading the question carefully will help you focus on the specific point being tested.

Work efficiently. If you don't know how to answer a question, move on to the next question.

- Remember to check yourself at the halfway point and adjust your speed accordingly.
- When you return to answer questions you did not answer the first time through the exam, eliminate the obviously incorrect answers first.

Prepare Yourself Physically

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Eat something before the examination.
- Avoid medication that makes you drowsy.
- Arrive at the testing site 30 minutes early.

Prepare Yourself Mentally

- Visualize success.
- Carry out your study and review plan.
- Use stress positively to help you focus.
- Keep the examination in perspective.

■ **How Can I Tell if I Am Ready to Take the Examination?**

Use the following checklist to help you determine your readiness to take the examination. Check the statements that apply to you. When you can check them all, you should be ready to take the examination.

Examination Readiness Checklist

- _____ I have successfully completed my long-term study plan.
- _____ I have completed a selective review of the examination content and feel comfortable with virtually all topics.
- _____ I have answered the sample examination questions and corrected my incorrect responses.
- _____ I have spent several study sessions preparing and answering additional examination-style questions using the online practice exam under examination conditions.
- _____ I am familiar with effective test-taking strategies, and I am prepared to use them.
- _____ I am physically and mentally prepared to take the examination.
- _____ Overall, I feel good about my preparation for this examination.

Notes

Conclusion

Now that you have completed your preparation for the examination in ethics, this is a good time to review and appreciate what you have accomplished. Through independent study, you have designed and carried out a study plan that has enabled you to acquire new knowledge and skills that you can apply to virtually any academic discipline or occupation as well as to everyday life. You now have the foundation necessary to recognize and respect sound moral arguments, particularly when they conflict with your own viewpoint.

When you receive the results of your examination, you may find that you have met or exceeded the standards you have set for yourself. If so, you will experience a sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Nevertheless, if diagnostic information is provided with your score carefully review your score report to identify areas you might want to strengthen. Use your skills as an independent learner to formulate a plan that addresses these areas, and carry it out.

If, on the other hand, you find that you have not met your standards, don't become discouraged. Remember that only your performance on that examination was evaluated, not you personally. Use diagnostic score reports to identify strengths and weaknesses in your performance. Critically evaluate your approach to independent study. Did you accurately assess your readiness to begin study? Did you formulate an appropriate personal study plan and spend enough time studying? Did you use the recommended learning materials and do you need to review your study and examination preparation techniques? What will you do differently the next time? By asking yourself these questions, you will be well on your way to developing the skills that you will need as a lifelong learner.

Appendix A

Examination Content Outline

The major content areas on the examination and the percent of the examination devoted to each content area are listed below.

| CONTENT AREA | PERCENT OF THE EXAMINATION |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| I. Basic Theories, Basic Concepts | 17% |
| II. Metaethics, Moral Deliberation | 16% |
| III. Social & Personal Issues | 16% |
| IV. Medical Issues | 17% |
| V. Professional & Business Issues | 17% |
| VI. Environmental Issues | 17% |
| | <u>100%</u> |

I. Basic Theories, Basic Concepts (17%)

A. Basic theories

1. Natural law
2. Social contract
3. Deontological
4. Utilitarianism
 - a. Act utilitarianism
 - b. Rule utilitarianism
5. Virtue ethics
6. Egoism and altruism
 - a. Psychological egoism
 - b. Ethical egoism

7. Divine Command
8. Intuitionism
9. Feminism
10. Existentialism

B. Basic concepts

1. Justice
2. Rights
3. Values and goods
4. Duties and obligations, including *prima facie* vs. actual
5. Moral agency (nature of persons, moral character, etc.)

6. Moral standing (scope of moral community, moral status, moral considerability, etc.)
7. Moral relations (friendship, loyalty, fidelity, etc.)
8. Autonomy and parentalism/paternalism
9. Respect for persons
10. Beneficence and nonmaleficence (harm, benevolence, sympathy, empathy, etc.)
11. Double effect
12. Equal opportunity and discrimination

aging, care of older persons, humanitarian intervention, and violence.

IV. Medical Issues (17%)

For example: autonomy, informed consent, and confidentiality, including treatment decisions and competence; patient rights; death and dying, including withholding and withdrawing care, euthanasia and the risks of abuse, refusal of treatment, and definitions of death; genetics and reproduction, including fetal rights, parental rights, abortion, reproductive technologies and risks, and genetic engineering.

II. Metaethics, Moral Deliberation (16%)

A. Metaethics

1. Subjectivism/objectivism (moral relativism)
2. Value theory
3. Origins of morality
4. Skepticism
5. Nihilism and the naturalistic fallacy

B. Moral deliberation

1. Moral reasoning
2. Implications of moral concepts
3. Status of moral judgments
4. Why be moral?

V. Professional & Business Issues (17%)

For example: professional/client and employer/employee relationships, including employee loyalty, privacy issues, whistle-blowing, and definitions of professions; equal opportunity and affirmative action, including comparable worth/pay equity and treatment of the disabled; doing business in a global economy, including international norms and ethical relativism; business and consumers, including health and safety issues; business regulation and moral/legal issues, including public awareness and disclosure and responsibilities to concerned stakeholders.

VI. Environmental Issues (17%)

For example: attitudes, positions, and theories, including ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, and deep ecology; the environment, including resource use, global justice, and future generations; nonhuman life forms, including sentience, species, and animals.

III. Social & Personal Issues (16%)

For example: personal behavior and relationships, including friendship, gender roles, privacy, and children's rights; social and political issues, including censorship,

Appendix B

Sample Completed Time-Use Chart

Sample Completed Time-Use Chart

| Time | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 7 am | Sleep | Rise, Eat | Rise, Eat | Rise, Eat | Rise, Eat | Rise, Eat | Sleep |
| 8 am | ” | Commute | Commute | Commute | Commute | Commute | ” |
| 9 am | Rise, Eat | Work | Work | Work | Work | Work | Rise, Eat |
| 10 am | Worship | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | Study |
| 11 am | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” |
| Noon | Family | Family | Family | Family | Family | Family | Chores |
| 1 pm | ” | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 2 pm | Lunch | Work | Work | Work | Work | Work | Study |
| 3 pm | TV | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” |
| 4 pm | Study | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | Chores |
| 5 pm | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | Family |
| 6 pm | Dinner | Commute | Commute | Commute | Commute | Commute | Dinner |
| 7 pm | Family | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Dinner | Family |
| 8 pm | TV | Children | Children | Workout | Children | Children | Free |
| 9 pm | ” | Study | Study | Study | Study | Free | ” |
| 10 pm | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” | ” |
| 11 pm | Sleep | Sleep | Sleep | Sleep | Sleep | Sleep | Sleep |

Appendix C

Blank Time-Use Chart

| Time-Use Chart | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Time | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 7 am | | | | | | | |
| 8 am | | | | | | | |
| 9 am | | | | | | | |
| 10 am | | | | | | | |
| 11 am | | | | | | | |
| Noon | | | | | | | |
| 1 pm | | | | | | | |
| 2 pm | | | | | | | |
| 3 pm | | | | | | | |
| 4 pm | | | | | | | |
| 5 pm | | | | | | | |
| 6 pm | | | | | | | |
| 7 pm | | | | | | | |
| 8 pm | | | | | | | |
| 9 pm | | | | | | | |
| 10 pm | | | | | | | |
| 11 pm | | | | | | | |

Appendix D

Sample Examination Questions and Answer Rationales

The questions that follow illustrate those typically found on this examination. These sample questions are included to familiarize you with the type of questions you will find on the examination. The answer rationales can be found beginning on page 180.

1. According to Aristotle, what is a moral virtue?
 - 1) an inclination to obey the laws of one's society
 - 2) using a combination of intelligence and prudence
 - 3) a disposition to choose the mean
 - 4) acting nobly and admirably
2. Which theory is characterized by the claim, "Whatever contributes to the overall well-being of the social unit is good; whatever detracts from it is bad"?
 - 1) ethical egoism
 - 2) cultural relativism
 - 3) Kantianism
 - 4) utilitarianism
3. What is one of the most fundamental objections to intuitionism?
 - 1) Intuitionism gives women a moral advantage over men.
 - 2) Intuitionism fails to consider the pragmatic consequences of moral behavior.
 - 3) What maximizes pleasure may not be intuitive.
 - 4) What is self-evident to one may not be self-evident to another.

4. Ethical egoism and utilitarianism are correctly described in which statement?
- 1) Ethical egoism is based on the belief that pleasure is the only intrinsic good; utilitarianism is based on the view that the future is beyond human control.
 - 2) Ethical egoism is concerned with promoting only one's own good; utilitarianism is concerned with promoting the greatest good for the greatest number.
 - 3) Ethical egoism is concerned with universal principles; utilitarianism is concerned with duties as opposed to inclination.
 - 4) Ethical egoism is based on the belief that feelings determine morality; utilitarianism is based on the belief that a higher being determines all.
5. According to a Kantian moralist, why should one always tell the truth?
- Truth telling
- 1) will maximize social utility.
 - 2) shows respect for persons.
 - 3) is the best policy.
 - 4) is a basic human inclination.
6. What is the formal principle of justice?
- 1) The form of the distribution of resources is as important as the actual distribution.
 - 2) However we distribute resources, we ought to follow rules.
 - 3) Like cases are to be treated alike and unlike cases unlike.
 - 4) What matters in justice is that we respect the forms of society.
7. An actual duty is what one actually ought to do in some particular situation. What is a prima facie duty?
- 1) what it appears one ought to do, but not what one actually ought to do
 - 2) what one ought to do if other moral considerations do not intervene
 - 3) what one ought to do first
 - 4) what one ought to do if no one interferes
8. According to emotivism, what does it mean to say that an act is right?
- 1) The act makes most people feel good.
 - 2) The act is objectively right.
 - 3) One sees a reason for the act.
 - 4) One approves of the act.
9. Which statement best describes the emotivist position?
- 1) Utterances like "Stealing is wrong" are mere expressions of human sentiment and, as such, are neither true nor false.
 - 2) Moral wisdom may be found only by listening to the dictates of the human heart.
 - 3) Because morality is more properly a matter of reason than of feeling, human sentiment must be tamed if we are ever to reach moral perfection.
 - 4) One's spirit may be willing, but humanity is generally weak.

10. To avoid the is/ought problem, what must be true of a deductively valid argument with a normative conclusion?
 - 1) The argument contains at least one normative premise.
 - 2) The argument contains a link between the normative and non-normative premises.
 - 3) There is a clear separation between the factual and normative premises.
 - 4) The context of the argument is given.
11. Which feature is a necessary condition for a judgment to be a moral judgment?
 - 1) Its realization maximizes well-being.
 - 2) It conforms with intuition.
 - 3) It expresses one's deepest convictions.
 - 4) It is universalizable.
12. According to Plato, a person who possesses the Ring of Gyges still ought to be moral for which reason?
 - 1) Harmony within self and society will be achieved.
 - 2) Self-control will lead to control of others.
 - 3) Seeming to be moral is the road to success.
 - 4) What exists is what ought to be.

Sample Case Study and Associated Questions

Marie is a 42-year-old teacher who has been waiting for a heart transplant for nearly 18 months. She has no other medical problems that would cause a transplant to fail. Early this morning, she was rushed to the hospital. She is conscious and lucid, but her survival depends on the availability of a suitable donor organ.

Dr. Johnson, a cardiologist, has taken a scientific and personal interest in Marie's case. Marie's age, tissue type, and positive attitude make her a perfect candidate for an experimental transplant using the heart of a young mammal. Although she expresses a strong preference for a human heart, Marie has not ruled out the procedure.

Marie's daughter, Susan, is a college sophomore. Four months ago, Susan unexpectedly became pregnant. Marie is not happy about the circumstances, but is looking forward to becoming a grandmother. She has begged God to let her live long enough to be present for the delivery of Susan's baby.

On her way to the hospital to see her mother, Susan lost control of her car and rammed into an embankment. Now doctors and nurses have gathered to discuss both situations.

Dr. Osborne, Susan's obstetrician, begins. "Susan has suffered severe brain trauma and is unable to breathe without a respirator. Her heart is strong and the fetus remains unharmed. We can and therefore should maintain life support for 8 to 10 weeks. There is no chance of Susan's recovery, but the fetus's odds of survival increase daily."

"Is she a potential organ donor?" asks Dr. Johnson.

"Yes," Dr. Carrigan, chief of surgery, replies. "She is a perfect match for Marie, whose chances of survival with a human heart are at least three times better than your most optimistic estimate. I intend to talk with Marie about transplanting Susan's heart to Marie. Your experiment will just have to wait."

“You cannot assess an experimental procedure in terms of its initial patients’ survival,” Dr. Johnson objects. “The long-term benefits for the human race surely outweigh any disadvantage which may apply to this particular case.”

“These are people,” interjects Nurse Beamer, “not objects you can manipulate to suit your own research interests! Marie keeps asking for Susan. What am I supposed to tell her?”

Refer to the case study to answer the following questions.

13. Which person pursues a line of reasoning and concern most clearly associated with rule utilitarianism?
 - 1) Beamer
 - 2) Carrigan
 - 3) Johnson
 - 4) Osborne
14. Which person pursues a line of reasoning and concern most clearly associated with Kantianism?
 - 1) Beamer
 - 2) Carrigan
 - 3) Johnson
 - 4) Osborne
15. Which of the following judgments is indicative of an approach that emphasizes individual autonomy?
 - 1) Susan should be kept on life support long enough to allow her fetus to develop.
 - 2) Susan’s heart should be transplanted into Marie as soon as possible to maximize Marie’s chance of survival.
 - 3) Marie should be allowed to make an informed decision based on her own beliefs.
 - 4) Due to the unusual circumstances of the case, the hospital should consult both religious and legal counsel before proceeding further.
16. Which ethical theory would be most likely to assign significance to the fact that Marie is a teacher?
 - 1) egoism
 - 2) utilitarianism
 - 3) Divine Command
 - 4) Kantianism
17. Which pair would be most likely to agree on a course of action?
 - 1) Johnson and Osborne
 - 2) Johnson and Carrigan
 - 3) Osborne and Carrigan
 - 4) Johnson and Beamer
18. Which claim would be characteristic of a person who strongly opposes all forms of euthanasia?
 - 1) Susan should be kept on life support long enough to allow her fetus to develop.
 - 2) Susan should be kept on life support indefinitely.
 - 3) Susan’s heart should be transplanted into Marie as soon as possible to maximize Marie’s chance of survival.
 - 4) Doctors should ask Marie if Susan ever expressed her beliefs about organ transplantation.

Rationales for Sample Questions

1.(IA5)

- 1) One may obey laws of society without being virtuous. Moreover, not all virtue is regulated by societal laws.
- 2) Though intelligence and prudence are useful tools in moral decision making, they are not in and of themselves virtuous.
- *3) According to Aristotle's "Doctrine of the Golden Mean," moral virtue is a matter of steering a course between excess and deficiency.**
- 4) Acting nobly and admirably are characteristics of a virtuous person, but are not in and of themselves virtuous.

2.(IA4)

- 1) The focus of ethical egoism is the individual, not the social unit.
- 2) Cultural relativism identifies moral worth as conformity to a society's expectation.
- 3) Kantianism is a deontological theory concerned with the motive for one's actions, not the results.
- *4) Utilitarianism describes the moral worth of an action in terms of its consequences for the social unit.**

3.(IA8)

- 1) This is not a fundamental objection to the theory of intuitionism.
- 2) In principle, moral behavior is not necessarily pragmatic.
- 3) In principle, moral behavior does not necessarily maximize pleasure.
- *4) A fundamental objection to intuitionism is that intuitions differ from person to person.**

4.(IA6)

- 1) Ethical egoism permits both broad and narrow views of intrinsic good; utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory that attempts to shape the social unit's future.
- *2) Though both are concerned with promoting good, ethical egoism focuses on the individual while utilitarianism broadens the concern to the social unit.**
- 3) Ethical egoism is concerned with the individual, not with universals; utilitarianism is concerned with consequences, not with duties or inclination.
- 4) Ethical egoism is concerned with consequences, not feelings; utilitarianism is not based on theology or metaphysical determinism.

5.(IB9)

- 1) For a Kantian moralist, maximizing social utility is not a moral basis for behavior.
- *2) For a Kantian moralist, respect for persons is an inviolable moral principle and to deliberately distort the truth, for any reason, would compromise the dignity of the person.**
- 3) Kantian ethics is based on duty, not policy.
- 4) Kantian ethics is based on duty, not inclination.

*correct answer

6.(IB1)

- 1) Not all forms of distribution are just.
- 2) Not all rules are just.
- *3) The formal principle of justice requires a nonpreferential treatment that reflects a sensitivity to both similarities and differences.**
- 4) Not all forms of society are just.

7.(IB4)

- 1) This does not define prima facie duty because moral considerations are not taken into account.
- *2) Prima facie means “at first glance.”
A prima facie duty is a duty that a person ought to do, all other things being equal. The distinction between prima facie duty and actual duty is designed to reflect the complex moral situations in which people often find themselves. Additional moral considerations may preclude acting according to a prima facie duty.**
- 3) The concepts of prima facie duty and actual duty reflect the process of an initial versus a complete analysis of a situation. They do not dictate the temporal order of prescribed action.
- 4) Prima facie duty is not based on the assistance or interference of others.

8.(IC1)

- 1) Emotivism is not concerned with whether an action makes anyone feel good.
- 2) Emotivism denies the possibility that any act is objectively right or wrong.
- 3) Emotivism does not consider the reasonableness of an act.
- *4) Emotivism rejects any rational basis for moral judgment; to say that an act is right is merely expressing one’s approval.**

9.(IC1)

- *1) Emotivism rejects any rational basis for moral judgment; to say that an act is right or wrong is merely expressing one’s approval or disapproval.**
- 2) Emotivism denies the possibility of moral wisdom.
- 3) Emotivism does not treat morality as a matter of reason; nor does it allow for a goal of moral perfection.
- 4) Emotivism is not based on a conflict between the individual’s spirit and humanity.

10.(ID1)

- *1) In the absence of a normative premise, a normative conclusion requires deriving what ought to be the case from what is the case (i.e., the is/ought problem).**
- 2) A deductively valid argument with a normative conclusion does not have to contain any non-normative premises.
- 3) A deductively valid argument with a normative conclusion does not have to contain any factual premises.
- 4) The context of the argument is irrelevant.

*correct answer

11.(ID3)

- 1) Maximizing well-being is required only by certain consequentialist theories.
- 2) Conforming with intuition is required only by intuitionist theories.
- 3) Expressing one's deepest convictions is irrelevant to the definition of moral judgment.
- *4) Any judgment, to be a moral judgment, must apply equally to all people, circumstances, and occasions.**

12.(ID4)

- *1) According to Plato's Republic, immorality and injustice reflect an undesirable lack of harmony within the self and society.**
- 2) Plato does not advocate morality as a mechanism to gain control of others.
- 3) Plato values being moral over seeming to be moral.
- 4) If there is no distinction between is and ought, all morality loses its prescriptive edge.

13.(IIB)

- 1) Because Nurse Beamer emphasizes respect for persons, Nurse Beamer's reasoning is most clearly associated with Kantianism.
- 2) Because Dr. Carrigan emphasizes an approach which would maximize utility in this particular situation, Dr. Carrigan's reasoning is most clearly associated with act utilitarianism.
- *3) Because Dr. Johnson argues that "the long-term benefits for the human race surely outweigh any disadvantage which may apply to this particular case," Dr. Johnson's reasoning is most clearly associated with rule utilitarianism.**
- 4) Dr. Osborne supports trying to save the fetus, but does not provide any reason for doing so other than the fact that "we can."

14.(IIB)

- *1) Because Nurse Beamer emphasizes respect for persons, Nurse Beamer's reasoning is most clearly associated with Kantianism.**
- 2) Because Dr. Carrigan emphasizes an approach which would maximize utility in this particular situation, Dr. Carrigan's reasoning is most clearly associated with act utilitarianism.
- 3) Because Dr. Johnson argues that "the long-term benefits for the human race surely outweigh any disadvantage which may apply to this particular case," Dr. Johnson's reasoning is most clearly associated with rule utilitarianism.
- 4) Dr. Osborne supports trying to save the fetus, but does not provide any reason for doing so other than the fact that "we can."

15.(IIB)

- 1) Susan and the fetus are unable to make a decision; therefore, neither is an autonomous individual.
- 2) This option does not focus on what Marie would want.
- *3) Individual autonomy is the ability to make decisions for oneself. What would Marie want? To ask that is to focus on individual autonomy.**
- 4) An approach which emphasizes individual autonomy will leave the decision up to Marie, not to the hospital.

*correct answer

16.(IIB)

- 1) Egoism seeks to maximize benefit for the individual agent. Profession does not matter.
- *2) Based on the assumption that teachers provide significant benefit to society, utilitarianism will assign greater moral weight to saving her life.**
- 3) Divine Command theory is based on the will of God. Profession does not matter.
- 4) Kantianism bases moral decisions on universal criteria. Profession does not matter.

17.(IIB)

- *1) Dr. Johnson wants to do the experimental transplant. Dr. Osborne wants to maintain somatic function in Susan. The two are not in conflict.**
- 2) Since Dr. Johnson wants to do the experimental transplant while Dr. Carrigan wants to transplant Susan's heart into Marie, the two are in conflict.
- 3) Since Dr. Osborne wants to maintain somatic function in Susan while Dr. Carrigan wants to transplant Susan's heart into Marie, the two are in conflict.
- 4) Since Dr. Johnson treats Marie as an expendable experimental subject while Nurse Beamer objects to treating people as objects, the two are in conflict.

18.(IIB)

- 1) What happens to Susan after the fetus matures? Taking Susan off life support after her fetus has matured could be construed as a form of euthanasia.
- *2) A strong opponent of all forms of euthanasia (active and passive) would support keeping Susan on life support indefinitely.**
- 3) Since Susan can be maintained on life support, failure to do so simply to procure her heart for transplantation could be construed as a form of euthanasia.
- 4) A strong opponent of euthanasia will not allow decisions based on personal belief.

*correct answer

Appendix E

Self-Assessment Summary Chart

Directions: Refer to the self-assessment charts at the end of each session. Decide which objectives you should review and circle them on the chart below.

| Self-Assessment Summary Chart | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Session | Objectives to Review | Comments |
| 1 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 2 | 1 2 3 4 | |
| 3 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 4 | 1 2 3 4 | |
| 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 | |
| 6 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | |
| 7 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 | |
| 8 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 9 | 1 2 3 | |
| 10 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 11 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 12 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 13 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 | |
| 14 | 1 2 3 4 | |
| 15 | 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 16 | 1 2 3 4 | |
| 17 | 1 2 3 4 | |
| 18 | 1 2 3 | |
| 19 | 1 2 | |
| 20 | 1 2 3 | |
| 21 | 1 2 3 | |

Appendix F

Sample Question Table

The following sample question table is based on the objectives and key terms for Session 1.

| Sample Question Table | |
|--|--------------------|
| Question | Answer/Information |
| 1. What are the steps to systematically reading and analyzing philosophical essays? | |
| 2. How are moral issues different from social, political, and other kinds of issues? | |
| 3. What is the difference between normative judgments and descriptive statements? | |
| 4. What is ethics? | |
| 5. What do the following terms mean? | |
| a. Argument | |
| b. Premise | |
| c. Assumptions | |
| d. Straw Man | |
| e. False Dilemma | |
| f. Slippery Slope | |
| g. Double Effect | |
| h. Metaethics | |
| i. Normative Ethics | |
| j. Nonnormative Approaches | |
| k. Utilitarianism | |
| l. Deontological Theories | |

Appendix G

If You Are Having Difficulty

If you are having difficulty learning the content covered by this course of study, you may find the following problem-solving approach helpful.

Step 1. Identify the problem.

This step produces a clear statement of the difficulty you are having with the content. Formulating the statement will enable you to focus clearly on your difficulty. Review the Self-assessment Chart for each session you have studied so far. When you are finished, you will have identified specific objectives and content areas that are difficult for you. Select one objective that you are having difficulty achieving and write a statement that describes exactly what you cannot do.

Step 2. Analyze the problem.

Take a closer look at the statement you wrote describing the difficulty you have identified. Does the statement refer to concepts that are new to you? If so, have you thoroughly read the text and done exercises addressing those concepts? Have you spent enough time trying to learn these concepts? Does the textbook satisfactorily address these concepts? Do you have the background knowledge required to understand this content?

Step 3. Select a solution(s) to the problem.

The solution(s) to the problem will be determined by the difficulty you identified in Step 2. For example, if you suspect that you have not spent enough time on the content or you realize that you didn't complete all the exercises addressing this content, the solution will be to return to your study materials and invest the time required. However, if you have already spent enough time on this content, you might decide that you need another explanation. In this case, you might decide to consult another textbook that may present the content more clearly. Alternatively, you could decide the best solution would be to ask for help on MyExcelsior Community or from a subject matter expert.

Step 4. Carry out the solution(s).

Once you have decided on a solution, carry it out right away. If you do not remove obstacles to learning as they occur, you may find they reappear later or prevent you from learning more difficult material.

Step 5: Evaluate the solution.

After you determine that you have given your solution a reasonable amount of time to work, evaluate it. To what extent did it help you to overcome your learning difficulty? If it worked well, keep it in mind for similar situations in the future. If it did not work well, try another solution. For example, if the solution you selected in Step 3 was to do additional reading in other textbooks and it did not help you, you should consider another solution such as asking for help from a peer or a subject matter expert.

Information Tip

Enrolled Excelsior College students have access to MyExcelsior Community.

Appendix H

Summary of Holmes’ Overview of *Ethics of Ambiguity*

The following summary replaces a short reading contained in the second edition of Holmes’ **Basic Moral Philosophy* but not included in the later editions of his book. If possible, obtain a copy of the second edition from a library and read these sections. You might also search the Internet to locate information on existentialism, particularly information relevant to the first two objectives of Course Guide Session 11.

13.4 Existentialist Ethics

Holmes introduces this section by pointing out the important role in existentialist ethics of individual choice in concrete situations. Unlike traditional views of morality, existentialist ethics rejects the notion of absolute moral laws, and, in fact, in some forms, it rejects religious-based ethics altogether. Therefore, existentialists must find “moral significance” without the aid of the traditional justifications of moral behavior, including religion.

According to Holmes, Simone de Beauvoir, in her *Ethics of Ambiguity*, distinguishes between two kinds of freedom: free will and creative freedom. The first type refers to the ability to make choices about what you do. This type of freedom is inescapable. However, you may or may not decide to choose creative freedom. If you choose not seek creative freedom, you will “deprive yourself of authentic, meaningful existence.” Holmes explains creative freedom by pointing out that during childhood your parents, religious leaders, or society impose values on you and expect you to live within their constraints. He refers to this as an “infantile world” and suggests that some people never leave it. However, during adolescence you typically begin to question and perhaps challenge these values as you learn that things are not as fixed and unchanging as you had been taught. (Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

According to Holmes, this moment is crucial because you can either choose to accept or deny your freedom. You may decide to choose a life of “self-deception” and cling to the values of society you experienced during your childhood and delude yourself into thinking that they are absolute. De Beauvoir refers to this as the “outlook of the serious,” a view lacking in authenticity, for it permits you to extend your infantile life into adulthood. However, you can avoid inauthenticity by choosing freedom.

13.5 Freedom, The Supreme End

Existentialists value freedom above all. Choosing freedom means that you will not accept the ready-made values of your childhood. You must “define your own ends in the course of living” rather than receiving them from others. According to Holmes:

Only in this way can you give significance to moral endeavors. Value must be *given* to life, which has none otherwise. Values must be *created*. They do not pre-exist. And it is human beings who must do this.

Holmes ends this section on freedom by pointing out the difficulty existentialists face in justifying their approach, for they cannot rely on the traditional justifications of morality. By definition, existentialists reject these. Holmes suggests that this version of existentialism needs “elaboration and perhaps qualification before it provides a wholly particularistic alternative to moral legalism.”

*Holmes, R.L. (1998). *Basic moral philosophy* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

Index of Key Terms

| Key Terms | Session Number | Key Terms | Session Number |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Absolute Rights | 13 | Divine Command Theory | 9, 4 |
| Act Utilitarianism | 5 | Dominance | 19 |
| Active Euthanasia | 16 | Double Effect | 1 |
| Actual Duty | 6 | Ecocentrism (bio-centrism) | 17 |
| Affirmative Action | 20 | Emotivism | 3 |
| Anthropocentrism | 17 | Empirical Theory | 10 |
| Argument | 1 | Empowerment | 19 |
| Assumption | 1 | Entitlement | 4 |
| Autonomy | 6, 14 | Equality | 19 |
| Axiological Theories | 4 | Ethical Absolutism | 2 |
| Beneficence | 6 | Ethical Egoism | 10 |
| Categorical | 6 | Ethical Relativism | 2 |
| Categorical Imperative | 6 | Ethical Universalism | 2 |
| Character | 7 | Ethics of Care | 8 |
| Coercion | 14 | Eudaemonia | 7 |
| Cognitivism | 3 | Fair Opportunity | 12 |
| Communitarianism | 8 | False Dilemma | 1 |
| Concept of a Person | 15 | Formal Principle of Justice | 12 |
| Consent | 18 | Free Speech | 21 |
| Consequences | 5 | Friendship | 18 |
| Consequentialist Theories | 4 | Genealogy of Morals | 11 |
| Contractarianism | 3 | God | 9 |
| Conventional Rights | 13 | Good Samaritan | 15 |
| Correlativity Thesis | 13 | Hate Speech | 21 |
| Counter Example | 1 | Hedonism | 5 |
| Cultural Relativism | 2 | Hypothetical Imperative | 6 |
| Debts | 18 | Impartiality | 12 |
| Deontic | 4 | Informed Consent | 14 |
| Deontological Theories | 1, 4 | Instrumental | 17 |
| Desert | 20, 12 | Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value | 5 |
| Direct Killing | 15 | Intuitionism | 3 |
| Discrimination | 19 | Justice | 20 |
| Distributive Justice | 12 | Justification | 3 |

| Key Terms | Session Number | Key Terms | Session Number |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Justice as Fairness | 6 | Premise | 1 |
| Kantianism | 6 | Prima Facie Duty | 6 |
| Land Ethic (eco-holism) | 17 | Principle of Utility | 5 |
| Legal Moralism | 14 | Principles of Justice | 12 |
| Liberty | 14 | Procedural Justice | 12 |
| Maxim | 6 | Psychological Egoism | 10 |
| The Mean | 7 | Rancor and Resentment | 11 |
| Metaethics | 1 | Respect for Persons | 6 |
| Moral Antirealism | 3 | Retributive Justice | 12 |
| Moral Conservatism | 8 | Reverse Discrimination | 20 |
| Moral Legalism | 4 | Rights | 13, 15 |
| Moral Particularism | 4 | Ring of Gyges | 10 |
| Moral Realism | 3 | Roe v. Wade | 15 |
| Moral Status of the Fetus | 15 | Rule Utilitarianism | 5 |
| Motivation | 7 | Self-defense | 15 |
| Multiculturalism | 21 | Sentience | 17 |
| Natural Rights | 13 | Slippery Slope | 1 |
| Naturalism | 3 | Social Utility | 20 |
| Naturalistic Fallacy | 2, 5 | Soul | 7 |
| Negative Rights | 13 | Speciesism | 17 |
| Noble and Slave Ethics | 11 | Straw Man | 1 |
| Noncognitivism | 3 | Subjectivist | 2 |
| Nonconsequentialist Theories | 4 | Symbolic Expression | 21 |
| Nonmaleficence | 6 | Sympathy | 8 |
| Nonnormative Approaches | 1 | Teleological | 7 |
| Normative Ethics | 1 | The Original Position | 6, 12 |
| Objectivist | 2 | The Veil of Ignorance | 6, 12 |
| Obligations | 13 | Universalizability | 12 |
| Offense Principle | 14 | Unnatural | 18 |
| Open Question Argument | 3 | Utilitarianism | 1, 5 |
| Passive Euthanasia | 16 | Value | 4 |
| Paternalism | 14 | Virtue | 7, 8 |
| Positive Rights | 13 | Virtue Ethics | 1 |
| Practice | 8 | | |

