

Lecture summary

Lecture 2: Theoretical underpinning of ethics

By introducing the bumping car scenario, he brings up the hallmark of ethical thinking which is recognition that there are appropriate interests other than your own, that should act as constraints on unbridled pursuit of self-interest. The most important question regarding this is: **what should I do? and what kind of person should I be?** When considering these two questions, it is not possible to think of one's self interest only, but also others.

Here's an interesting example, Sam tell me something secret but telling you not to anyone else. And you realize that everybody would be better off if you tell Janet this thing. But you realize you just promised not to tell anybody and if you tell you'll be breaking your word. Now the best way to do is I go to Sam and tell him it would be great if Janet knew this too. This would **turn an ethical one into non-ethical one**.

He also talked about **relativism** and **pluralism**. **Relativism** follows that values people follow relative to the culture, time, place and people. It is made of two components: **Descriptive Relativism**: what people are thinking. **Normative Relativism**: acknowledges that different views are all correct and no one should judge or interfere with values or other cultures. **Pluralism** is the idea that no one moral theory should be accepted/preferable over others. This means that even conflicting theories are accepted and occur due to human limitation.

The lecture also introduced concepts of **descriptive** and **prescriptive ethics**, where the first describes behaviour and the latter was concerned with principles, normative issues and moralising. This becomes more apparent when we are asked to make an ethical judgement on a problem, as ethical judgements affect both rules and regulations. Ethical caution which concerns preventing, avoiding and minimising the unethical is best understood when looking at its principles. The precautionary principle explains that "in cases where we don't KNOW that an action is harmful, we must proceed as though it IS harmful and act accordingly".

Immanuel Kant followed a deontological moral theory, meaning an action is considered right or wrong depending on whether they fulfilled a duty rather than the consequences. Two questions have to be asked before an action is taken: Is the action I'm about to do what everyone else would do? Does the action respect other people rather than using it for my benefit? 5 formulations that govern actions: Act as if what you are doing is something everyone is required to do. Any action taken should be done so that it isn't a means to an end. Act so that what you are doing is law for everyone. Act as if you are making the acceptable ends that people can have. Act so that you recognise the importance of an action.

Mill Ethics: John Stuart Mill followed a teleological moral theory, meaning that an action is derived from moral obligation from what is desired to be achieved. It is more commonly known as utilitarianism, which follows that an action is right if the performer promotes happiness and those affected by it and is wrong if it reverses promotes reverse happiness. It essentially promotes ideas that are opposite that of Kant, following an 'ends justifies the means' ideology.

Lecture 4: Moral Reasoning and Professional Ethics

The lecture talked about the **moral chart**. **Obligations** are there special relationships that I promise we do something that establishes a probate special relationship. And if I have an obligation to do something for you, you have the right to expect me to do it. **Duties** are like obligations except they do not require special relationships. **Social responsibility** are there's a lot of things you could do that would be very good for society. We know what **good Samaritanism** is doing something you did not have to do. **Minimally decent Samaritanism** is being just a decent human being. **Heroism self-sacrifice** is to put your vital interest at serious risk but you wouldn't have an obligation, don't have a duty to do it and given the gravity of the whole thing and the terrible risk to yourself.

Barriers to ethical decision making is there can be obstacles to people's objectivity, there can be obstacles for professional in working in your client's interest there can be obstacles for taking into account. **Partisanship**: The good part is trying to act in the best interests of the client. The bad part is you could become too sympathetic of what clients unrealistic or wrongheaded professed beliefs or professed interests are and then working to further them. **Rationalisation** is basically telling yourself a story with the moral that it's ok to do something that's in your own interest, rather than having your client's interest rationale of your actions. **Implicit bias** is about unconsciously substituting stereotypes for real knowledge about the client. Making unwarranted assumptions based on those beliefs.

An exception that proves the rule, it is something that seems to be outside the rule. It should be is in fact outside the rule. But it puts the rule to the test and the answer comes back, the rule is the correct rule and this is an exception to it. **A counter example** is you got a general principle that says it applies to all cases. You find one case that it doesn't apply to that shows that the general principle as a general principle is false it doesn't work all songs are white. **An anomaly** is something that doesn't fit the principal. And we don't know what to do with it we don't want to view it as a counter example but we don't want to throw away the principal single the principles just falls.

Accountability gives you a historical track of something did you do wo that you can reveal liability and what was supposed to have done. **Responsibility** is proactive as in take responsibility for this and not just take responsibility for getting those 800 knots on bolts but take responsibility for figuring out how to construct the fence. **Code of ethics** is about having something which is general, it gives the values and principles of the organization you know we're honest. It will involve judgment necessarily. And it will be empowering our aspirational it will give you permission to make decisions and do things. This will require **responsibility**. The **code of conduct** is a different kind of thing. A code of conduct is not something that is going to introduce new values. But it is going to be specific and also a bit more about why you might want to be specific it will offer prescriptions not just be honest but. **Codes of conduct** are concerned with **accountability**. **Codes of ethics** are concerned with **responsibility**.

Ethical awareness: Avoid moral negligence. They should ask and then answer the question is there a moral dimension to this problem is there a moral dimension here. **Recklessness** is you were not negligent because you knew that was a problem, but you've dealt with it in a reckless way. **Moral blindness** is asking Have I identified more the areas of moral concern, Have I got the moral values. **Exhibit Moral competence** is to deal with the issue, displaying an awareness of its elements and facility with ethical concepts and tools, if there are any.