

Ethics has three main branches of studies

1. Meta Ethics: concerned with the definition of ethical terms and the search for ethical truth. This is not going to be focused on in this class. Anyone interested in this branch of ethics should pursue this further with the links and other readings. You do not have to exclude this but there is such a depth of writing on this topic that TOK cannot do it justice/ and vice versa. Definitely good food for thought and lots of options to study this on your own or in college courses down the road.

2. Applied Ethics: how moral outcomes can be achieved in practical situations. This is where applying different theories to life. TOK requires real world applications so this is a great area of reading/discussion.

<http://www.globalethics.org/>

3. Normative Ethics: concerned with how we “ought to live,” and theories of behavior

Religious	Virtue	Self Interest	Deontological	Consequentialist
Various see linked pdf http://www.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/8/8/10880196/religious_ethical_systems.pdf	Aristotle https://youtu.be/PHVuzec6s0c	Aynd Rand https://youtu.be/irToIXyHzcl	Emmanuel Kant https://youtu.be/j9WCnZOa344	Various https://youtu.be/j9WCnZOa344

Religious: Often focused on rules and duty originating in Divine Command or revelation (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, Islam)

Rules are thought to be objective and universal

Can focus on methods of determining behavior (i.e Buddhism) <https://youtu.be/JD0eukESsI0>

Virtues are emphasized as are the ways to acquire them

Virtue: Focus on the character of the person making the moral decision

An action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would do in the circumstances.

A virtuous agent is one who acts virtuously- one who has/ exercises the virtues.

A virtue is a character trait a human being needs to flourish or live well.

Self Interest: Focus on either a denial of ethical behavior existing beyond self interest

Ethical Egoism: focused on the argument that self interest guided by reason, results general good for individuals and as it often happens, the group they are in as well

Denies the existence of “real” altruism or, denies the worth of altruism for it’s own sake

Deontological: Focus on living up to obligations or following rules (and also on the claiming of your rights relative to others)

An action is right if it is in accordance with a moral rule or principle.

A moral rule is one that is required by rationality.

Kant’s Categorical Imperative: “Act only according to the maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become universal law.”

The ends do not justify the means

Consequentialist: Focus on morally desirable consequences or outcomes

An action is right if it promotes the best consequences.

The best consequences are those in which happiness is maximized.

The proper course is the one which maximizes the overall “happiness”

The ends justify the means

The greatest good for the greatest number