

# ETHICS

## INTRODUCTION

**A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.** Therefore, he must learn to identify what is right from what is wrong. Man should be wise enough to know what he is ought to do when confronted with some ethical problems in life. If not then he is no different with a robot who follows only what he is asked to do.

**No man is an island.** Therefore, man should learn to live with others. How do we co-exist with other people? We should learn to be moral. Why need to be moral? Sociologists would say human should care about being moral because without morality social life is nearly impossible. On the other hand, psychologists would opine that we need to be moral because we care about what others think of us. It is a matter of preserving our reputation and social censure. Theologically speaking, we need to be moral because there is a life in the hereafter that rewards or punish the deeds of a person. Whatever our reason is, we can agree on the idea that man should learn to be moral.

**Man as a rational being.** Man should behave as a human being and not otherwise. Man should reflect on the values that are most important to him. It will help him develop his skills in articulating his own values and how to morally justify or provide ethical reasons for his actions. This will give him the means in questioning and assessing the values of others in a more critical way.

How should people act? What do people think is right? How do we apply our sense of morality? What does 'right' or 'wrong' even mean? Is morality based on religion? These are some of the general questions that we will attempt to answer in the study of ethics. There will be a lot of challenges since morality has become a complicated issue in the multi-cultural world we live in today. So here we will try explore what morality is, how it affects our behavior, our conscience, our society, and our ultimate destiny. We will also explore some of the ethical frameworks that we can use in solving moral dilemmas we are facing in our daily lives. Making moral decision is where our rational mind is being tested.

At the end of this course, it is expected that the students will reflectively analyze the situations in order for him to make a sound ethical judgement based on framework. Thus, students will be able to know/learn the following:

1. Differentiate between moral and non-moral standards.
2. Differentiate between a moralist and an ethicist.
3. Identify moral problems.
4. Explain the influence of Filipino culture in dealing with moral problems
5. Use ethical frameworks or principles to analyze moral experience.

## I. ETHICS/ MORAL PHILOSOPHY\*

The word "**ethics**" is derived from the Greek "ethos" (meaning "custom" or "habit"). Ethics is not limited to specific acts and defined moral codes, but encompasses the whole of moral ideals and behaviors, a person's philosophy of life (or Weltanschauung).

**Ethics** (or Moral Philosophy) is concerned with questions of how people ought to act, and the search for a definition of right conduct (identified as the one causing the greatest good) and the good life (in the sense of a life worth living or a life that is satisfying or happy). It deals with the basic principles that serve as the basis for moral rules.

### **Ethical vs Moral**

When a person says "*It is right to do this and wrong to do that*" and he practices what he preached, we call him a MORALIST, but when a person says "*It is right to do this and wrong to do that*" but he himself do not practice the same we call him an ETHICIST. Hence, ethics and morality are not the same thing! If a person follows moral rules he is considered moral person and he if he does not, he is therefore, immoral but not unethical. If a person is aware of the basic principles governing moral conduct and acts in a manner consistent with those principles, he is therefore considered ethical. Ethics differs from morals and morality in that ethics denotes the theory of right action and the greater good, while morals indicate their practice.

### **Morality Defined**

Morality speaks of a system of behavior in regards to standards of right or wrong behavior. The word carries the concepts of: (1) moral standards, with regard to behavior; (2) moral responsibility, referring to our conscience; and (3) a moral identity, or one who is capable of right or wrong action. Common synonyms include ethics, principles, virtue, and goodness.

## **A. MORAL standards versus NON-MORAL standards**

**Moral standards** - are norms that individuals or groups have about the kinds of actions believed to be morally right or wrong, as well as the values placed on what we believed to morally good or morally bad. It normally promotes "the good" that is, the welfare and well-being of humans as well as animals and environment. According to many scholars, Moral standards have the following characteristics; (1) Moral standards deal with matters we think we can seriously injure or benefit whether it is a human, animal or even an environment, such as issue on taking lives (suicide), issue on destroying environment in return of business (mining), and taking animals for recreation or educational purposes; (2) Moral standards are not established or changed by the decisions of authoritative individuals or bodies, such as implementation of tax in Philippines which is created by the law making body of the government and amended also by the same. ; (3) Moral standards are overriding, that is, they take precedence over other standards and considerations, especially of self-interest; (4) Moral standards are based on impartial considerations. Hence, moral standards are fair and just; and (5) moral standards are associated with special emotions (such as guilt and shame) and vocabulary (such as right, wrong, good and bad). -PHILONOTES

Moral standards are the sum of combined NORMS ( general rules about actions or behaviors) plus VALUES (enduring beliefs about what is good and desirable or not.).

**Non-moral standards** refer to standards by which we judge what is good or bad and right or wrong in a non-moral way. It is a matter of taste or preference. Such as standards of law, etiquette, aesthetics, and even religion.

Not all moral are legal and not all legal are moral. Say for example carrying of gun. It is not immoral to carry gun especially that you have no intention of using it to harm people. However, in the eyes of man-made laws if you are caught with an unlicensed gun, you will be liable of the crime of Illegal Possession of Firearms. There is a standard law regulating the possession of gun such as Presidential Decree No. 1866. Hence, carrying of such is not a moral issue. Law, in a general sense, is the principles and regulations established in a community by some authority and applicable to its people.

Eating with hands in a fine dine restaurant, pricking one's pimples in public, farting in front of classmates, drinking your classmate's soft drink without his permission are acts that are not with moral standards. These acts can be categorized under what we called Etiquette. We sometimes use the expression "way breeding oi" or "walay etikit nga tawo" when we dislike the person. But it is to be noted that it does not follow that when a person lacks of etiquette, he is already immoral. An unethical person is different from a person wanting in etiquette. Etiquette is an unwritten code or rules of social or professional behavior.

Most of the millenials nowadays were very conscious of their fashion. Some follows the bohemian style, some would like to maintain the old vintage fashion style or the sophisticated kind of fashion. In this generation, most of the teenager would go on what is trendy and that is the K-POP fashion style or some would call it the OPPA style (the korean hearthrob). We sometimes call a person BADOY when he lacks taste in fashion but we failed to realize that choosing what to wear is a choice and it doesn't not make you a lesser person because it is simply an art. Maybe some *fashionista* would disagree for they believe that art is an expression of one's self. But it does not define your being moral. Choosing the kind of fashion you will follow is a non-moral standard. It belongs to what we called *AESTHETICS* that deals with the nature of art, beauty, and taste and with the creation of appreciation of beauty. Although Kant once said that "*beauty is the symbol of morality*." Undeniably, one's assessment in any artwork sometimes raises moral questions. Say for example a senior high school student who's nude-sex sketch catches the attention of some netizens because they believe that it is a kind of pornographic art. But that student argues "it is just a creation of his imagination and he himself did not experienced such". It now raises the question - Is the student immoral in doing that? Or do we define one's morality through his piece of art?

Can an atheist have morality at all? When you do not believe in the existence of God, does it follow that you are immoral already? When we engaged in the practice of polygeny, do we become immoral? If you are a Muslim, you are not a polygenis because marrying up to four women is allowed. Sadly, if you are a non-muslim engaging such practice you can be tagged as bigamist! Whether to eat pork or not, fast or not, pray five times a day or only every Sunday, the wearing of Niqab or Hijab are non-moral standards acts. Most religious people think their morality comes from their religion but that is not always the case. Religion is about valuing and not about reasoning or about truth. Religion is a set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human beings and the divine.

What is then the basis of one's moral beliefs? Is it purely personal or self-evident? Or can we consider culture the ultimate source of moral beliefs? But how do we identify if there is such thing as multiplicity of culture? Different societies have different moral beliefs. Our moral beliefs are grounded on our culture. Different cultures have different moral standards. Hence, a matter of moral indifference is a matter of taste in one culture and may be a matter of moral significance in another. This is to be discussed in the preceding chapter.

## **B.MORAL DILEMMA**

The 2018 Miss Asia Pacific International Sharifa Akeel admitted that she was in a dilemma whether to continue joining the pageant or not because as a Muslim she knew that the muslim society will criticize and even condemn her. Is Sharifa in a state of moral dilemma in deciding whether to join the pageant or not? When you are confused on what course you will take accounting or engineering, do you think you are facing a moral dilemma? Is there a moral issue involve when you consider whether to stop schooling to help the family in financial problems or opting to stay in school and let the parents work? What is the moral dilemma there?

Imagine in the future you come to a car sales event to purchase your very first self-driving autopilot car. These type of cars revolutionized road safety by having better reaction speeds and split-second decision-making capabilities than a human driver. However, the sales agent explained to you that in the extremely rare case of an unavoidable accident, it will sacrifice the driver-occupant if it can save more people and minimize life casualties as a result. Say, it can avoid ramming a crowd of people by forcefully steering the vehicle into a wall which may kill the driver. Will you buy the car? What if you badly needed to buy a car and all cars were designed as self-driving cars, will your answer be the same? In deciding whether to buy the car or not, are you now in a moral dilemma?

Surely, you will of course consider your own safety. The possibility of not buying the car is highly probable. Self-preservation is just natural for humans but when it involves saving others, there are some however who are willing to risk their lives in order to save others. This is a situation where moral dilemma occurs. It is a situation in which there is a choice to be made, neither of which resolves the situation in an ethically acceptable fashion.

Another example is the sincere, qualified candidate who wants to run in their congressional district. He wants to create change and he knew that he can well-represent their district if he will win the election. However, his opponent is a known drug-pusher, illiterate but very rich. He knows that his district will be in danger if his opponent will win. So, he told himself that at by all means he should win the election. But he knew from the very start that if he will not buy votes, like what his opponent will be doing, he will surely lose the election. Now, some of his supporters are willing to fund him for him to win because they believed on him. But he knew that vote-buying is illegal. He is now in dilemma whether to accept the offer or not? Whether he will engage in vote-buying or not? This is a situation where a man's dignity and integrity is being tested. But as stated above, not all legal are moral. It maybe illegal to buy votes but does it make the person immoral if he will buy votes for him to win the election knowing that he has good intention? If you think that this situation falls down in a moral dilemma, what makes the issue moral then?

Consider this famous "TROLLEY PROBLEM". There is a runaway trolley barreling down the railway tracks. Ahead on the tracks, there are five people tied up and unable to move. The trolley is headed straight for them. Assuming

that you are standing some distance off in the train yard, next to a lever. If you pull the lever, the trolley will switch to a different set of tracks. However, you notice that there is one person on the side track. You have two options: (1) Do nothing, and the trolley will kill the five people on the main track. (2) Pull the lever, diverting the trolley onto the side track where it will kill one person anyway. What do you think is the best thing to do? Of course it is easy for you to choose the second option. What if that one person happened to be your loving brother? Will you still choose the second option? Here, you are facing a moral dilemma.

Man learned his personal moral values when he is confronted with moral dilemma. Making moral decision is not easy. It involves your whole being and even others. In deciding what to do, you do not only consider your self but the people that surrounds you. Sometimes you do not refer to the act alone but the consequences of your action.

How to deal with moral dilemmas? The following are the important questions in dealing with moral dilemmas in life;

1. What is the situation? What makes it moral dilemma?
2. What values are involved in the dilemma?
3. Who is involved and who will be affected by the decision? How will they react?
4. How does the context affect the ethics in this case?
5. What are the possible solutions?
6. What will be the results of said possible solutions?
7. FINAL DECISION-What would you do in this case?

Questions to ponder:

1. Why the need to distinguish moral standards from non-moral ones?
2. What is cultural conundrum? And how do we address it?
3. What are moral standards and how do they differ from other values of lines?

CLASS ACTIVITY:

Group yourselves in five (5) and then discuss with your group mates about issues in our society , choose at least one problem then identify moral issues raised in the chosen problem.

Choose one representative from your

KEYNOTES:

Ethics

Moral philosophy

Morality

Moral values

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE NO.1:**

A. List down some of the acts/issue you think that with moral standards in column A and non-moral standards in column B.

Column A --- MORAL STANDARDS	Column B --- NON-MORAL STANDARDS
E.g: Indiscriminate killing of street dogs.	Do not text while driving.

B. Read the passage then answer the question below.

**SEX MOUNTAIN in Indonesia**

It's an unlikely story for the biggest Muslim population in the world, but Mount Kemukus is hailed around the country as "Sex Mountain", where adultery, a scandalous sex industry and strange rituals take place.

It starts, as all good stories do in Indonesia, with a legendary prince of the 16th Century, Pangeran Samodro, the son of a king who ran off with his step-mother Nyai Ontrowulan. They ran off to Mount Kemukus in Sragen Regency Central Java, 28 kilometres away from the little town of Solo. It was here they were caught "in action" by the local village, chased by soldiers, killed and buried together in a hole - now honoured with a shrine.

Today they are honoured during the Pon Festival (which takes its name from Jumat Pon, or Pon Friday, an auspicious day on the Javanese calendar). Legend has it that couples help to "finish" the act that the dead couple could not complete before death would be granted blessings from Ontrowulan herself (one version of the story). Another version states that couples who commit a *more* shameful act than Samodro and Ontrowulan will be granted blessings...

With this amazing promise, pilgrims commit to a ritual on Gunung Kemukus. The ritual includes:

- (1) Prayers and offerings at the grave of the dead royal couple.
- (2) Pilgrims will then wash themselves in the sacred springs on the hill
- (3) Then they must find a stranger and have sex with them
- (4) Then they have to repeat this in a cycle of 35 days, 5 times over.

The ritual exploded, firstly with pilgrims making love under trees around the shrine, but slowly a small tourist-like industry grew with hostels opening rooms for adulterous lovers - sadly this was of course corrupted and grew into a rampant sex-trade, prostitution industry in the area. As you can imagine, the concerned, conservative Muslims nearby wanted to see an end to the ritual and ended many of the businesses - especially with the rise of diseases like HIV and AIDS... Now, well, perhaps the strong believers continue to practice their rituals under the trees for Samodro and Ontrowulan.

**Question:**

**1. Muslims in the entire world condemned the said rituals and claimed that it is UNISLAMIC. Can we consider this as ethical issue?**

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## II. ETHICAL RELATIVISM versus ETHICAL PLURALISM versus ETHICAL MONISM

The Confucian ethical value of respect for elders is amplified with the Filipino *mano po* practice. *Mano po* is the practice of placing the hand of the elderly on one's forehead as a way of showing respect. Although this practice is common to the Filipinos it does not mean that those who do not follow it do not respect the elders. The Philippines is a multi-cultural country so in every culture they have different practices and moral values. The Muslim Filipinos have their own way of showing respect to elders. They do not do this *mano-po thing* because Islam prohibits them to do so. So here we understand that there is no single universal right. The principle of viewing actions of others through different lenses in every situation in order to gain understanding and different perspectives is what we call **Ethical Relativism**. It is the theory that holds that morality is relative to the norms of one's culture. Values are determined by the society we grow up, and again there are no universal values. **Cultural Relativism** is the view that moral or ethical systems, which vary from culture to culture, are all equally valid and no one system is really "better" than any other. This is based on the idea that there is no ultimate standard of good and evil so every judgement about right and wrong is a product of society.

**Ethical Monism** (moral monism) is the view that is necessary to choose only one theory for your moral decisions. If you are bound to kill someone to save your family, will you do it? An absolutist will tell you that law in all means should not be violated, that killing is a crime and that it is wrong. So, an absolutist will choose not to kill but the family dies as a result. This is an extreme case where absolutism is applied. **Absolutism** is the principle of believing in no relativity or flexibility in different circumstances. It means that the right choice is always the best choice. The advantage of this principle is that in every situation, we were able to identify the right choice. Less pressure, right? On the other hand, we should know also that choice may not be the best in every circumstance.

Consider the above scenario, will you really consider the strict rules on killing someone as absolutely wrong? Will you really sacrifice the lives of your family? What if that someone is declared to be *PERSONA ENGRATA* in the Philippines or known as a habitual rapist and someone asked you to kill him for you to save your family in return? Will you do it? This is the advantage of ethical pluralism. It is true that this principle believes that there are really certain laws of society that should not be violated but when extreme circumstances prevail, it allows and accepts flexibility to change and adapt to every situation. **Ethical Pluralism** (moral pluralism) is the idea that there are several values which may be equally correct and fundamental, and yet in conflict with each other.

According to David Ross' Ethical Pluralism, "*there is a plurality of moral norms that cannot be reduced to one basic norm.*" This statement is the central point of ethical pluralism. It is a normative theory which deals with the structure of moral theories, that is, theories about what is morally right and wrong. In the book of Ross ("The Right and the Good"), there are kinds of moral duties that he enumerated; The (1) Duties of fidelity; (2) Duties of gratitude; (3) duties of justice; (4) Duties of beneficence; (5) Duties of self-improvement and (6) Duties of non-maleficence.

<b>ETHICAL PLURALISM</b>	<b>ETHICAL RELATIVISM</b>	<b>ETHICAL MONISM</b>
Considers diversity of ethical theories	Considers diversity of cultures	Does not considers diversity of ethical theories or even cultures
No recipe /algorithm for decision making	Culturally specific recipe/algorithm	One theory recipe for moral
Better and worse and right and wrong decision	No universally right or wrong decision	One universally right

**CLASS ACTIVITY:**

Group yourselves in 3 teams then list down the advantages and the disadvantages of each ethical theories.

Agree or disagree?

**KEYNOTES:**

Ethical Relativism  
Cultural Relativism  
Ethical Pluralism  
Ethical Pluralism

**Questions to ponder:**

1. What are the problems poses for relativism?
2. Is being good the same thing as being a cultural norm?
3. Is it possible that universal norms underlie the