

Summer 2018 Introduction to Philosophical Ethics

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Available here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UrBcOVSSoWZ537ugkS7IkrijsVBZ7u2ySYbF0H6y6-4/edit?usp=sharing>

Intro to Philosophical Ethics - 42527 - HPHI 302G - 01

Associated Term: Summer 2018

Levels: Undergraduate

Morehouse College Campus

Lecture Schedule Type

3.000 Credits

[View Catalog Entry](#)

Type	Time	Days	Where	Date Range	Schedule Type	Instructors
Class	10:30 am - 11:50 am	MTW RF	Brawley Hall 206	Jun 05, 2018 - Jul 13, 2018	Lecture	Nathan M. Nobis (P) 

Syllabus Contents (click for link to below)

Instructor	2
Materials	2
Description, Goals & Objectives	2
Assignments & Grading	4
Calendar - Readings and Assignments	6
Email	6
In Class Notes	7
For Thursday:	10

Summer 2018 Introduction to Philosophical Ethics

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Tuesday's assignment, on homosexuality, 6/12; due by Tuesday's class:	13
Notes from 6/12	15
For Wednesday's assignment,	16
Thursday's assignment, on relativism:	17
For Monday: female circumcision / genital mutilation and male circumcision, and polyamory	21
For Tuesday: review topics from yesterday, and please email a list of topics from the syllabus, and the links, that you'd like to make sure we address	22
For Wednesday, poverty	22
Midterm review exam	22
Feedback on topics of interest:	24
Drugs:	26
Abortion	27
Eating animals.	28
FINAL PROJECTS	28
These are notes from the 2017 class .. to be deleted, eventually	33

Instructor

Nathan Nobis, Ph.D., www.NathanNobis.com; nathan.nobis@morehouse.edu;
404-825-1740 cell (text first, please)

Materials

- All online or instructor-provided handouts; free:
 - Nathan Nobis & Scott McElreath, *Making Moral Progress: An Ethical Arguments Workbook* (in progress; free):
<http://www.MakingMoralProgress.com>
 - An overview of the typical process we will use in finding and evaluating arguments:
<http://www.nathannobis.com/2018/05/introduction-to-ethics.html>
 - Various online and emailed materials, many from *1000-Word Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*: <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/>

Description, Goals & Objectives

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION: Provides an introduction to philosophical reflection about the nature and function of morality. Readings will include both historical and contemporary materials.

EXTENDED COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides students with the opportunity to improve their skills at reasoning critically about moral issues. Students will learn some basic logical concepts and *argument analysis skills* and apply them to theoretical and practical questions about morality. We will practice identifying clear and precise moral conclusions and the premises, or reasons, given in their favor and apply our argument analysis skills to moral issues such as the treatment of disabled newborns, genital mutilation, sexual ethics, homosexuality, abortion, absolute poverty, racism and race-related ethical issues, sexism, and speciesism, drug use and the criminalization of drug use, vegetarianism and the treatment of animals, environmentalism, euthanasia and assisted suicide, and capital punishment, ethics and course grades (and extra credit), among others.

[some additional topics of special interest to college students here:

<http://www.nathannobis.com/2017/05/college-ethics.html> ;

some race-related topics here:

<http://www.nathannobis.com/2017/08/race-related-controversial-ethical.html>].

We will practice finding reasons given for and against various conclusions about these topics and trying to see if these reasons provide strong support for these conclusions or not. We will think about what helps people think more carefully and critically about moral issues and what factors and influences discourage this.

PREREQUISITES:

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. However, students will benefit most from the course when they enter it with the abilities to:

- **read** critically and identify the structure and components of an argumentative essay or passage, i.e., the conclusion(s), the premises(s) or supporting elements, and so forth;
- **write** clear, concise and simple grammatical, spelling-error-free sentences and well-organized expository and argumentative essays, as taught in Introductory English courses;
- **speak** clearly, concisely, and grammatically.
- Basic **mathematical and scientific literacy** is desirable.
- **Familiarity** with moral issues, common positions taken on them and reasons given in favor of these positions is desirable, since we will build on any previous understanding.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Intellectual and moral virtues, such as curiosity, patience, and openness to the possibility of error and the need for change, are desirable as well.

A general goal is to improve students' abilities to communicate about controversial issues: accurately state views and arguments, responsibly raise and respond to questions and criticisms, and communicate in clear, well-organized and effective ways.

Objectives:

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to use the set of *argument analysis skills* below to identify and evaluate moral arguments:

- a. identify whether any presentation is "morally argumentative" or not, i.e., whether it presents an argument for a moral conclusion on a moral issue or not;
- b. identify **conclusions** of morally argumentative presentations, evaluate these conclusions for clarity and precision, and (if needed) reconstruct / restate the conclusion in clear and precise terms;
- c. identify stated **premises or reasons** in morally argumentative presentations, evaluate these conclusions for clarity and precision, and (if needed) reconstruct / restate these premises in clear and precise terms;
- d. identify (if needed) **unstated premises** in argumentative presentations that are logically essential to the structure of an argument and state them as part of the argument in clear and precise terms;
- e. identify and distinguish factual/empirical/scientific and moral/philosophical premises in moral arguments;
- f. evaluate moral arguments as (1) **logically valid or logically invalid** and (2) **sound or unsound** (i.e., logically valid with true premises, or not).
- g. identify and explain reasons given to think an argument is sound, reasons to think it is unsound (often using **counterexamples** to general moral premises), and responses to these reasons.

Students will be able to accurately explain historically influential moral theories and common arguments against them, in light of their *implications, explanatory power* and *theoretical virtues and vices*.

Students will be able to accurately explain (in essays and oral presentations) the most common arguments given on a number of controversial moral issues, from a variety of perspectives, and criticisms of these arguments. Students will be better able to evaluate their own moral views and create their own moral arguments.

Assignments & Grading

We have about 25 class meetings. There will be 10 assignments (at 10 points each) and two

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

tests (at 20 points each). **All work will be due to Blackboard, on time.**

Attendance will be taken and unexcused absences will affect grades.

The typical assignment for the class is this:

Common Assignment

The typical assignment in this class will involve working through at least five arguments on a moral issue, using this process below:

1. Is this a controversial **topic** or **issue**? If yes, excellent. If no, is there a controversial topic or issue that's related?
2. What are the relevant **facts** about the topic? What's the relevant **information** about the issue?
3. What are the various moral **conclusions** one might hold on that topic?
 - a. Doing this is **wrong**.
 - b. Doing this is **not wrong**. (Not wrong = **morally permissible**.)
 - c. Doing this is **morally obligatory** = wrong to not do; impermissible to do).
 - i. **MORE PRECISE CONCLUSIONS**: All? Some? (which?)
 - ii. Sometimes wrong? Always permissible? Sometimes obligatory?
4. What **reasons** or **premises** are or can be given for these conclusions? What's "the why"? ("Why think that?") ("What do you mean?")
5. How do you make the argument **logically valid**, meaning make the complete pattern of reasoning explicit? What (if any) premises need to be added?
6. Is the argument **sound** or not (sound = logically valid with true premises)? Are the premises true? Are there any counterexamples that show that a general premise is false?

This project can be done in a number of ways:

1. Papers or reports of varying lengths and for differing purposes.
 - a. Letter to editor
 - b. Critical responses paper or commentary of some kind... (This could also be done as a talk, a presentation, in person or in video or audio).
2. Youtube talk; oral presentation; video lecture.
3. Lead a discussion or give a talk to a real audience, report on what happened
4. Narrated powerpoint
5. Create a blog / webpage on a topic
6. A debate! Report on what happened.
7. An interview project: Random people; people you know; go to some organization.

Summer 2018 Introduction to Philosophical Ethics

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

8. A scientific poster..
9. You could find some kind of person or organization that does some morally significant activity and go meet with them and report back.
10. What else?

A worksheet to use for these assignments is here:

<http://www.makingmoralprogress.com/p/worksheet.html>

Calendar - Readings and Assignments

Morehouse calendar: <http://www.morehouse.edu/academics/calendar/index.html>

June 2018

- 5 First day of Summer Classes
- 8 End of Add/Drop
- 9 Withdrawal/ Period begins
- 20 - 23 Midterm Examinations
- 29 Last day to withdraw

July 2018

- 4 Wednesday, Independence Day/ No classes
- 6 Friday, Last day of summer classes; Reading Period
- 11 - 13 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) Final Examinations; Summer term ends
- 17 All grades due in the Office of the Registrar by noon

Please see here for a Google calendar of reading and writing assignments; these will also be posted in Blackboard when a written assignment is due:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar?cid=dmxrcGdubDFybGo4dWU5MzRzbG1mbWl2azRAZ3JvdXAuY2FsZW5kYXIuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbQ>

Email

Email announcements will be sent to Blackboard. Check that at least daily. If you do not regularly check whatever email address Blackboard has on file, please set up an auto-forward so you receive emails at whatever address you regularly check.

Summer 2018 Introduction to Philosophical Ethics

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

In Class Notes

Tuesday, June 5.

How do you figure out if an action is wrong?

- Need to know what's not wrong, to compare. Need a measuring stick.
- If anyone or anybody is negatively impacted.
- The consequences or the negative reactions of other people.
- Your beliefs, the way you were raised, etc. [How do you tell whether your beliefs about what's wrong are correct or not?]
- Compare it to your beliefs. [How do you tell whether your beliefs about what's wrong are correct or not?]

Read these on moral theories:

Introduction to Consequentialism by Shane Gronholz

Introduction to Deontology: Kantian Ethics by Andrew Chapman

Because God Says So: On Divine Command Theory by Spencer Case

Make lists:

1. **Actions that you think most people would think are pretty obviously wrong. Vivid, extreme and specific examples are good. Historical, contemporary, or made up. Fairly uncontroversial cases or examples.**

Sex trafficking

Murder = e.g., killing someone to get some shoes or a phone..

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Genocide

Lynchings

Rape

Slavery

Jim Crow

Not allowing women the right to vote

Giving people the wrong directions

Throwing big rocks off highway overpasses

Throwing acid in people's faces ..

Taking advantage of poor or elderly people

Arson

Stealing.. When you really really don't have to.

Wrongful imprisonment..

Kidnapping..

Assassination of MLK and other good people

Improper disposal of toxic waste: environmental racism

Certain types of animal cruelty.

- 2. Actions that you think most people would think are pretty obviously NOT wrong (permissible, obligatory, or just good actions). Vivid, extreme and specific examples are good. Historical, contemporary, or made up. Fairly uncontroversial cases or examples.**

Contributing to (good) charities, Foreign aid, Food pantries

Opening the door for an elderly person

Talking someone out of suicide (usually)

- 3. Anything that comes to mind that doesn't fit these categories, put it in a new list.**

Buying from a store? ..

The actions that we thought were typically wrong are wrong because:

- They are harmful (to other forms of life).

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

- They brought senseless pain.
- They are mean spirited.
- They don't bring positive effects.
- They rob someone of opportunities.
- They unnecessarily damage something or someone.

The actions that we thought were typically not wrong are not wrong because:

Well, they're not wrong. They are none of the above.

They make someone feel better.

They have positive consequences for someone.

Provide an an opportunity for a better life.

Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do*: Ch.1 “A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy,” available here , and focus on the last half: :

<http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/rachels-intro-to-ethics.pdf>

Utilitarianism

Utilitarians hold that there is one principle that sums up all our moral duties. The ultimate moral principle is that *we should always do whatever will produce the greatest possible balance of happiness over unhappiness for everyone who will be affected by our action*. This “principle of utility” is deceptively simple. It is actually a combination of three ideas: First, in determining what to do, we should be guided by the expected

Kant's ethics:

Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

For Thursday:

read this: Ch. 1, "What is Morality?" (*Elements of Moral Philosophy, EMP*):

https://docs.google.com/open?id=1QyhpT1ZUBT00Uk5A0btYfBfXwc36UNS9NxktM9T1O_KwZSo_vIjD9X_yLVbM

Think about how you would explain the facts and the arguments about the cases, using this type of worksheet:

<http://www.makingmoralprogress.com/p/worksheet.html>

EMP Ch. 1 Notes

Discussion of Rachels *Elements of Moral Philosophy* Ch. 1

What is it to ‘Think Morally’?

“Morality is ...”

Someone is “thinking morally” or engaged in “moral thinking” when:

- (1) one is guiding one’s thought by reasons – the best reasons – and
- (2) one gives equal weight to each individual who is affected by one’s actions.

Re. (1): *reasons* include (scientific, empirical) facts and moral principles.

Facts

+

Moral Principles

=

What to Do?

Case 1: Baby Theresa L

- What’s her situation?
- What did her parents want to do? What were their reasons?

The parents' argument:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

(3) If, by doing some action X, we can (a) benefit someone without (b) harming anyone, then action X is morally permissible. T?

(4) By taking Theresa's organs we can (a) benefit others and (b) not **harm** anyone. T

(5) So, killing her and taking Teresa's organs is morally permissible.

To harm someone = is to make them *worse off, in some way*, compared to how they were.

Is this arguments sound or not?

· What did “the critics” say” (p. 2)

(6) “It's too horrifying to use people as means to other people's ends.”

(7) “It's unethical to kill in order to save, unethical to kill person A to save person B.”

(8) “The parents are saying we should kill the baby to use the organs. That's horrendous!

These remarks are the basis of arguments. Are these arguments sound or not? If any of them are, then argument (3)-(5) is not sound.

Re. Remark (6):

(A) If someone is used as a **mere means** to another's end, then that is wrong.

(B) Taking Teresa's organs would be to use her as a **mere means**.

(C) So, it would be wrong to take her organs.

If you are not providing information *that if the person had, they would agree to it, then that would not be using someone as a mere means.

If you are deliberately lying, then mere means.

If you are not telling the truth BUT the truth is something the person wouldn't agree to.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true? (Are they somehow ambiguous or imprecise?)

Re. Remark (7):

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

(D) If person A is killed to save person B, then that's prima facie wrong.

(E) To kill Teresa would be to kill her to save others.

(F) Therefore, it's wrong to kill Teresa.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true? (Are they somehow ambiguous or imprecise?)

Re. Remark (8): ?

Case 2: Jodie and Mary

· What's their situation? What did her parents want to do? What did the hospital want to do? What were their reasons?

“Whose to decide?!” Asking this kind of question is often a way to avoid thinking about which arguments are best. (Also, it's often unwise to ask rhetorical questions, since there might be good answer to them).

An argument:

(G) If we have a choice between saving one infant and letting both die, we should save one.

(H) We have such a choice.

(I) So we should save one.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true?

Some critics say:

The parents didn't want them separated. T

Anything parents want to happen should happen. F

C; They shouldn't have been separated.

(J) If someone is an 'innocent human life', then they **should never be killed**.

(K) Mary is an innocent human life.

(L) Therefore, Mary should not be killed.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true?

3rd Case: Tracy Latimer

- What's her situation? (We need to think about the details..)
 - What did her parents want to do? What were their reasons?
-
1. If someone is terminally ill and horribly suffering and is in intense pain AND has been that way their entire life and there's no chance of recovery AND caring people think the person might be better off dead given their condition, then it might be permissible to kill that someone.
 2. Tracey was like all that...
 3. Killing her was MP.
-
- What did their critics say?

Take note of:

- Feelings
- Require reasons
- Getting one's (non-moral) facts straight: checking up on the empirical / scientific evidence
- Impartiality: differences in treatment are justified only by relevant differences in the person/being and in light of general moral principles; otherwise these are unjustified prejudices.

Tuesday's assignment, on homosexuality, 6/12; due by Tuesday's class:

1. Look at these materials here, in particular, **carefully watch the video on syllogisms, and take notes on it, to submit to Blackboard.**
<http://www.nathannobis.com/2018/05/introduction-to-ethics.html>

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

2. Watch at least this video on homosexuality, by John Corvino,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iXA_0MED98&t=1s
3. There are many arguments in the video. State them **all** in logically valid, premise-conclusion format, and explain whether they are sound or not and why (this involves explaining whether each and every premise is true or false and why) up using this template"; submit this to Blackboard:

This worksheet below provides a step by step process for finding, developing and evaluating moral arguments.

[Download in Word](#). Download in [Google Docs](#).

1. What do you mean, *your topic*?

In this section, explain what the issue is, and explain what any unclear terms **mean** (or, at least, how you are going to use the terms: e.g., what do you mean by 'an abortion'? What is 'absolute poverty'? What do you mean by 'homosexuality'? etc. Here we basically want an explanation what the issue is and the relevant facts and information.

How to find these? Reflect on your own observations, talk to fellow students, ask (random) people - interview them just about anywhere, do some internet research using any sources, do some internet research using philosophical sources, etc.

How many reasons to find? This depends on your purpose or your assignment. Maybe the top three would do. Maybe 5-10? Should you focus on common reasons, or ones that philosophers focus on? Again that depends on your purpose or assignment.

2. State the relevant *conclusions* on the topic, for example:

- a. Doing X is wrong.
- b. Doing X is not wrong.
- c. Doing X is *prima facie* wrong.
- d. Doing X is wrong *in these specified circumstances*...e.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Whatever conclusions are needed, given the goal of having precise conclusions.

3. Why think that? State the reasons or premises people give, or might give, in favor of these various conclusions.

4. Identify any question **begging premises at this point: strike those arguments.**

5. Formulate the arguments in **logically valid form. (Strike any arguments that are irreparably logically **invalid** also).**

How many arguments? Again, it depends on your purpose.

6. Evaluate each argument as **sound (= logically valid and with true or reasonable premises) or not and why.**

7. Tentative conclusions. This might be about just one argument, some of the most common or popular arguments, or broader conclusions, depending on how many arguments you evaluated.

Notes from 6/12

Talked about these <http://www.nathannobis.com/2017/03/simple-arguments.html>

“Homosexuality is wrong.” What do you mean? WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR REASONS WHY ANYONE WOULD THINK THIS.

- Homosexual sex is wrong. (actions or behaviors)
- Homosexual sexual orientation are wrong. (feelings / desires / wants, etc.)
- Intimate (?) romantic-ish (?) relationships between people of the same sex are wrong.
- Being of a certain stereotype is wrong.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Relationships make people happy.

Some people are or would be happy only in homosexual relationships. T

This is permissible UNLESS there is some good reason to think it's wrong.

“Homosexuality is not wrong.”

For Wednesday's assignment,

take a look at some of these arguments and add the premise(s) to make the logically valid, and explain whether they are sound or not:

Common Arguments on Homosexuality “Mad Libs” Worksheet, available here:

<http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/homosexuality-arguments.doc>

<http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/homosexuality-arguments.pdf>

Turn in on Blackboard.

Homosexuals can't reproduce.

Therefore, homosexuality is wrong.

P1. People can't reproduce by having homosexual sex. T

P2. If a sexual action is not one anyone can reproduce from, then that action is wrong. = All non-reproductive sexual actions are wrong. F

C1. Homosexual sex is wrong.

P4. Homosexuals can't reproduce: people with a homosexual sexual orientation can't reproduce. F

P4. If an orientation (or “lifestyle”) prevents one from reproducing, then that orientation or lifestyle is wrong. F

C2. Being homosexual is wrong: having a homosexual sexual orientation is wrong.

A. Homosexuals have an increased risk of disease. ???

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

- B. If an action increases your risk of disease, then it's wrong. F??
- C. Therefore, homosexual sex is wrong.

Therefore, **homosexuality is wrong** because:

- 1.
2. Homosexuality is a choice. *Any choice is wrong = if someone chooses to do something, or be some way, then that is a wrong choice. F F F!!*
 - a. *[Choosing to] Have H sex is wrong, because it's wrong to choose to have homosexual sex.*
3. Homosexuality produces mental illness. = Any one who has mental illness is wrong. If a way of being leads to mental illness (such as depression) then, it's wrong to be that way.
4. Homosexuals are targets of hate crimes. Any group of people who are targets of hate crimes are doing wrong.
5. Homosexuality is gross. If an action is considered gross by somebody, then it is wrong.
6. Homosexuality contributes to a break in the family institution. Depends? .. Any action that does that is wrong. No, not necessarily.

Thursday's assignment, on relativism:

1. Read this page on 'relativism' from Rachels' "A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy". Two questions: what is this view called relativism? Second, what are the arguments against it?

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Relativism

Perhaps the oldest philosophical theory about morality is that right and wrong are relative to the customs of one's society—on this view, there is nothing behind the demands of morality except social convention. Herodotus, the first of the great Greek historians, lived at about the time of Socrates. His *History* is full of wonderful anecdotes that illustrate his belief that "right" and "wrong" are little more than names for social conventions. Of the Massagetae, a tribe in Central Asia, he writes:

The following are some of their customs—Each man has but one wife, yet all the wives are held in common . . . Human life does not come to its natural close with these people; but when a man grows very old, all his kinsfolk collect together and offer him up in sacrifice; offering at the same time some cattle also. After the sacrifice they boil the flesh and feast on it; and those who thus end their days are reckoned the happiest. If a man dies of disease they do not eat him, but bury him in the ground, bewailing his ill-fortune that he did not come to be sacrificed. They sow no grain, but live on their herds, and on fish, of which there is great plenty in the Araxes. Milk is what they chiefly drink. The only god they worship is the sun, and to him they offer the horse in sacrifice; under the notion of giving the swiftest of the gods the swiftest of all mortal creatures.

Herodotus did not think the Massagetae were to be criticized for such practices. Their customs were neither better nor worse than those of other peoples; they were merely different. The Greeks, who considered

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

themselves more "civilized," may have thought that their customs were superior, but, Herodotus says, that is only because everyone believes the customs of his own society to be the best. The "truth" depends on one's point of view—that is, on the society in which one happens to have been raised.

Relativists think that Herodotus was obviously on to something and that those who believe in "objective" right and wrong are merely naive. Critics, however, object to the theory on a number of grounds. First, it is exceedingly conservative, in that the theory endorses whatever moral views happen to be current in a society. Consider our own society. Many people believe that our society's moral code is mistaken, at least on some points—for example, they may disagree with the dominant social view regarding capital punishment, or homosexuality, or the treatment of nonhuman animals. Must we conclude that these would-be reformers are wrong, merely because they oppose the majority view? Why must the majority always be right?

But there is a deeper problem with Relativism, emphasized by Socrates. Some social customs are, indeed, merely arbitrary, and when these customs are at issue it is fruitless to insist that one society's practices are better than another's. Funerary practices are a good example. The Greeks burned their dead, while the Callatians ate their dead, but neither practice is better than the other. However, it does not follow from this that *all* social practices are arbitrary in the same way. Some are, and some are not. The Greeks and the Callatians were free to accept whatever funerary practices they liked because no objective reason could be given why one practice was superior to the other. In the case of other practices, however, there may be good reasons why some are superior. It is not hard, for example, to explain why honesty and respect for human life are socially desirable, and similarly it is not hard to explain why slavery and racism are undesirable. Because we can support our judgments about these matters with rational arguments, we do not have to regard those judgments as "merely" the expression of our particular society's moral code.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

2. Read this NY Times essay by Justin McBrayer: **Why Our Children Don't Think There Are Moral Facts**

Also available here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Lnhy74P4Jj0c6ZFqVnun-cIpwTK5ViqRDvZqtXS7AHk/edit?usp=sharing>

What is relativism?

Suppose someone says this, “**Hey, that’s their culture, so don’t criticize; don’t complain; that’s their tradition, etc. and so what they are doing is not wrong.**”

People might say this because they accept the moral theory called relativism.

Relativism = If the majority of people in some society think that some action X is wrong, then action X is wrong, in that society.

= If the majority of people in some society think that some action X is NOT wrong, then action X is NOT wrong, in that society.

= The majority’s view are always correct, in some society.

One observation - People believing things doesn’t *make* those things true.

A few arguments against Relativism:

1. If relativism were correct, then anyone who criticizes their own society is mistaken, because they are not in the majority, and so R says they are mistaken. But people with minority views are sometimes correct. So R is false.
2. If relativism were correct, then any action done with the endorsement of the majority in a society is always correct. But the majority can endorse wrong actions. So R is false.
3. If relativism were correct, then there really can’t be progress in society, that is, things getting objectively better.

There is a difference between some **believing** some claim to be true and that claim really **being true**.

Examples to illustrate people saying this (some might be good examples where the action is wrong):

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

feet binding, child labor, one child policy, FGM, “extreme” punishments for minor crimes (e.g., spitting, spitting out your gum), North Korea, slavery, chicken fighting / dog fighting, marriage practices (especially concerning very young girls);

Examples to illustrate people saying this (where people say this, but the action isn't wrong, just different):

putting those plates in your lip [it might be that this is just different, not wrong];

When people think something, they can either have reasons or not. If people think that something is wrong, they can either have reasons or not.

Sometimes people and cultures merely do things differently, but there really isn't a good reason to think that what they are doing is wrong: it's just different.

If not relativism then what? Utilitarianism; Kant's ethics; or how about just a general idea of this?

If those affected by an action tend to be harmed by it, that action would tend to be wrong.

If those affected by an action tend to benefit from it, that action would tend to be not wrong.

Individual relativism =

If someone thinks it's OK for them to do X, then it's OK for them to do X: it's not wrong.

For Monday: **female circumcision / genital mutilation and male circumcision, and polyamoury**

Topics: female circumcision / genital mutilation and male circumcision, and polyamoury ... These will some applications of the theory of relativism..

- **First just Google these topics (female circumcision / genital mutilation; ethics and male circumcision; ethics and polyamoury, ethics and monogamy) , to see what you see.**

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

- Next read these:

- "What's Culture Got to do with it?" from the Harvard Law Review. "What's Culture Got to Do with it? Excising the Harmful Tradition of Female Circumcision"
- Boys and girls alike: An un-consenting child, an unnecessary, invasive surgery: is there any moral difference between male and female circumcision?
<https://aeon.co/essays/are-male-and-female-circumcision-morally-equivalent>
- Whatever you find on polyamory and monogamy. (NN will try to find something good)
- Writing Assignment:
 - please write up the arguments *in favor of FGM* from the Harvard Law review article in logically valid form;
 - informally explain the arguments from the article on male circumcision: basically, what's the issue?;
 - what arguments did you find for or against polyamory and/or monogamy?

For Tuesday: review topics from yesterday, and please email a list of topics from the syllabus, and the links, that you'd like to make sure we address

For Wednesday, poverty

watch these videos and look at these links and read the Singer Solution to World Poverty, at least: <http://www.nathannobis.com/2013/11/effective-altruism.html>

Some of what we used about this topic: **POVERTY:** [argument worksheet](#), a [Powerpoint](#) and . And a [Peter Singer video clip](#).

Midterm review exam

For your midterm take-home exam, I would like you to *review* what we have done so far, and reflect on what we have done so far, since what we have done so far serves as a foundation for future topics of discussion. So I would like you to develop a document that clearly answers these questions, asked by someone who has no clue what we've done in this class:

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

"What have you learned about so far in Ethics class?"

"What's most interesting and important?"

(Also, if there are any other questions you want this person to ask you, then ask and answer those questions! :)

So, your goal is basically to teach the material to someone else: review it for them. Whatever format you do, it's gotta be written up in a manner that someone else could read or view it and learn a lot from it.

So, for all the below, I would like you to (a) explain the concepts, theories or arguments - using only notes and course materials (so DO NOT seek outside sources: look above on the syllabus for everything you need) and (b) when relevant, develop your own examples to explain the concepts.

So here is what you will need to review and explain:

- Logic & Basic Concepts
 - MP, MO, MW (not 'right')
 - Concepts of arguments = conclusions, premises (make up an example?)
 - Logical Validity (make up an example?)
 - Sound argument (make up an example?)
 - Prima facie .. (make up an example?)
 - Begging the question (make up an example?)
 - Why think that? What do you mean? (examples? Why important?)
 - Argument patterns
 - Syllogisms video.
- Moral Theories
 - What is a moral theory? Why might someone want one?
 - Utilitarianism (make up an example?)
 - Kant's categorical imperatives
 - He had two of them .. what were they? (explain with your own example?)
 - Relativism - we have argued this is false.. (explain with your own example?)
 - Divine Command Theory of Ethics -- has also been argued to be false..
 - Simple arguments from the Bible..
 - - The Bible says doing X wrong.
 - *If the Bible says that doing something is wrong, then doing that something is wrong. F*

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

- So, doing X is wrong.
-
- Counterexamples: <http://www.owl232.net/biblequotes.htm>
- EMP Ch. 1
 - Rachels general ideas about moral thinking..
 - Having reasons; being impartial.
 - Baby Theresa
 - Conjoined twins.
 - Tracey Lattimer..
- Homosexuality
 - What do you mean by homosexuality? What might “homosexuality is morally wrong” *mean*?
 - The contrast was between what people mean when they say things versus the reasons they give in favor of what they think.
 - Many arguments in logically valid form. Stated as syllogisms.
 - Some were question begging arguments.
- FGM / Circumcision / Polyamoury
 - What are all these things?
 - What are arguments in favor of them? What are arguments against them? Which arguments are good, which are bad?
- That Extra Credit Essay - we read in class for fun.
- Poverty?

And anything else important that we've done! :)

Feedback on topics of interest:

1. Is casual sex wrong? Does casual sex “objectify” someone, and is that wrong?
2. When does drinking alcohol impair consent and so contribute to rape?
3. How persistent can someone be in seeking a romantic relationship?
4. When would it be wrong to have an **abortion**? When would it be not wrong to have an abortion?
5. What are different types of **sexism**? What are different types of feminists and what do they think should be done to address sexism?

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

6. What is a woman? Can someone born male become a woman? (What is a man? Can someone born female become a man?)
7. What is **racism**? What makes an individual a racist? What makes a society racist?
8. If you are treated unjustly, should you protest? Does protesting show that you respect yourself?
9. Which, if any, **drugs**, should be (or remain) illegal?
10. Should colleges and universities have NCAA-regulated sports teams (that is, not intramural or recreational teams)?
11. Is it wrong to sing along to violent, disrespectful and abusive music?
12. When and why is cheating wrong?
13. What should education be like in a global community?

drug use and the criminalization of drug use,

Should colleges and universities have NCAA-regulated sports teams (that is, not intramural or recreational teams)?,

Is it wrong to sing along to violent, disrespectful and abusive music?,

When can humor be morally problematic?,

What is the ultimate goal of education? Knowledge? Wisdom? Something else?, Should college be free? If not, how much should students have to pay?,

1. Capital Punishment
2. Criminalization of **Drug Use**
3. **Racism**
4. **Abortion**
5. When does drinking alcohol impair consent and so contribute to rape?
6. When would it be wrong to have an **abortion**? When would it be not wrong to have an abortion?
7. Is racial preference in college admissions, i.e., affirmative action, unfair?
8. Which, if any, **drugs**, should be (or remain) illegal?
9. **It is wrong to eat meat? Is it wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them?**
10. Do individuals have **moral obligations to help the environment**?

euthanasia and assisted suicide,

absolute poverty

drug use and the criminalization of drug use

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

capital punishment

Drugs:

Why do some people think that drugs **should be illegal** and/or are **wrong** to use/buy/sell?

- They alter your mind in harmful ways.
- Can be harmful: death (overdose), other injuries, etc.
 - Psychological damage: hallucinations,
- Can lead to addiction.
- Can lead to physical changes: teeth fall out, lose tons of weight, .. seriously damage your body.
- Can cause the user to become violent.
- Impairs reflexes .
- Impairs judgment.

Why do some people think that drugs **should NOT be illegal** and/or are **NOT wrong** to use/buy/sell?

- It's their body, so should be their choice.
- Make you feel good!
 - Makes people feel better in a variety of (important) ways.
- Can be medically beneficial, sometimes, for some people.
- Drugs are “as bad” as many other things that are legal and/or are considered not immoral. So important difference between alcohol and tobacco, etc. and various drugs.
- There is \$ to be made.
- *There is no good reason why they should be illegal; no good reason to think it'd wrong.*

For Tuesday:

Read and write about Mike Huemer's “America's Unjust Drug War”:

<http://www.owl232.net/papers/drugs.htm>

Writing assignment:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

(a) Huemer argues that the arguments in favor of drug prohibition are no good: what are those arguments and are they indeed no good? Explain your answers.

(B) He argues in favor of drug legalization: what are his arguments and are they any good? Explain your answers.

(c) He does think that *some* drugs should be illegal: which one(s) and why?

Also, watch some videos or read up on Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* book:

General search:

https://www.google.com/search?q=Michelle+Alexander%E2%80%99s+The+New+Jim+Crow&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS779US779&oq=Michelle+Alexander%E2%80%99s+The+N ew+Jim+Crow&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.1575j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=michelle+alexander+the+new+jim+crow

Abortion

Abortion: <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2016/03/07/the-ethics-of-abortion/>

Applied Ethics: <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2018/02/13/applied-ethics/>

Read at least these sections of this paper:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ES4x3AaDbIbSnwuIJpqvEX2LC2klSdhZR6y4xP7IolM/edit?usp=sharing>

1. Defining Abortion	3
2. Arguments About Abortion, Not Circumstances	5
3. Question-Begging Arguments about Abortion	6
4. On Arguments Against Abortion	

Writing assignment: write up all the non-question begging arguments about abortion, in logically valid form, and explain whether they are sound or not and why: this means explaining whether each premise is true or false and why.

Abortion is *prima facie* wrong *because*:

- Pregnancies can kill the woman, sometimes. T

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

-
- If the pregnancy results from rape, then it's OK. [?]

C: Abortion (that is, killing fetuses) is *prima facie* wrong because:

- Fetuses are [BIOLOGICALLY] alive, living, they are life. T ***All killing of anything alive is prima facie wrong.*** F
- Abortions are dangerous. ?? f Any action that is dangerous is wrong. F
- Fetuses are [BIOLOGICALLY] human. T *Anything biologically human is prima facie wrong to kill.* F
- Fetuses are human beings [organisms]. T?
 - If you have some right now, then you've always had it, as long as you've existed, or If you have some quality or characteristic now, then you've always had it, as long as you've existed. F
- Fetuses are persons. ?
- Fetuses are potential persons.
- Fetuses have valuable futures like our futures.

Eating animals.

1. If someone is causing serious harms that are done for no good reason, then they are doing wrong. 2. Animals are harmed - made worse off - when raised and killed to be eaten. 3. These harms are done for no good reason: not needed for life or health (LINK) or tasty food. C: It's prima facie wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them.	P1. If someone is doing wrong and you can easily and safely not support them in doing that wrong, then it's wrong to support them. P2. People who raise and kill animals to eat them are doing wrong. [WTT? See argument on the left) C: It's prima facie wrong to buy and/or eat meat (and other animal food products).
---	--

These arguments are unsound and/or it's not wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them and/or it's not wrong to eat meat, etc. because:

1. Well, it would be a lot better if animals were raised and killed in far better conditions and ways. NO, they are still harmed when killed.
2. It's a tradition. **Any tradition is not wrong.** F

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

3. The Bible says it's OK. If the Bible says doing X is OK, then it's OK. F?
4. This is all nutritionally necessary. F
5. Eating meat is natural. If an action is natural, then it's MP.
 - a. "We are omnivores, and so eating meat is ok."
 - i. Omnivore = 1. CAN eat everything (including meat), 2. MUST eat everything, 3. RUNS REALLY WELL eating everything F
6. Animals eat other animals, and that's OK. T
 - a. If animals do something, then it's OK for us to do something.
 - b.
7. (Some) animals would kill and eat us, if they had a chance. ?

FINAL PROJECTS

DUE AND DISCUSS ON ONE OF THESE DAYS (CLASS, LET'S PICK), the final exam days: July 12 (**Thursday**)

I'd like you to do TWO of these projects:

ONE of a topic that we covered in class and

ANOTHER of either a new topic (something from the syllabus and the syllabus links, or sometime confirmed with Dr. Nobis) OR another topic that we've already done. A different audience for each project; these can be done individually or as any kind of group. (If you do a *new* topic, you should read up some on the topic: check 1000-Word Philosophy and/or the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy and/or the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Google those) and/or ask Dr. Nobis by email for recommend sources.)

Philosophical Service Project

For this assignment, you will, in a group, perform some "community service." The service you will provide is demonstrating to the some part of the community how to thinking critically about moral issues using the logical methods we've practiced in this class. So, you will model thinking in systematic ways about moral issues, engage some arguments from your audience and help them evaluate these arguments: in short, you will teach them how to do the type of thing we have done in this class.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

This project, and your report on it, are due by DUE DATE _____, via the course management system.

Here's what to do:

1. Find a group of 2-5 students. Or do this on your own.
2. Pick a topic from the syllabus, or develop your own, with approval from Dr. Nobis:

the treatment of disabled newborns, genital mutilation, sexual ethics, homosexuality, abortion, absolute poverty, racism and race-related ethical issues, sexism, and speciesism, drug use and the criminalization of drug use, vegetarianism and the treatment of animals, environmentalism, euthanasia and assisted suicide, and capital punishment, ethics and course grades (and extra credit), among others.

[some additional topics of special interest to college students here:

<http://www.nathannobis.com/2017/05/college-ethics.html> ;

some race-related topics here:

<http://www.nathannobis.com/2017/08/race-related-controversial-ethical.html>].

3. Develop at least 5 arguments in logically valid form on this topic.
4. Find an audience of at least 3 people, not from this class.
5. Present your arguments to this audience. **First, give them an introduction to what you will do in your presentation. Explain to them what you will do and how you will do it (recall the ‘everything you need to know’ sheet).** State and explain your five arguments and evaluate

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

them as sound or not, meaning, explain whether each and every - not just one! - premise is true or false and WHY.

6. Get at least 3 (ideally, at least 5) new arguments, or premises, on the topic from the audience.

7. With the audience, formulate these arguments in logically valid form and determine whether they are sound or not, meaning, explain whether each and every - not just one! - premise is true or false and WHY.

8. Formulate any conclusions from your discussion and wrap it up.

9. Write up a report on what happened, using this form:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/islqffskixca8om/Philosophical%20Community%20Service%20Project.rtf?dl=0>

Philosophical "Community Service" Project:

Report Form

2. Group members (if any): (note: each member must submit this report via the course management system).

3. Your topic:

4. Summarize the introduction to what you will do in your presentation. What will you explain to audience about *what* you will do and *how* you will do it. You need to explain the methods that you will use to identify and evaluate moral

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

arguments.

5. Present at least 5 arguments on that topic, *stated in logically valid form*.
6. Evaluate those 5 arguments as sound or not. Explain why they are sound or not. (Note: merely *stating* whether an argument is sound or not does not explain why it is sound or not: so explanation is needed).
7. Your audience members' names:
8. Your audience's reactions to the arguments that you presented and your evaluation of them:
9. The 3-5 arguments from the audience:
10. These arguments stated in logically valid form:
11. Your, and the audience's, evaluations of these arguments as sound or not:
12. Your conclusions and summary of this activity that you presented to the audience.
13. Your group's reflections on this experience: what went well? What was interesting? What was surprising? What was challenging? How was this experience, overall?

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oCLERRObMer3brEB4i1nIyQXPTYDGwa7McUxfGFGVDI/edit?usp=sharing>

Orange = old stuff

Tuesday's assignment

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

These are notes from the 2017 class .. to be deleted, eventually

Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do* (RTD: Ch. 2, "Some Basic Points About Arguments," available here: <http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/rachels-on-arguments.pdf>)

Discussed, in light of student observation:

The "Ought" implies "can" principle: This means that if you ought to do something, then you CAN do it. And if you can't do something, then it's not true that you ought to do it. (Example: you are in a full body cast and so can't jump in to save the drowning person. Ought you save the drowning person by jumping in? No, since you can't. If you CAN call someone for help, then ought to, though!

6/7/17

For NOW FRIDAY, due before class:

Read this and do a general assignment [see the syllabus] on the three cases from the chapter:

Ch. 1, "What is Morality?" (*Elements of Moral Philosophy, EMP*):

- For Thursday, here's what you should do:

- Watch the video

- Read the two readings by Rachels:

- Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do*: Ch.1 "A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy," available here , and focus on the last half: : <http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/rachels-intro-to-ethics.pdf>

-

- Rachels, *The Right Thing to Do* (RTD: Ch. 2, "Some Basic Points About Arguments," available here: <http://aphilosopher.googlepages.com/rachels-on-arguments.pdf>)

-

Some **actions** that you think many people would think are pretty obviously wrong:

1. Rape.

2. Torture.

3. Money laundering.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

4. Murder (=wrongful killing).. .. killing a child or old person, just for fun or some money..
5. Kidnapping;
6. Cannibalism BUT NOT in a plane crash at the top of a mountain situation.
7. Homophobia, racism (= what actions?)
- 8.
9. Stealing for fun, not for need.
10. Genocide...
11. Slavery (Forced child labor); middle passage;
12. Electrocuting dogs? / animal abuse.
13. Many examples of police brutality and killing.

The actions above *tend* to be wrong because ____? ____:

- Offensive to many people that many people interact with. (Why? They reduce people's peace of mind; loss of loved ones; death; killing; harms)
- Affect others in a negative way (how so? Negative quality of life)
- People are treated inhumanely (broaden beyond people?)
- They inflict pain and other bad stuff. (harms)
- They interfere with people's natural rights to happiness, right to freedom, right to life, right of expression (which rights?)
- They promote dis-harmony (chaos) and mis-trust.
-

The actions BELOW tend to be not-wrong / good because ____? ____:

- They tend to help people; contribute to progress; positive effects.
- Don't cause harm to anyone involved; they benefit those involved.
- They promote harmony and trust.

Not wrong, good:

- Honesty
- Charity & donations [to good to causes ???]
- Smiling :)
- Kindness
- Caring
- Empathy
- Prayer and/or meditation...

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

6/9/17

EMP Ch. 1 Notes

Discussion of Rachels *Elements of Moral Philosophy* Ch. 1

What is it to ‘Think Morally’?

“Morality is ...”

Someone is “thinking morally” or engaged in “moral thinking” when:

- (1) one is guiding one’s thought by reasons – the best reasons – and
- (2) one gives equal weight to each individual who is affected by one’s actions.

Re. (1): *reasons* include (scientific, empirical) facts and moral principles.

Facts + Moral Principles = What to Do

Case 1: Baby Theresa L

· What’s her situation?

· What did her parents want to do? What were their reasons?

The parents' argument:

(3) If, by doing some action X, we can (a) benefit someone without (b) harming anyone, then action X is morally permissible. T?

(4) By taking Theresa’s organs we can (a) benefit others and (b) not **harm** anyone.

(5) So, killing her and taking Teresa’s organs is morally permissible.

Who can be harmed? (Rock? Desk? Carrot? Corpse? Someone like BT?)

When is someone’s life valuable or worthwhile or when does someone’s life “matter”?

Is this arguments sound or not?

· What did “the critics” say” (p. 2)

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

(6) “It’s too horrifying to use people as means to other people’s ends.”

(7) “It’s unethical to kill in order to save, unethical to kill person A to save person B.”

(8) “The parents are saying we should kill the baby to use the organs. That’s horrendous!”

These remarks are the basis of arguments. Are these arguments sound or not? If any of them are, then argument (3)-(5) is not sound.

Re. Remark (6):

(A) If someone is used as a mere means to another’s end, then that is wrong. T

(B) Taking Teresa’s organs would be to use her as a mere means. F

(C) So, it would be wrong to take her organs.

If you are not providing information *that if the person had, they wouldn’t agree to it, then that would be using someone as a mere means.

If you are not providing information *that if the person had, they would agree to it, then that would not be using someone as a mere means.

If you are deliberately lying, then mere means.

If you are not telling the truth BUT the truth is something the person wouldn’t agree to.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true? (Are they somehow ambiguous or imprecise?)

Re. Remark (7):

(D) If person A is killed to save person B, then that’s prima facie wrong.

(E) To kill Teresa would be to kill her to save others.

(F) Therefore, it’s wrong to kill Teresa.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true? (Are they somehow ambiguous or imprecise?)

Re. Remark (8): ?

Case 2: Jodie and Mary

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

· What's their situation? What did her parents want to do? What did the hospital want to do? What were their reasons?

“Whose to decide?!” Asking this kind of question is often a way to avoid thinking about which arguments are best. (Also, it's often unwise to ask rhetorical questions, since there might be good answer to them).

An argument:

(G) If we have a choice between saving one infant and letting both die, we should save one.

(H) We have such a choice.

(I) So we should save one.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true?

Some critics say:

The parents didn't want them separated. T

Anything parents want to happen should happen. F

C; They shouldn't have been separated.

(J) If someone is an 'innocent human life', then they should never be killed.

(K) Mary is an innocent human life.

(L) Therefore, Mary should not be killed.

Is the argument valid? Are the premises true?

3rd Case: Tracy Latimer

· What's her situation? (We need to think about the details..)

· What did her parents want to do? What were their reasons?

If someone is terminally ill and horribly suffering and is in intense pain AND has been that way their entire life and there's no chance of recovery AND caring people think the

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

person might be better off dead given their condition, then it might be permissible to kill that someone.

Tracey was like all that...

Killing her was MP.

· What did their critics say?

Take note of:

· Feelings

· Require reasons

· Getting one's (non-moral) facts straight: checking up on the empirical / scientific evidence

· Impartiality: differences in treatment are justified only by relevant differences in the person/being and in light of general moral principles; otherwise these are unjustified prejudices.

Next Assignment, due Tuesday:

Topic: review the theory called “relativism” or cultural relativism from “A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy,” which was already assigned.

Read this article, online: ["What's Culture Got to Do with it? Excising the Harmful Tradition of Female Circumcision"](#)

[also, you could look here :

<https://www.google.com/search?q=%22What%27s+Culture+Got+to+Do+with+it%3F+Excising+the+Harmful+Tradition+of+Female+Circumcision%22&oq=%22What%27s+Culture+Got+to+Do+with+it%3F+Excising+the+Harmful+Tradition+of+Female+Circumcision%22&aqs=chrome..69j57j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#q=What's+Culture+Got+to+Do+with+it?+Excising+the+Harmful+Tradition+of+Female+Circumcision>]

Do a “general assignment” on the topic of female genital mutilation: from the article, and anything else you might read, see or watch, what is it? What are the arguments given for and against it, that is, arguments that it's wrong and arguments that it's not wrong? State these arguments in logically valid form and explain whether they are sound or not,

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

focusing on the arguments that it's not wrong from the reading "What's Culture Got to Do with it? Excising the Harmful Tradition of Female Circumcision"

Monday 6/12

Ethnocentrism =

the belief that your own culture is superior to other cultures =

Nearly everything my cultures does is at least permissible: my culture does no wrong.

Most cultures are a mix of good and bad.

- Reasons given for that practice or not? Are they good or not?

I find roaches to be gross. T

If something is gross, then, I wouldn't eat it.

So I would not eat roaches.

If I wouldn't eat something, then it is wrong to eat that thing.

"Eating roaches would be wrong."

1. FGM is a tradition; it's part of some cultures.

C. FGM is permissible.

Some people like how it looks; they personally prefer it. (Aesthetic versus moral)

FGM is permissible.

6/13/2017

Facts? Information?

Conclusions:

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

FGM causes harm and torture.

FGM causes pain, of all kinds.

FGM makes childbirth more challenging and more deadly.

FGM can harm babies, from birth challenges.

FGM is dangerous.

... FGM is very very very harmful to women and girls AND not as beneficial to them as the harms.

Any action that is very very very harmful and not as beneficial them to the person involved is wrong.

Therefore, FGM is wrong. Why think that?

1. FGM is a rite of passage.

2. Anything done as a rite of passage is permissible. ?

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

2. FGM is done to get social acceptance. T

Anything done to get social acceptance is permissible. F

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

3. FGM is a tradition. T

If something is a tradition, then that something is not wrong. = All traditions are not wrong. F

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

7 FGM enhances fertility. F

Any action that enhances fertility is permissible. F

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

8. Religions require or allow FGM. F

If a religion requires an action, then that action is permissible. F

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

5. FGM women are cleaner. ??

Any action that makes someone cleaner is permissible. F

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

4. FGM prevents or reduces promiscuity. T?

Any action that reduces promiscuity is MP. ? False and sexist.

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

6. FGM'd women look better to the men in that society. T?

Any action X that makes someone else A look better to someone B, then that action X is MP.

Therefore, FGM is not wrong, is permissible.

Thursday:

Please watch John Corvino's video “What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?”

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=what%27s+morally+wrong+with+homo+sexuality

Watch the video and write up all the arguments from the video in logically valid form, and do a few of the arguments from this handout also:

<http://philosophy302.blogspot.com/2007/02/common-arguments-on-homosexuality-mad.html>

Dear all,

There are two assignments, however, for Thursday. Please see the assignment section in Blackboard; they are both due by classtime on Thursday.

Thanks

NN

6/15

Our culture has male circumcision: it's our tradition, our practice.

All traditions and cultural practices are MP. F

Male circumcision is MP.

Monogamy is our tradition, it's our practice.]

All traditions and practices that are not our traditions are wrong.

Polyamory is wrong.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48



1. It's permissible to do and be what makes you happy UNLESS WHAT YOU ARE DOING OR BEING IS WRONG.
2. H. makes some people happy.
3. There's no good reason to think that homosexuality is wrong.
4. Therefore, Homosexuality is not wrong.

H's use their body parts in ways they aren't supposed to be used. ?

If you use a body part in a way it's not supposed to be used, then that's wrong. F
Homosexuality is wrong.

Sexuality = (1) attraction (desires; feelings;); (2) actions or behaviors; (3) “presentation” or stereotypes; (4) relationships

New assignment for Monday:

Instead of class Friday, since some students and instructor want to go to the service, I propose this assignment, due Monday before class:

I'd like to give you an opportunity to explore, on your own, in greater detail, some of the topics we've touched on lately. These include:

- female genital mutilation;

- male circumcision;

- polyamory / polygamy versus monogamy

- homosexuality

- any of the cases from the Elements of Moral Philosophy, Ch. 1

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Please research any of these topics and submit a general assignment where you give some of the important information about the topic, as well as at least 3-5 arguments about that topic, in logically valid form, that you will then explain are sound or not.

Come prepared Monday to present your research!

The assignment template was sent yesterday and/or see www.NathanNobis.com

Let's talk about some arguments about homosexuality..

C: H. is wrong. Why?

“Homosexuality is wrong because ____? ____”

1. The Bible says that H is wrong. ???

[https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Really-about-Homosexuality/dp/18863600](https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Really-about-Homosexuality/dp/188636009X)

[9X](https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Really-about-Homosexuality/dp/188636009X)

2. If the the Bible says that doing X is wrong, then doing X is wrong. F

3. Therefore, H is wrong.

4. **H's, as people, cannot reproduce.** (F) (H sex is not reproductive - T).

5. (a) If a sexual action is not reproductive, then it's wrong. [F] (b) **Any non-reproductive sexual orientation is wrong to have. ?**

6. Therefore, H is wrong. (What is H?)

7. Homosexual sex is wrong.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

8. Therefore, H SEX is wrong.

BEGGING THE QUESTION = ASSUME YOUR CONCLUSION AS A PREMISE.

9. H's **wrongfully use** their (sexual) body parts. F

10. If you wrongfully use a body part, then you are acting wrongly. F

11. Therefore, H SEX is wrong.

12. H is harmful to society. ?

13. Any action harmful to society is wrong. ?

14. Therefore, H is wrong.

15. H sex is unhealthy. (How so?)

16. Any unhealthy action is wrong. ?

17. Therefore, H is wrong.

18. H's are at higher risks of certain diseases.

19. If some action raises one's risk of diseases, then that action is wrong. F

20. Therefore, H is wrong.

21. Children raised by homosexuals have increased problems.

22. If a way of raising children results in increased problems, then that way of raising children is wrong.

23. Therefore, H is wrong.

Reply: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMLZO-sObzQ>

Male circumcision -

Alleged factual claims about MC ..

Polyamoury ...

FGM..

Next topic:

Abortion

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

<https://1000wordphilosophy.wordpress.com/2016/03/07/the-ethics-of-abortion/>

<https://whatswrongcvsp.com/2016/07/16/whats-wrong-with-linking-abortion-and-animal-rights/>

6/21/2017

Abortion =

D1. The intentional killing of a fetus to end a pregnancy.

D2. The intentional **termination (=killing) of a fetus to end a pregnancy.**

- a. Adoption is a **better** option.
- b. If a woman gets pregnant, she just **must** have the baby: she is obligated to have the baby; **ending the pregnancy and not having the baby would be wrong.**
- c. Women who have abortions are **irresponsible**, meaning, they don't do what they are supposed to do.
- d. Some women feel guilty when they have abortions. If someone feels guilty about doing something, then they have done something wrong.
- e. A is murder (= wrongful killing).
- f. **Therefore, abortion (i.e., intentional killing fetuses to end pregnancies) is *prima facie* wrong.**

25 reasonable, practical, achievable solutions for police brutality:

<https://www.facebook.com/shaunking/posts/1136506649721585>

1. Fetuses are BIOLOGICALLY alive, living, life. **All biologically alive things are wrong to kill.** Therefore, they are PF wrong to kill.
2. Fetuses are **biologically human**. T If something is biologically human, then it is *prima facie* wrong to kill. F Therefore, abortion (i.e., killing fetuses) is wrong.
3. Fetuses are human beings.
4. Abortions prevent a person from experiencing their life. **Any action that prevents someone / something from experiencing their life, or a life, is *prima facie* wrong.** F So abortion is wrong.
5. Fetuses are persons. ? **All persons are *prima facie* wrong to kill.** T Therefore abortion is wrong.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

List of persons; actual persons AS WELL AS *fictional or merely possible persons*:

- Mr. James; me and everyone in this class; President Wilson; Olivia Pope; Ted the talking teddy bear; Batman; God. Spongebob; Ariel; Bart Simpson; Peter Griffin. Bryan the dog.
- PERSONS = BEINGS WITH PERSONALITIES = CONSCIOUSNESS, FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Make a list of non-persons:

- Manequin; broomstick; statues; carrots; mold; rusty old car; desk; corpse; Michael Jackson;

Controversial: fetuses; dogs ; computers?

If you cannot afford to support someone, then it permissible to kill them.
Some people cannot afford to have a baby.

A fetus is not a person because they are dependent on someone else.
If someone is dependent on someone else, then they are not a person.

Fetuses are potential people. T
Persons are PF wrong to kill or have a right life.
If something is a potential X, then that something has the rights of an actual thing X NOW. Or potential X's should be treated as actual X's.
Therefore abortion is wrong.

6. Fetuses are potential persons.
7. Abortions will lead to medical complications later for the woman. [Not really true; doesn't have to be true]. **Any action that could lead to medical complications later in life is wrong.**
8. Abortions prevent a fetus from experiencing its future.
9. Fetuses have a right to life.

Worksheet:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

https://8e82e549-a-62cb3a1a-s-sites.googlegroups.com/site/aphilosopher/abortion-worksheets.pdf?attachauth=ANoY7cpB2QtV-2fVlw2vKpLSeq0cBd7IUqhR2-1qLdrsMxas3A1hQ2OjtfRBzUTcvwOr67j4IR4h_MYZpvceEGeVd9mMTWAGjKdBWBLPctlCK1Mqq-cR919OaD5L3pByT7R_Jrsoz-wuTy5r4tyGh5Wzf1dJQOje6tCxBDXiBNsOgrnAjhJRpNl2pQSX06Eb_Eqe0ZhYTRutEKEKE7Wd_U-5oqvbPxWvyO_mfq5b4GujIoq_H-znu0%3D&attredirects=0

Therefore, Abortion is prima facie wrong.

Abortion is morally permissible because:

There's no good reason to think it's wrong.

H relationships makes some people happy. T

H harms nobody.

Anything that makes you happy and harms nobody is MP.

H is morally permissible.

H relationships makes some people happy. T

There is no good reason to think that H is wrong. .

Anything that makes you happy and there is no good reason to think is wrong is MP.

H is morally permissible.

The Singer Solution to World Poverty... NY Times.

6/27/17

Thursday's topic: Drugs:

Two readings and viewings:

Michael Huemer: "America's Unjust Drug War" at

<http://www.owl232.net/drugs.htm>

Reading questions:

1. What's Huemer's overall conclusion about the ethics and legality of drug use? (Meaning, are drugs wrong to use or not? Should they be legal, or not?)

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

2. What arguments does he discuss for the conclusion that drug use is morally wrong and should be illegal? What's his evaluation of those arguments?
3. What arguments does he discuss for the conclusion that drug use is morally permissible and should be legal? What's his evaluation of those arguments?
4. Why does Huemer say that criminalizing drug use is an injustice?
5. Which, if any, drugs does Huemer think should (remain) illegal? Why?

Watch and/or read about Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Michelle+Alexander%E2%80%99s+The+New+Jim+Crow.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=michelle+alexander+the+new+jim+crow&oq=michelle+alexander+t&aqs=chrome..69j0j69j0l3l11087j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

BIG question:

What if people don't care that some action is wrong?

What can you do if people don't care?

Should people care?

6/29

Reading for Friday and Monday and writing assignment for Monday:

Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal" :

<http://rntintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil3140/Singer1.pdf>

John Simmons, "Reasonable Humans and Animals: An Argument for Vegetarianism"

<http://philosophy302.blogspot.com/p/1-reasonable-humans-and-animals-by-john.html>

Today: drugs.

Some people think that drug use is immoral and/or should be illegal. WHY? Write down your answers.

- Drug use is harmful to the user, such as death or develop other medical problems.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

- Drug use is harmful to people other than the user: bad for society.
- They are addictive.
- Drug use can change your personality: lazy, not care, poor worker, poor student, rude, paranoid;
- Drug use can lead to lose all your \$.
- THEREFORE, DRUG USE SHOULD BE ILLEGAL.

What if everyone, or many people, became really lazy and uncaring?

Would this be a problem?

If so, what should we do? Imprison people? Or something else?

Drugs - different types of drugs: e.g., marijuana versus meth/bath salts. Different responses:

If doing X might likely result in you killing some innocent person, then the government can legitimately criminalize that activity.

Reading for Friday and Monday and writing assignment for Monday:

Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” (Animal Liberation ... racism, sexism .. speciesism)

<http://rintintin.colorado.edu/~vancecd/phil3140/Singer1.pdf>

John Simmons, “Reasonable Humans and Animals: An Argument for Vegetarianism”
<http://philosophy302.blogspot.com/p/1-reasonable-humans-and-animals-by-john.html>

7/3/17

“All animals are equal”

Men and women are equal

Different races are equal..

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

Simmons:

1. If an action causes (a) serious harms for (b) no good reason, then that action is wrong. 2. (a) Animals (and some humans?) are seriously harmed when raised and killed to be eaten. 3. (b) There is no good reason to cause these harms: not needed for life, or health, or tasty food. (http://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(16)31192-3/fulltext ; tasty food). C1. It's wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them.	1. If someone is doing something that's wrong, then it's wrong to support them <i>in doing that action</i> that is wrong (especially if you can easily avoid supporting them). 2. It's wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them. C2. It's wrong to buy and/or eat meat and other animal products, e.g., eggs, dairy products, etc.
--	--

These arguments above are unsound, and so it's not wrong to raise and kill animals to eat them and/or to eat animal products because: ____ ? ____

1. Meat tastes good; it's pleasurable to eat. Anything that brings pleasure is MP.
2. **Meat can be healthy. T Anything healthy to eat would be permissible to eat. F**
3. They ate meat in Biblical times. **If people did X in Biblical times, then it's OK for us to do it.**
4. **It's a tradition to eat meat. All traditions are MP. F**
5. **Animals are not humans. If X is not human, then it'd OK to kill and eat it. ?**
6. **Animals eat other animals. If animals do X, then it's permissible for us to do X. F Therefore, it's not wrong for us to eat animals.**
7. **That eating meat is inconvenient. (F) If an action is not convenient, then it is not wrong to do it. (We can never be morally obligated to do anything that's inconvenient.) F**
8. Eating meat is natural. Any natural action is MP.
9. Meat is a good source of protein. **Anything with lots of protein is permissible to eat**

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., '48

10. Animals don't have MORAL rights .. to life, to avoiding pain, freedom. F [?]

If something or someone doesn't have MORAL rights, then it's not wrong eat that someone. F

- **AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES:**

- **BLACK VEGANS ROCK :** <http://www.blackvegansrock.com>

- **African American Vegan Starter Guide:**

- <http://africanamericanveganstarterguide.com/>

- **By Any Greens Necessary:** <http://www.byanygreensnecessary.com/>

- **King's Apron (Atlanta):**

- <https://www.facebook.com/kingsapron/?fref=ts>

- **The Plant Based Princess (Atlanta):**

- <https://www.facebook.com/plantbasedprincess/> ;

- <http://www.theplantbasedprincess.com/>

- <http://gochefahki.com> (Atlanta?)

- **Black Vegetarian Society of Georgia:**

- <https://www.facebook.com/bvsga/?fref=ts>

- **Sevananda**

<http://www.creativeloafing.com/food-drink/article/20855768/meatless-in-the-west-end>

<http://www.nathannobis.com/2016/12/j-mester-2017.html#more>