

# Ethics

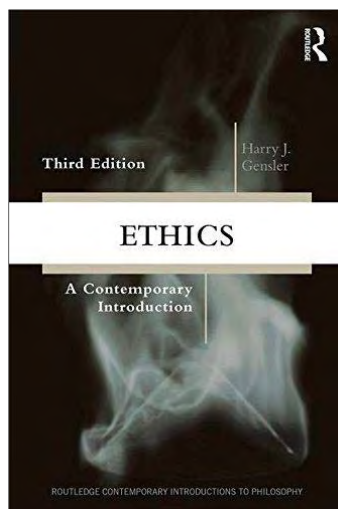
PHI 320 Contemporary Ethical Problems  
Summer 2019, Wuhan University, China  
Mon & Wed 8:00-10:35 and 14:05-15:40  
Fri 8:00-9:35

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Web: <http://www.harryhiker.com>  
Software: <http://www.harryhiker.com/ec>

This course is about the foundations of ethics. We'll focus on the nature of morality and how to reason and argue about ethical issues. Philosophers differ much on these topics; some take ethics to be about social conventions or feelings, while others base it on religion or reason.

In this course, we'll wrestle with some of life's deepest questions, learn to think better about morality, and sharpen our general thinking skills.

Our text is *Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction*, third edition, by Harry J. Gensler (Routledge 2018). Get either the paperback or the Kindle e-book version.



Our course has two parts, each going for two weeks, with an exam at the end of each part:

1. Five views of the nature and methodology of morality: cultural relativism, subjectivism, ideal observer view, supernaturalism, and intuitionism.

2. An approach to moral rationality that emphasizes consistency and the golden rule. And consequentialist (e.g. egoist and utilitarian) and nonconsequentialist views of duty.

While we'll apply the different approaches to various moral issues, we'll mostly emphasize these three issues: racism, global warming, and moral education.

# Course Requirements

Do **READINGS** from the book by assigned dates. We'll skip Chapters 5, 6, and 12, and every section marked "optional." Homework assignments are displayed below (for the whole course) and in a slide at the end of each individual class (for the next class).

Do three one-page **REACTION PAPERS**. For these, don't do any outside reading or read further than assigned. These are graded as "check" (+0), "check plus" (+½), "check minus" (-½), or "not done" (-1); I won't accept papers more than a class late.

Do **COMPUTER EXERCISES** for each chapter. You're required to get at least 90% (you can repeat an exercise until you get 90%); for each exercise not done at this level, your corresponding written exam score is lowered by 2 points. E-mail me your scores just before the corresponding exam.

Take two **WRITTEN EXAMS**; these are given on Friday of the second and fourth week. Each exam has 10 study questions from book

chapters plus a question that has you apply one of the views to some area of special interest to you (consider your major, your future work, or some ethical or social issue that is very important to you). Each exam counts for 50% of your grade.

**ATTEND CLASS.** You can miss 3 classes without this itself hurting your grade (these 3 are for sickness, funerals, etc.). After that, each unexcused absence subtracts two points from your final course average. You can be excused for university functions. Perfect attendance will add a four point bonus to your final course average.

I use this grading scale to convert numbers into letters: A+ > 96, A 90-95, A- 85-89, B+ 82-84, B 78-81, B- 75-77, C+ 71-74, C 66-70, C- 62-65, D 60-61, F < 60.

To figure out your **COURSE AVERAGE**, average your two written-exam scores and then add any bonus/penalty for reaction papers and attendance.

EthiCola →  
computer →  
exercises →

# Our Schedule

**Monday (June 24) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

## **Introduction**

*Where you sit is your assigned seat.*

**Homework** (for the next class): Read the syllabus and pages 1-9 from the book (Introduction and then §1.1). Install the EthiCola software (from <http://www.harryhiker.com/ec> – see the syllabus directions) on your computer or flash drive, if you didn't finish doing this during class. Do EthiCola exercise 00 at 90% or above (but don't email me scores until exam time). Write a 1-page reaction paper to Cultural Relativism based only on §1.1 (don't use outside sources) and give it to me on Wednesday.

**Wednesday (June 26) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

## **Cultural Relativism**

*Turn in your Cultural Relativism reaction paper.*

**Homework:** Read pages 10-24 (§§1.2-2.1); here and elsewhere, you can skip sections marked “optional” or “for further study.” Do EthiCola computer exercise 01 at 90% or above (but don't email me scores until exam time). Write a 1-page reaction paper to Subjectivism based only on §2.1 (don't use outside sources) and give it to me on Friday.

**Friday (June 28) 8:00 to 9:35**

## **Subjectivism and the Ideal Observer View**

*Turn in your Subjectivism reaction paper.*

**Homework:** Read pages 25-50 (§§2.2-3.10). Do EthiCola exercise 02 at 90% or above (but don't email me scores until exam time).

**Monday (July 1) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

## **Supernaturalism**

**Homework:** Read pages 54-68 (Chapter 4). Do EthiCola exercise 03 at 90% or above (but don't email me scores until exam time). Write down (but don't turn in): (1) One thing that you *liked* about Intuitionism, or (2) one thing that you *disliked* about Intuitionism, or (3) one thing that you'd like an ethical theory to do that Intuitionism doesn't do.

**Wednesday (July 3) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

## **Intuitionism**

**Homework:** Prepare for a Thursday midterm exam on Chapters 1-4. Do computer exercise 04 and email me your scores at 90% or above for exercises 00, 01, 02, 03, and 04.

**Friday (July 5) 8:00 to 9:35**

## **Midterm exam**

**Midterm exam:** 10 study questions from Chapters 1-4 (but nothing from optional sections – so prepare 1-13 on §1.13, 1-18 on §2.11, 1-14 on §3.10, and 1-17 on §4.9) plus a question that has you apply one of the views (of your choice) to some area of special interest to you (consider your major, your future work, or some ethical or social issue that is very important to you).

**Homework:** Read pages 98-118 (§§7.1-7.8).

**Monday (July 8) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

**GR (Golden Rule) logic**

**Homework:** Read pages 118-149 (§§7.9-8.11).

**Wednesday (July 10) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

**GR applications**

**Homework:** Do computer exercise 07 and 08. Read pages 150-172 (Chapter 9).

**Friday (July 12) 8:00 to 9:35**

**GR frameworks**

**Homework:** Do computer exercise 09. Read pages 174-180 (§§10.1-10.3). Write a 1-page reaction paper to utilitarianism based only on §§10.1-10.3 (don't use outside sources) and give it to me on Monday.

**Monday (July 15) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

**Utilitarianism**

*Turn in your Utilitarianism reaction paper.*

**Homework:** Read pages 180-210 (§§10.4-11.7). Do computer exercise 10.

**Wednesday (July 17) 8:00 to 10:35 and 14:05 to 15:40**

**Nonconsequentialism**

**Homework:** Prepare for a Friday final exam on Chapters 7-11. Do computer exercise 11 and email me your scores at 90% or above for exercises 07, 08, 09, 10, and 11.

**Friday (July 19) 8:00 to 9:35**

**Final exam**

**Final exam:** 10 study questions from Chapters 7-11 (but nothing from optional sections – so prepare 1-22 on §7.12, 1-16 on §8.11, 1-17 on §9.9, 1-20 on §10.10, and 1-18 on §11.7) plus a question that has you apply the golden-rule approach to some area of special interest to you (consider your major, your future work, or some ethical or social issue that is very important to you).

# Downloading EthiCola

You'll do computer homework exercises using the EthiCola program, which runs in Windows, Macintosh, or Linux. To download EthiCola, go to either of these:

<http://www.harryhiker.com/ec>  
<http://www.harrycola.com/ec>

Windows	Macintosh	Linux
		
Click where it says "click here."	Click "Macintosh" at the top of the page.	Click "Linux" at the top of the page.

If you want to run EthiCola:

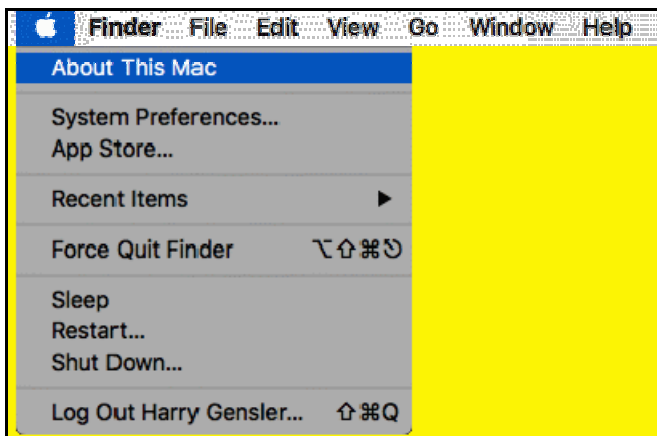
- on a single computer: then just install it to that computer.
- on several computers: then install it to a USB flash drive.



After you install EthiCola, click the cola-can icon to start the program. At quiz time, use the TOOLS menu to send your scores to your teacher by e-mail.

## Macintosh Directions

**(Step 1 - OS)** Check which version of the operating system (OS) you have, and write it down. To do this, click the apple and then "About This Mac":



The ABOUT BOX for my Mac Mini shows that I have an OS of 10.12.2:



- If you have an OS of 10.6 or later (like 10.8 or 10.10 or 10.12 or 10.12.6), you're OK and can go to the next step. Your Mac is probably in this group.
- If you have an OS of 10.4 or later, but earlier than 10.6, you're OK if the "about box" says that you have an Intel processor - but you can't run EthiCola if you don't have an Intel processor. These Macs are pretty old (roughly 2005 to 2009).
- If you have an OS earlier than 10.4, you can't run EthiCola, sorry. These Macs are very old.

**(Step 2 - rootless)** If your OS is 10.11 or later, you may have to disable rootless to allow other programs to run. Restart your computer, hold down the **COMMAND and R keys** while your computer is restarting, and release these keys when you see the apple. This boots you into recovery mode. Go to the menu bar and click UTILITIES and then TERMINAL. In Terminal, type **csrutil disable** and hit enter. A message like this indicates success: *"Successfully disabled System Integrity Protection. Please restart the machine for the change to take effect."* Then restart your computer again.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Here are related Terminal commands: **reboot** restarts your computer, **csrutil status** shows whether System Integrity Protection is on or off, and **csrutil enable** turns rootless on (which you can do after you install EthiCola). If you're using a Windows keyboard (as I do with my Mac Mini), then use Win-R instead of Command-R.

**(Step 3 - gatekeeper)** If your OS is 10.7.5 or later, you may have to disable gatekeeper to allow other programs to run. Go to SYSTEM PREFERENCES (SETTINGS) under the apple menu) and change your SECURITY AND PRIVACY (under GENERAL) setting to allow applications downloaded from ANYWHERE (if you have this option).

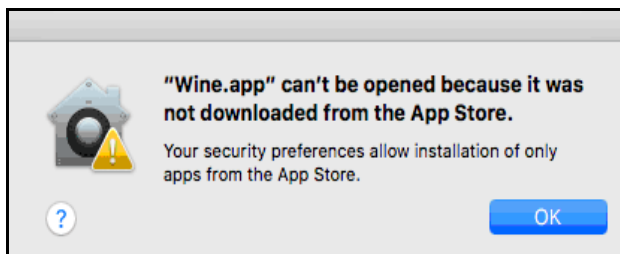
**NOTES:** If these options are dimmed, then you might have to click at the bottom where it says "Click the lock to make changes"; then it will ask for your password.

**(Step 4 - Wine.app)** Now you install the free Wine.app program; this uses Wine emulation to run Windows programs on your Mac. Using Safari (I suggest you don't use

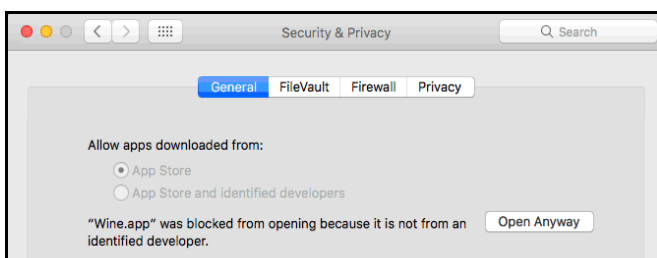
Chrome), go to Mike Kronenberg's WineBottler download page <http://winebottler.kronenberg.org/downloads> and scroll down toward the bottom (**don't click the WineBottler versions - you want Wine.app**). If your OS is 10.6 or later, then download **Wine 2.0** or **Wine 1.8.6** (for an older OS, download **Wine 1.4**). After this downloads, which may take several minutes, click this file (which will end in **.dmg**) from your DOWNLOADS folder; then a box will invite you to install Wine.app by dragging the wine-bottle icon into the Applications folder (you can ignore the readme.rtf file):



If you get no complaint, then Wine.app is installed - and then you should then open the APPLICATIONS folder and double-click the Wine.app program to start it. But you might get a complaint like this:



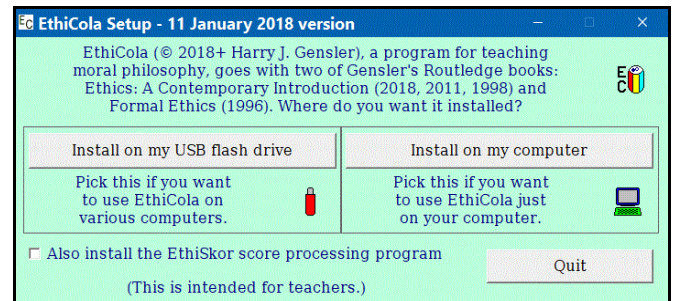
If you get a complaint like this, then first click OK and then return to the SECURITY & PRIVACY box (which you can get by picking SYSTEM PREFERENCES (SETTINGS) under the apple menu); the box may look like this:



Click OPEN ANYWAY at the bottom. If you're asked the same question again, then click the OPEN button again. Finally, go back to the APPLICATIONS folder and double-click the Wine.app program to start it. You should then see the little wine-glass icon on the menubar at the top of the screen, which indicates that you can now run Windows programs - like EthiCola.



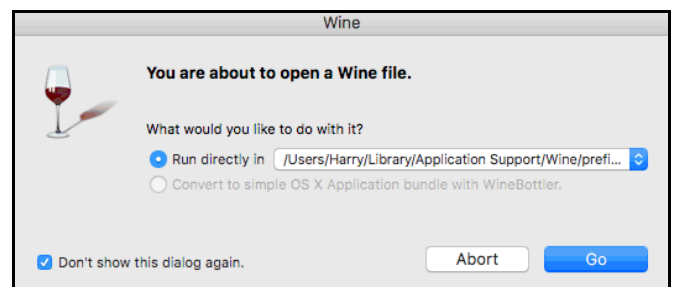
(Step 5 - EthiCola Setup) Using Safari (I suggest you don't use Chrome), go to <http://www.harryhiker.com/ec> or here <http://www.harrycola.com/ec> to download the normal Windows EthiCola Setup program; click where it says "CLICK HERE." If all goes well, the **ecsetup.exe** file will go to your downloads folder. When you click this file, a **EthiCola Setup** box pops up:



Toward the bottom, you can check a box to also install the EthiSkor score processing program (for teachers). Toward the top, you can choose to install on a USB FLASH DRIVE (which you can use with various computers, including Windows computers and Macs-with-Wine) or ON MY COMPUTER (which most people will want to do). In the latter case, you'll end up with a EthiCola.exe icon on your desktop (which you can click to start EthiCola), a EthiSkor.exe icon for the scoring program (if you checked the box to install this), and an EC folder for your scores and other supporting files (you must keep the program and folder together, but you can put them together into another subfolder if you'd like):



To run EthiCola, just double-click the EthiCola.exe file; be patient, since sometimes it takes many seconds to open. The first time you run the program, you may get this box (where "Wine files" are Windows programs):



Just select RUN DIRECTLY, check DON'T SHOW THIS DIALOG AGAIN, and click GO. EthiCola should run the same as it does on a Windows computer.

# Study Questions

(for the first half of the course)

## G. Study questions

1. What is philosophy? Give two examples of questions that it deals with. (A)
2. If you had a previous philosophy course, what definition of “philosophy” did you learn? Was the definition radically different from the one given here, or was it just phrased differently? Give two issues that you dealt with.
3. What other subjects deal with the big questions? How does their approach differ from that of philosophy?
4. Philosophy *reasons* about the big questions. Explain what this “reasoning” in a general sense involves. (B)
5. What is logical reasoning? What is an argument? What two things do we need to prove something?
6. What is the most common way to argue against a philosophical view?
7. What is moral philosophy? Explain its two main questions and the difference between metaethics and normative ethics. (C)
8. What four areas does normative ethics investigate?
9. Why study moral philosophy? (D)
10. Who is Ima Relativist and how should we approach her view? (E)
11. Explain this motto: “Understand before you criticize.” How might someone violate this idea?

## 1.13 Study questions

1. How does cultural relativism define “good”? What method does it use for arriving at moral beliefs?
2. What two experiences led Ima to embrace cultural relativism? (1.1)
3. Explain Ima’s three arguments for cultural relativism.
4. How is CR supposed to make us more tolerant of other cultures?
5. What was your initial reaction to cultural relativism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
6. Explain the conformity objection to CR. (1.2)
7. How does CR apply to racism, global warming, and moral education? (1.3)
8. What is moral realism? Why does Ima reject it? (1.4)
9. What are problems with Ima’s *cultural differences* argument? Mention a few ways that Ima distorts cultural differences about morality.
10. What are problems with Ima’s *product of culture* argument? (1.5)
11. What are problems with Ima’s *no neutral standpoint* argument? (1.6)
12. Does CR necessarily lead to tolerance toward other cultures? How might moral realism provide a firmer basis for tolerance? (1.7)
13. What is CR’s challenge for ethics? (1.8)

## 2.11 Study questions

1. How does subjectivism define “good”? What method does it use for arriving at moral beliefs?
2. Ima Subjectivist once believed in cultural relativism. Why did he convert to subjectivism? (2.1)
3. How did Ima Subjectivist apply SB to drinking?
4. How is the truth of SB supposed to be obvious from how we speak about “good” and about “what I like”?
5. Does SB see values as relative? What are they relative to?
6. How did Ima Subjectivist handle the objection that moral judgments make an objective claim about what is true in itself, apart from our feelings?
7. What was your initial reaction to subjectivism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
8. Give some objections to subjectivism. (2.2)
9. In actual fact, do our moral judgments necessarily correspond to our likes and dislikes?
10. How does SB apply to racism, global warming, and moral education?
11. How does the ideal-observer view define “good”? What method does it use for arriving at moral beliefs? (2.3)
12. What was Ima Idealist’s major objection to subjectivism?
13. How do we develop rational moral feelings? Explain the two rationality conditions. (2.4)
14. What is an “ideal observer”? Do any ideal observers exist? If not, then what’s the point of the idea?
15. Apply subjectivism and the ideal-observer view to smoking. Apply these two views to how you should vote if you were a member of Congress. (2.5)
16. Apply the ideal-observer view to racism, global warming, and moral education.
17. What was your initial reaction to the ideal-observer view? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
18. Sketch two problems with the ideal-observer view. (2.6)

## 3.10 Study questions

1. How does supernaturalism define “good”? What method does it use for arriving at moral beliefs?
2. How did Ima sum up Biblical teaching about God’s will? (3.1)
3. How did Ima view the three secular approaches to ethics (cultural relativism, subjectivism, and the ideal-observer view) that she studied in her ethics course?
4. How did Ima define “God”? How did she avoid the danger of circular definitions?
5. What were Ima’s three arguments for accepting SN?
6. In what three ways did SN affect Ima’s life?
7. Some think supernaturalists are “intolerant judgmental fundamentalists.” How did Ima respond to this charge?



8. What problems did Ima mention about taking the Bible as the sole source of our knowledge about God's will? (3.2)
9. How did Ima think we can best know God's will?
10. What was your initial reaction to supernaturalism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
11. Explain the argument against SN based on the idea that atheists can make positive moral judgments? How could Ima respond? (3.3)
12. What was Socrates's question? Explain the two possible answers. (3.4)
13. How could Ima's three arguments for supernaturalism be criticized? (3.5)
14. Natural law rejects SN but closely connects ethics and religion. On this view, how would believers and atheists differ on (1) our origin and purpose, (2) our knowledge of moral truths, and (3) our motivation for leading moral lives? (3.6)

#### 4.9 Study questions

1. How does intuitionism define "good"? What method does it use for arriving at moral principles?
2. Why must there be indefinable terms? What example did Ima give of an indefinable term? (4.1)
3. How would intuitionists argue against the subjectivist definition, that "X is good" means "I like X"? How would they argue against the supernaturalist definition, that "X is good" means "God desires X"?
4. What is Hume's law? Why would it show that neither science nor religion can establish basic moral principles?
5. Explain Ima's claim that there are objective moral truths. Why does he believe in such truths? (4.2)
6. What is a self-evident truth? How did Ima argue that morality must be based on self-evident truths? (4.3)
7. Why can't we decide what we ought to do in a concrete situation by just sitting down and having a moral intuition?
8. Give an example where the intuitionists Moore and Ross agreed that a specific moral belief was self-evident and an example where they disagreed over whether a specific moral belief was self-evident.
9. Do self-evident principles have to be present from birth and universally agreed upon? Talk about " $x+y = y+x$ ."
10. Should we accept as self-evident any principle that seems initially plausible to us? Talk about " $-(x \bullet y) = (-x \bullet -y)$ ."
11. What approach did Ima take to moral education?
12. What was your initial reaction to intuitionism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
13. In what two ways do basic *mathematical* principles seem to be unlike basic *moral* principles? (4.4)
14. Do intuitionists agree about what moral principles are self-evident? Give some examples of such disagreements.
15. Explain how moral intuitions seem to come from social conditioning – and how using moral intuitions can lead to a stalemate in arguing with a racist.
16. What objection is made to Ima's approach to moral education?
17. How might we reconstruct intuitionism? (4.5)



# Study Questions

(for the second half of the course)

## 7.12 Study questions

1. People disagree widely about how to understand morality and whether there are objective moral truths; in light of this, what strategy is suggested here about how we can reason together about ethics? (7.1)
2. What does consistency in beliefs demand? Apply this to the Ima-Relativist example and to Socrates's method for appraising philosophical views. (7.2)
3. How did Lincoln appeal to consistency against slavery?
4. Does consistency tell us what specific things to believe? Does it tell us to prove all our beliefs? Does consistency guarantee truth?
5. What is the ends-means consistency requirement? Give a concrete example of how we might violate it. (7.3)
6. What is the conscientiousness requirement? How would a conscientious pacifist live?
7. How could we use consistency to criticize the belief that *all short people ought to be beat up, just because they're short*?
8. Explain the impartiality requirement. What does it mean to call two actions "exactly similar" and "relevantly similar"? Explain this using the Good-Samaritan and the Babe's-operation examples. (7.4)
9. Does impartiality require that we treat everyone the same? Does it require that we love everyone equally?
10. What is the story about the grandpa, the grandson, and the wooden bowl? How does it illustrate the golden rule? (7.5)
11. Explain, using the example about stealing Detra's bicycle, how GR follows from conscientiousness and impartiality.
12. What is Gensler's GR formula? Give an example to show why we need an "in the same situation" clause. (7.6)
13. What is the literal golden rule? Give the two main objections to it. What is the literal GR fallacy?
14. Explain the KITA procedure for using GR wisely.
15. Explain, using the example about a nurse giving a shot to a baby, why GR is worded using "willing that if." (7.7)
16. What is Kant's objection to GR about the criminal and the judge. How can we avoid the objection using "willing that if"?
17. What is the soft GR fallacy? What is the doormat GR fallacy?
18. Explain, using the example of Electra, why GR needs to be worded using "Don't combine these ..." (7.8)
19. Explain the example of Adolf the Nazi, who desires that he be killed if he were found out to be Jewish. Give the three steps for dealing with this case.
20. What is the easy GR fallacy? Explain it using the example of Rich, the rich coal-mine owner. How could Rich use KITA to apply GR more adequately to how he runs his company?
21. What are some acceptable variations in the GR wording? (7.9)
22. Explain self-regard, future-regard, and the generalized GR.

## 8.11 Study questions

1. On the GR consistency view, how can we judge how rational our moral thinking is? Explain each of KICO's four parts (e.g., what sorts of knowledge do we need?). (8.1)
2. Explain the Jeb-Sue example.
3. How can consistency attack *racist principles* (e.g., "All people of dark skin ought to be treated poorly, just because they have dark skin")? (8.2)
4. What three obstacles may we encounter, and how can we deal with these?
5. Why is the desire not to eat worms held to be irrational? What's the point of this example?
6. How can we attack *racist arguments* (e.g., "Blacks should be treated poorly because they're inferior") using consistency and an appeal to facts? (8.3)
7. How is appealing to consistency and facts better than just countering with our own principle (e.g., "People of all races should be treated fairly")?
8. How can we similarly attack this sexist argument: "Women should get paid less for the same job because they gossip all the time and so do less work"?
9. How can KITA attack *racist actions*? (8.4)
10. If racism is so flawed from a rational standpoint, why did so many otherwise normal people embrace it?
11. What can we do if society discriminates but refuses to listen to reason?
12. Assuming that most climate scientists are right about how our use of fossil fuels is causing global warming, how would KITA apply to the issue? (8.5)
13. Suppose that climate-change deniers make a good case that it's far from certain that our use of fossil fuels is causing global warming. Then how would KITA apply to the problem?
14. What is the two-pronged strategy for the moral education of children? (8.6)
15. How can adults teach children how to be more rational in their moral thinking? Use KICO to structure your answer.
16. How can we teach children the golden rule?

## 9.9 Study questions

1. Explain the intuitionist defense of GR-consistency norms. (9.1)
2. Explain how other metaethical approaches (like cultural relativism, subjectivism, and supernaturalism) could defend GR-consistency norms.
3. In the GR-consistency view, what is our most basic moral right? (9.2)
4. How can GR consistency be expressed in terms of virtues?
5. What is GR's place in Christianity? (9.3)
6. What are some views about how GR relates to "Love your neighbor"?

7. What is GR's place in non-Christian religions? Give some examples. (9.4)
8. What are some common GR themes in the various world religions?
9. What two biological aspects of humans did Darwin see as most important to the rise of moral thinking? (9.5)
10. What is social Darwinism and how did it differ from what Darwin actually held?
11. Explain Pfaff's neurological explanation of how GR reasoning works.
12. Did Darwin think that our biological social instincts are oriented to promote the good of our group or to promote everyone's good?
13. What four factors push us from groupism to a universal GR?
14. What is natural law, as developed by Aquinas and others? (9.6)
15. Explain the three dimensions of our updated version of natural law.
16. In our updated natural-law ethics, what are the key aspects of our human biological nature? Emphasize how humans differ from squirrels.
17. In our updated natural-law ethics, what does the spiritual dimension add to ethics? Could atheists accept our natural-law ethics?

## 10.10 Study questions

1. How do consequentialism and nonconsequentialism differ? (10.1)
2. What is (classical) utilitarianism? (10.2)
3. How did studying cultural relativism first lead Ima Utilitarian toward utilitarianism?
4. How did GR confirm Ima's belief in utilitarianism? What other paths could bring one to utilitarianism?
5. Explain the direct and indirect ways to apply utilitarianism. When should we use the direct method?
6. Why did Ima reject exceptionless norms?
7. What is utilitarianism's approach to virtue and justice? Explain how *diminishing marginal utility* tends to favor equality of wealth.
8. How do egoistic and utilitarian forms of consequentialism differ? Why did Ima reject egoism? (10.3)
9. What was Ima's view about what is intrinsically good? What is pluralism and why did she reject it?
10. What was your initial reaction to utilitarianism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
11. Explain the "lynching is fun" and "lying politicians" objections to utilitarianism. How could utilitarians respond to such objections? (10.4)
12. Among the other objections, which two do you take to be the strongest?
13. What does pluralism hold? Why might one prefer this to hedonism? (10.5)
14. What is happiness and how does it seem to differ from pleasure?
15. How does pluralism help us avoid objections to classical utilitarianism?
16. What is rule utilitarianism? Apply it to the "lying politicians" example.
17. How can one counter the three objections to exceptionless norms?
18. When should we take a norm as very strict, or even exceptionless?
19. What was your initial reaction to pluralistic rule utilitarianism? How did your thinking about it change after further study?
20. What are some problems with rule utilitarianism? (10.6)

## 11.7 Study questions

1. What is nonconsequentialism?
2. What is a "prima facie" duty? Is promise-keeping an exceptionless duty or a "rule of thumb" about how to maximize good results? (11.1)
3. Explain the three prima facie duties from Ross that are given here. In what sense are these duties *relational*?
4. What is the beneficence duty, and what are its four parts? Explain the idea that "Don't cause harm" is a stronger duty than "Do good."
5. Does the nonconsequentialist view presented here ignore consequences?
6. What is a virtue? What is a good person? (11.2)
7. What were Plato's four basic virtues? How did Aristotle add to our understanding of virtue?
8. Explain the idea that moral principles (about actions) and virtues (about character traits) are mirror images of each other.
9. Give two or three vices from the medieval list of the seven worst vices.
10. What are commandments? Which four are part of practically every religion? What four human goods do these try to protect? (11.3)
11. Pick one of these commandments and give some further issues that it raises and that we can investigate using practical reason (including GR).
12. What are rights? Distinguish legal from moral rights. (11.4)
13. On the GR-consistency view, what is the basic moral right?
14. What is justice? What are some forms of justice?
15. Distinguish negative from positive rights – and give an example of each.
16. Explain *libertarianism* and how it views positive rights and the role of government. What is Nozick's entitlement view of just possessions? Could it justify extreme differences between rich and poor?
17. Explain the contrasting *liberalism* view. How does Rawls argue for the basic principles of justice – and what two principles does he arrive at? What would he say about extreme differences between rich and poor?
18. In terms of libertarianism versus liberalism, can you think of reasons for favoring one of these views over the other?

# Golden Rule Stories from China

from <http://www.harryhiker.com/stories.htm>

## **Li-li and the mother-in-law**

*Gold can transform relationships*

A Chinese girl named Li-li got married and lived with her mother-in-law. Since the mother-in-law was obnoxious, Li-li decided to kill her. Li-li went to her doctor to get slow-acting poison. The doctor said, "Just so that people don't suspect you, treat your mother-in-law very nice, as you'd like to be treated." So Li-li was nice to her mother-in-law as she slipped a little poison into her food each day. Now a funny thing happened: the two started getting along much better and became best friends. So Li-li went back to the doctor and said, "I now love my mother-in-law and don't want to kill her; please give me something to counteract the poison." The doctor replied, "I gave you ordinary vitamins; the only poison was in your attitude."

This Li-li story occurs in many places on the Web.

## **Hell, heaven, and long spoons**

*Gold can transform society*

A woman died and was taken to heaven. The angel wanted her to see hell, so they stopped there first. Hell had a lake of nutritious stew, but the people had only 12-foot spoons and so were frustrated when they tried to feed themselves. So the people were miserable and hungry. Then the woman was taken to heaven. Amazingly, heaven was exactly the same, with the same stew and 12-foot spoons; but here the people were happy and well-fed. The woman asked, "Why are these people so different?" The angel replied, "They feed each other; these people have learned the way of love."

The Chinese version of the story features long chopsticks.

# Golden Rule Chronology from China

from <http://www.harryhiker.com/chronology.htm>

**c. 551-479 BC** Confucius sums up his teaching as: "Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you." (Analects 15:23)

**c. 500 BC** Taoist Laozi says: "To those who are good to me, I am good; and to those who are not good to me, I am also good; and thus all get to receive good." (Tao Te Ching 49)  
A later work says: "Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain and your neighbor's loss as your loss." (T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien)

**c. 479-438 BC** Mo Tzu in China teaches the golden rule: "Universal love is to regard another's state as one's own. A person of universal love will take care of his friend as he does of himself, and take care of his friend's parents as his own. So when he finds his friend hungry he will feed him, and when he finds him cold he will clothe him." (Book of Mozi, ch. 4)

**1763** Voltaire, inspired by Confucian writings that Jesuits brought from China, says: "The single fundamental and immutable law for men is the following: 'Treat others as you would be treated.' This law is from nature itself: it cannot be torn from the heart of man." (du Roy 2008: 94)

**1791-1855** Liu Pao-nan's *Textual Exegesis of Confucius's Analects* says: "Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you. Then by necessity we must do to others what we want them to do to us." (W. Chan 1955: 300)

**1900** Wu Ting-Fang, a diplomat from China to the U.S., writes an open letter about how both countries need to be fair and honest in cooperating for mutual economic advantage. He appeals to the golden rule, which he sees as part of his Confucian tradition and as the basis for morality.

**1996** Confucian scholar David Nivison calls the golden rule "the ground of community, without which no morality could develop: it is the attitude that the other person is not just a physical object, that I might use or manipulate, but a person like myself, whom I should treat accordingly."

# Some Confucian Quotes

mostly from the Analects

Tsze-kung asked, saying, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

The Master said, "[Perfect virtue] is, when you go abroad, to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself;

"When one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the path. What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others. In the way of the superior man there are four things, to not one of which have I as yet attained.-To serve my father, as I would require my son to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my prince as I would require my minister to serve me: to this I have not attained; to serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me: to this I have not attained; to set the example in behaving to a friend, as I would require him to behave to me: to this I have not attained."

Fan Ch'ih asked about benevolence. The Master said, "It is to love all men." He asked about knowledge. The Master said, "It is to know all men."

"The object of the superior man is truth."

The Master said, "I do not know how a man without truthfulness is to get on. How can a large carriage be made to go without the crossbar for yoking the oxen to, or a small carriage without the arrangement for yoking the horses?"

"Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of men. He who possesses sincerity is he who, without an effort, hits what is right and apprehends, without the exercise of thought; he is the sage to naturally and easily embodies the right way. He who attains to sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and firmly holds it fast. To this attainment there are requisite the extensive study of what is good, accurate inquiry about it, careful reflection on it, the clear discrimination of it, and the earnest practice of it." (The Doctrine of the Mean)

"To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage."

"Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand."

"The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man."

"How to play music may be known. At the commencement of the piece, all the parts should sound together. As it proceeds, they should be in harmony while severally distinct and flowing without break, and thus on to the conclusion."

The Master said, "How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them!" "We look for them, but do not see them; we listen to, but do not hear them; yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them."

The Master said, "The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler." [And the last is the most important.]

Mencius (a later follower of Confucius) claimed that the seeds of morality are inside of us (innate): "Suppose someone suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well: anyone in such a situation would have a feeling of alarm and compassion, but not because one sought to get in good with the child's parents, not because one wanted fame among one's neighbors and friends, and not because one would dislike the sound of the child's cries." "If one is without the feeling of compassion, one is not human."

Xunzi (another later follower of Confucius) disagreed; he claimed that we are born selfish and must have morality imposed on us by society: "If [crooked] wood is placed against a straightening board it can be made straight; if metal is put to the grindstone, it can be sharpened; and if the gentleman studies widely and each day examines himself, his wisdom will become clear and his conduct without fault. Our moral character is an artefact much like a wheel or a knife." "Just as metal or wood do not carry within them an internal principle of change by which they naturally become knives or wheels, neither does human nature possess an internal moral principle through which it naturally develops moral dispositions." This view of human nature led Xunzi to focus on culture and the role of teachers, rituals, and tradition.