# Contemporary Moral Problems

## August 20, 2012

* An argument must be valid and sound.
* In order for an argument to be valid and sound it must be:
  + Impossible for all the premises to be true and the conclusion false.
  + If all premises are true the conclusion is true.
  + The truth of the premises the conclusion is true.
* You can have a valid argument that is not sound
* Arguments are *valid, invalid, sound, and unsound.*
* Premises are *true or false*
* While all sound arguments are valid, not all valid arguments are sound.

## August 22, 2012

* Cultural Relativism
  + Definition
    - There are ***no*** objective moral truths (standards or codes)
    - Morality is determined by culture
  + Objective truths
    - Are true regardless of what one thinks.
    - Example
      * 1+1=2, if you believe 1+1=3 then you’re wrong. 1+1=2 is true for all people at all times
* The Cultural Differences Argument
  + Different cultures have different moral standards, therefore there are no objective moral standards
* 3 Counterintuitive Consequences of Cultural Relativism
  + If cultural relativism is true then
    - We cannot morally condemn the actions/practices of other cultures
    - We cannot correctly judge or condemn the standards of our own culture
    - There are be no moral progress

## August 24, 2012

* Divine Command Theory
  + Morality is determined by the commands of God. If you are religious he says you aught to reject the DCT. It isn’t an attack on God.
  + Meanining.
    - Whatever God commands is good is good
    - Whatever God commands is bad is bad
    - If you take God away you remove morality
  + The DCT believe in objective moral standards
  + Premises for the DCT
    - Object moral standards (OMS) exist
    - OMS require a foundation (or, an explanation)
    - God is the only possible foundation for OMS
    - Therefore, God is the foundation for OMS
    - This argument is valid**,** but only arguably sound
  + What is God?
    - Ommpotent = All powerful
    - Omnscient = All knowing
    - Omnibenevolent = Holy (Good) Perfect
    - Omnipresent = Exists everywhere
* Objections with DCT
  + If the DCT is true, then morality is relativistic (ie not objective)
  + If DCT is true then morality is arbitrary 1) X is good b/c god commands it, 2) God commands x because it’s good
  + If the DCT is true and God commands cruelty then it would be good (Which is false)
* The DCT is objectively true if true regardless of what someone believes. Why does God command what he commands?

## August 27, 2012

* Psychological Egoism
  + Each person always pursues his/her own interests
  + We are always selfish
  + Not an ethical theory, it explains ***how we act***, not how we aught to act
  + Descriptive
* 3 General Approaches to Ethics
  + Ethical Egoism
    - I am the only one who matters
    - Each person ought to pursue his/her own self interests exclusively (perspective / normative)
  + Altruism
    - I have duties to everyone but myself
    - Each person ought to pursue the interest of others exclusively
  + Command Sense Morality
    - We ought to balance our own interest with the interests of others
* 3 Arguments for EE
  + Everybody will be better off if each person pursues his/her own interests exclusively
  + EE wouldn’t argue with this because it says everybody, this is thus the command sense morality
    - Rachel’s Reply:
      * This attempt to motivate EE is self defeating, insofar as it assumes that we ought to make everybody better off (ie EE is false)
  + EE is the only view that takes the value of an individual seriously
    - Rachel’s reply
      * Common sense morality also takes the value of the individual seriously