

## STUDY GUIDE FOR MODULE NO. 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE KEY CONCEPTS



## MODULE OVERVIEW

## Module Outline:

- A. The Need to Study Ethics and the Importance of Rules to Social Beings**
- B. Moral versus Non-moral Standards**
- C. What are Dilemmas?**
- D. What are the Three Levels of Moral Dilemmas?**
- E. Foundation of Morality**

## Introduction

What is morality? Morality is “a system of beliefs about what is right behavior and wrong behavior” (Rubin, 2015). Morality refers to “the principles of right and wrong behavior or rightness and wrongness (that is, goodness and badness) of human actions” (philonotes.com, 2018). In his book, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, author and university professor Dr. James Rachels – a philosopher who specialized in Ethics – asserted that “at the very least morality is the effort to guide one’s conduct by reason, to act based on the best reasons for doing, while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual affected by one’s decision” (Gallinero, 2018).

In this Module, you will learn how to distinguish a moral standard from non-moral standards and likewise distinguish a moral dilemma from any other types of dilemmas. You will also learn in this Module how to identify and classify moral experiences as they happen in different levels of human existence.



## MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of following various rules (home, community, school rules and regulations)
2. Differentiate between moral and non-moral standards
3. Differentiate between dilemma and moral dilemma
4. Identify a moral dilemma in a given situation
5. Classify moral dilemmas according to the three levels of moral dilemmas
6. Explain why only human beings can be ethical



## LEARNING CONTENTS (The Need to Study Ethics and The Importance of Rules...)

## Topic 1. The Need to Study Ethics and the Importance of Rules to Social Beings

## What is Ethics?

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) defines that “ethics deals with principles of ethical behavior in modern society at the level of the person, society, and in interaction with the environment and other shared resources” (CMO 20 series of 2013).



Alternatively, ethics which is also called “Moral Philosophy” is a branch of philosophy that studies the morality of human conduct using moral frameworks, theories, principles and standards.

In our course, “ethics” and “morality” can be used interchangeably, like using the term “unethical” instead of the term “immoral” or vice-versa. However, philosophically speaking, there is a very thin dividing line between the terms ethics and morality. Ethics is the specific branch of philosophy that studies morality, while morality refers to the system of beliefs or principles of rightness or wrongness of actions. In other words, “ethics is the science of “morals”, while morality is the practice of ethics” (philonotes.com, 2018).

### Relevance of Studying Ethics

College students already have developed a set of moral standards by which they use to understand the world and a moral compass to navigate it. The end goal of studying Ethics is for the student to become a person who makes sound judgments, sensitive to the common good (Gallinero, 2018).

### The Importance of Rules to Social Beings

“Rules are necessary to protect the greater good. Even the freest societies ought to have rules in order to avoid exploitations and tyranny while upholding the common welfare” (De Guzman, 2018). Human societies have rules to guarantee that rights of everyone is protected by regulating behavior and produce a sense of justice in the society.

**Required Reading:** To learn more about the lesson, **please read “The Importance of Rules to Social Beings”** by J.M. De Guzman (2018).



### LEARNING ACTIVITY 1

#### “Gear-up” Activity

**Recall / review** all the rules that you have to follow at home, at the church, in the community and in Pangasinan State University.

Consider the following **study questions** after recalling the rules:

- Among the rules (i.e. rules at home, in the community, at PSU), which rule do you find constricting?
- What do you think are the reasons behind these rules?
- What would your home be without these rules? Your community? PSU?

#### Recitation:

Prepare for a sharing on why we need to study ethics and the **importance of rules to social beings**, specifically by answering the study questions listed under “Gear-up” Activity.





## LEARNING CONTENTS (Moral versus Non-Moral Standards)

### Topic 2. Moral versus Non-moral Standards

As explained under Topic 1, we may infer that morality refer to the norms that an individual, a group or community has regarding what is right or wrong (moral or immoral).

**Moral standards** are those 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 be morally good or morally bad” (philonotes.com, 2018). On the other hand, **Non-Moral standards** refer to rules “by which we judge what is good or bad and right or wrong in a non-moral way” (philonotes.com, 2018).

**Required Reading:** To learn more about the lesson, **please read “Moral and Non-Moral Standards”** by philonotes.com.



## LEARNING ACTIVITY 2

### Self-Reflection:

Read “Moral and Non-Moral Standards” uploaded/linked in MS Teams. Consider the following **study questions** after reading:

- Differentiate between standards and moral standards.
- What features should a moral standard have?



## LEARNING CONTENTS (What are Dilemmas?)

### Topic 3. What are Dilemmas?

Dilemma refers to a situation in which a tough choice has to be made between two or more options, especially more or less equally undesirable ones (dictionary.com, 2017).

**Not all dilemmas are moral dilemmas.** Moral dilemmas (ethical dilemmas) are “situations where persons are forced to choose between two or more conflicting options, neither of which resolves the situation in a morally acceptable manner” (philonotes.com, 2018).

**Required Reading:** To learn more about the lesson, **please read “Moral Dilemmas”** by philonotes.com.



## LEARNING ACTIVITY 3

### Self-Reflection:

Read “Moral Dilemmas” by philonotes.com. Consider the following study questions after reading:

- What is the difference between a dilemma and a moral dilemma?
- What features should a moral dilemma have?



**Written Homework on Moral vs Non-Moral Standards (Topic 2) and Dilemmas (Topic 3):**

Respond to the following guide questions as a Written Homework to be submitted in your MS Teams. Follow the given format below.

- “Not all rules are moral rules or standard”. Give three differences between moral standards and non-moral standards.
- Enumerate 5 examples of moral standards and 5 examples of non-moral standards.
- Recall a past experience that you consider as a moral dilemma. Briefly explain why it is a moral dilemma and not just any other dilemmas.

**GE 9 - Ethics**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Moral versus Non-Moral Standards**

1. “Not all rules are moral rules or standard”. Give three differences between moral standards and non-moral standards.

2. Enumerate 5 examples of moral standards and 5 examples of non-moral standards.

Moral Standards:	Non-Moral Standards:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

3. Recall a past experience that you consider as a moral dilemma. Briefly explain why it is a moral dilemma and not just any other dilemmas.





## LEARNING CONTENTS (What are the Three Levels of Moral Dilemmas?)

### Topic 4. What are the Three Levels of Moral Dilemmas?

The three levels of moral dilemmas are, 1) Personal dilemmas, 2) Organizational dilemmas, and 3) Structural dilemmas.

Personal dilemmas are those that are encountered and resolved personally by the individual. Personal dilemmas may be caused by the individual him/herself, by another person, or by a group.

Organizational dilemmas are those “encountered and resolved by social organizations. This include moral dilemmas in business, medical field and public sector” (De Guzman, 2018).

Structural dilemmas are dilemmas encountered and resolved by network of organizations. Structural dilemmas are multi-sectoral and larger in scope than organizational dilemmas (De Guzman, 2018).



## LEARNING ACTIVITY 4

### Recitation

After the short lecture, there will be a recitation. You will participate by classifying moral dilemmas which I will provide according to the three levels.



## LEARNING CONTENTS (Foundations of Morality)

### Topic 5. Foundation of Morality

#### Freedom: Responsibility for One's Act and to Others

Only human beings can be ethical because, 1) only human beings are rational, autonomous (free) and self-conscious, 2) only human beings can act morally or immorally, and 3) only human beings are part of the moral community.

Morality involves CHOICE. It is choosing ethical codes, values or standards to guide us in our lives. Choosing is impossible without freedom. Everyone who wishes to function morally in a society has to make choices every minute of the day (De Guzman, 2018).

Furthermore, freedom demands responsibility. According to Sartre, even though individuals must make their own choices because they are free, these choices also have consequences to it – these consequences are something that the person must endure (Gallinero, 2018).

**Required Reading:** To learn more about the lesson, **please read “Freedom”** by Gallinero.



## Minimum Requirement for Morality

Since freedom demands responsibility, according to James Rachels, moral judgments must be backed by **sound reasoning** and that morality requires the **impartial consideration** of all parties involved (Rachels, 2004).



## LEARNING ACTIVITY 5

### Reading Assignment:

Read "Freedom" by Gallinero uploaded in your MS Teams. Consider the following reflection questions while reading:

- Why is it that only human can be ethical? How about the animals?
- Why is freedom regarded as the foundation of ethics?

### Online Sharing

Respond to the following questions. I will randomly select 3-5 "lucky" students among you to share their answers to the guide questions below in our official MS Teams or messenger group chat. Good luck!

#### Questions for Online Sharing:

1. What will happen when: (a) freedom is unlimited, (b) freedom is absent?
2. What is the role of reason and importance of impartiality to ethics?

### Quiz:

Review all the lessons in this module and **prepare for a quiz**. The schedule and mode of the quiz will be posted in your MS Teams or Messenger Group Chat. Good luck!



## SUMMARY

- Rules are important because they protect social beings by regulating behavior; they help to guarantee each person certain rights and freedom; they produce sense of justice among social beings; and they are essential for a healthy economic system.
- There are different kinds of standards, i.e. etiquette, policy, law, and commandment. In ethics, a moral standard is a code of what is right or wrong without reference to specific behaviors or beliefs.
- A moral dilemma is a situation where: there are two or more actions that you can possibly do; there is a moral reason(s) for doing such actions; and you cannot do all the possible actions presented to you, you only need to choose one.
- There are three levels of moral dilemmas. These are personal moral dilemma, organizational moral dilemma, and structural moral dilemma.
- Only human beings can be ethical because of freedom and reason. Morality is a question of



“choice”. Philosophically, choosing is impossible without freedom. Likewise, moral decisions must be backed by sound reason and ought to be based on impartial and objective criteria.

## REFERENCES

De Guzman, J. M., et.al. 2018. *Ethics: Principles of Ethical Behavior in Modern Society*. Malabon City: Mutya Publishing House, Inc.

Gallinero, W.B., et.al. 2018. *Ethics*. Malabon City: Mutya Publishing House, Inc.

*PHILO-notes: Learn Philosophy Online*. [www.philonotes.com/index.php](http://www.philonotes.com/index.php)

Rachels, J. 2004. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill College.

