

The Ethics of Everyday Living

Essay Topics

1. Is there anything morally wrong with jokes that rest on certain stereotypes (e.g. the reserved Brit, the stupid Newfie, the dumb blond)? If so, what makes them objectionable and what determines how objectionable they are? If not, why do some people think such jokes are objectionable, and why are they wrong?
2. Do sick jokes and/or politically incorrect jokes serve any valuable social, psychological or moral purposes?
3. Why has gossiping been viewed as morally suspect by so many people for so long? Are there objections to gossiping that its apologists have ignored or underestimated? Or is the condemnation of gossip a misplaced anxiety?
4. Is politeness a fairly trivial virtue, or is it an important indication of a person's moral character?
5. Does a person have the right not to be offended?
6. Is a person who deliberately breaks the rules when playing a game doing something morally wrong?

Your essay should be informed by the relevant readings that we have discussed in class. You are encouraged to find and make use of other articles that relate to your topic, but this isn't required. If you do this, though, avoid extensive quotations, and be sure to cite texts you have made use of. Write clearly, think rigorously, construct your own illustrative examples and work out your own position.

Length: approx. 1500 words

Due date: Wed. Oct 8th