


SCIENCE

Ethics



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Contemporary dilemmas

- Plagiarism
- Drink driving
- Recreational drugs
- Tax evasion
- Capital punishment
- Corporal punishment
- Euthanasia
- Genetic selection
- Abortion
- Stem cell research
- Cloning
- Genetically modified foods

What is

- your personal stance?
- your profession's stance?
- society's stance?

Based on what?

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Philosophically,

What makes an act right or wrong, good or bad?

People have long sought to find **moral** codes and principles that would help society flourish!

Early **ethics** founded on "reciprocity" [the Golden rule]

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?"
"Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you"

Morality entangled with **religion** and/or elevated to **laws**

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Behavioural rules

Values	Morals	Ethics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personal standards, beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - define personal character - principles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - right/wrong - good/bad - etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social system of beliefs/rules adopted by group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medical ethics - business ethics - military ethics - etc
<p>how you 'treat' yourself</p>	<p>how you 'treat' people you know</p>	<p>how you 'treat' people you don't know</p>

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Values, Morals, Ethics

Values are standards on which we make decisions

- n : beliefs of a person which they have an emotional investment (either for or against something)

Morals are how we judge others based on our perception of right/wrong, good/bad, etc

- n : motivation based on ideas of right and wrong

Ethics are professional standards codified into a formal system of moral values; rules/standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession

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Questions

Who's views do you hold?

Influenced primarily by:

- proximity (esp. 'family')
- 'belonging' (social culture)

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Anthropological associations

(Morris 2015 NS 3017:28)

Three broad systems of values (e.g. fairness and justice related to eras defined by sociology and energy capture)

1. Foraging values (<10,000 BC)
 'fair' world (everyone treated similarly, no rich/powerful (no time/place to stockpile wealth)
 [dissenters: met with mockery, ostracism, violence]
2. Farming values (>10,000 BC)
 'unfair' world (different individuals treated differently, wise/rich/powerful/royalty/slavery/gender inequality)
 (complex division of labour, sedentary existence, stockpile surplus
 [dissenters: resisting authority punished]
3. Fossil-fuel values (>1,800 AD)
 move back to liberalization 'fair' world
 (democracy/free markets/socialism/feminism)
 (need affluent middle-class as consumers of excess)
 [dissenters: economic/sociological punitive measures, violence]

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Questions

What sort of person are you?

Define yourself in three words (think deeply)!

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Questions

Are moral/ethical codes:

- Black and white? Fixed in stone? Unchanging?
- Flexible? Variable? Continually evolving?

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The difference between morals and ethics can be subtle

Morals define personal character, while ethics point to standards or codes of behaviour expected by a group (family, community, society, state, company, etc)

While a person's moral code is usually unchanging, the ethics practiced can vary.

Consider a criminal defence lawyer

Though a lawyer's personal moral code likely finds murder immoral, ethics demand the accused client be defended as vigorously as possible (even when the lawyer may know the party is guilty and that a freed defendant may potentially lead to more crime).

Legal ethics must override personal morals for the greater good of upholding a justice system in which the accused are given a fair trial and the prosecution must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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Is it about:

- YOU?
- THEM?
- EVERYONE?

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Be prepared to:

- hear alternative views
- respect others
- accommodate change

Evidence-based science
 Thoughtful introspection

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Questions

How do you study ethics?

AGENT - ACT - OUTCOME

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ETHICS

Ethics (sometimes known as moral philosophy) involves systematizing, recommending and defending concepts of right and wrong conduct

May be divided into three major areas of study:

- **Meta-ethics**, investigates source or basis of morality, including such questions as whether it is essentially objective or subjective
- **Normative ethics**, focuses on ethical standards (or norms) on which moral conduct is based
- **Applied ethics**, brings philosophical theory to bear on practical issues in specific situations

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META-ETHICS

Meta-ethics asks how we understand, know and define what is right and what is wrong

An ethical question fixed on some particular practical question cannot be a meta-ethical question

(e.g. "Should I eat this particular piece of chocolate cake?")

A meta-ethical question is abstract and relates to a wide range of more specific practical questions

(e.g. "Is it possible to ever know what is right and wrong?")

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NORMATIVE ETHICS

Practical means of determining a moral course of action

Moral worth judged on:

- **Consequentialism** - **outcome** (but separates agent-act-consequences)
- **Utilitarianism** - **outcome** (greatest happiness, hedonism)
- **Virtue ethics** - **temperament of agent** (apply 'virtues') (courage, justice, temperance, intelligence)
- **Deontology** - **act itself** (rules, duties) (thou shalt not ...!)

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APPLIED ETHICS

Specific applications to everyday life (personal, professional, societal)

- legal ethics
- bioethics
- medical ethics
- business ethics
- relational ethics
- military ethics
- political ethics
- public sector ethics
- publication ethics



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MEDICAL ETHICS

A common framework is the "four principles" approach (Beauchamp & Childress)

Recognizes four basic moral principles, which are to be judged and weighed against each other, with attention given to the scope of their application.

- **Autonomy** (patient has right to refuse/choose treatment)
- **Beneficence** (practitioner to act in best interest of patient)
- **Non-maleficence** ("first, do no harm")
- **Justice** (fairness in deciding who gets what treatment)

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