**Lecture Summary Week 3**

Theoretical Underpinnings of Ethics

Week 3 lecture focuses on ethics, especially theoretical underpinnings of ethics, aiming to let students understand what is moral and ethics.

The first part is about relativism, due to different cultures, times, places and individuals, values are different, hence they form relativism, and relativism can be divided into two kinds of relativism, one is descriptive relativism, which is culture-to-culture, the other one is normative relativism, which states that views are equally correct and we oughtn’t to interfere or judge other cultures values.

Then, the second point is introduction to ethics, specifically ethics can be divided into two types, one is descriptive ethics, which aims to investigate what people do and what they think are the right things to do, then uncover people’s beliefs about such things as values. The other one is prescriptive ethics, which is reaching a view about what ought to be done, and how people should behave.

Next, the third point is moral and moral reasoning. When we analysis something, it turns out we need three steps, which are judgement (true or false), rationale (application of some principle) and generalizable (appeal to principle), but at most time, analysis or judgement is difficult, since a person has private morality and has public morality as a role. One example mentioned in lecture is Ford Pinto, the reason why Ford Pinto is one of the worst cars is that the company doesn’t deal so much with responsibility because cars have safety hazards, but company doesn’t fix this problem due to more cost than benefit.

Then the fourth topic is about ethical awareness, which is the wiliness to identify moral and ethical contexts, exactly when we encounter ethics problem, we should avoid moral negligence, avoid moral recklessness, avoid moral blindness and exhibit moral competence, also we should have ethical caution, which is equal to precautionary principle: in case where we don’t know that action is no harm/risk, we must proceed as though there is harm/risk.

Last the fifth point is normative ethical theories. Normative ethical theories have two types of theory, one is consequential theory(teleological), which is when to evaluate an action is right or wrong, this theory will look at the consequence in the future, the consequences may involve happiness, knowledge, egoism or nationalism. By contrast, Non-consequential theory will look at the past or present, for example, I promised to do something. This theory involves rights, duties, contracts and fairness.

This week’s lecture gives me clear understanding on moral and ethics, furthermore, gives me a moral awareness and ethics thinking.