Chapter 2
Values & Ethics

What Price Ethics and Can You Afford Not to Pay?

Intro to Critical Reasoning Phil 110
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This Chapter Will Cover

- Value Assumptions
- Conflict Between Value Assumptions
- Value Priorities
- Ideal Values versus Real Values
- Ethics in Argumentation
- Ethical Decision Making
A critical thinker understands the value assumptions underlying many arguments and recognizes that conflicts are often based on differing values. 27
Value Assumptions

• Assumptions underly arguments that influence all of us as we consider claims and take positions on issues. 27

• Assumptions are ideas we take for granted; as such they are often left out of a written or spoken argument. 27
There are two forms of assumptions.

- Value Assumptions (chapter 2) are beliefs about how the world should be.
- Reality Assumptions (chapter 3) are about how the world is.
Value Assumptions

- Value Assumptions are beliefs about how the world should be, and reality assumptions are about how the world is
Toulmin’s Model

- This method identifies claims, reasons and warrants.
- Warrants are “those unstated but necessary links between reasons and claims, the glue that attaches the reasons to the claims.”
27 Example
- We’ll have to leave at 5 a.m. to make our flight because we’ll be driving in rush hour traffic.
- Claim: We’ll have to leave by 5 a.m. to make our flight.
- Reason: We’ll be driving in rush-hour traffic.
- Warrant: Rush-hour traffic moves more slowly than other traffic.
Toulmin’s Model

• 28 “Value assumptions often remain unstated ‘warrants’ for an argument if most people accept these assumptions without question.”
• examples page 28
Toulmin’s Model

- “Understanding reality assumptions and value assumptions as foundational, but unstated, parts of an argument becomes very important when we discover that other people hold very different assumptions and thus do not believe that our reasons are warranted.”
Value Assumptions & Conflicts

- Remember when I asked why you chose some issues (we put on the board) as important and some as not important?
- Value assumptions are beliefs about what is good and important that form a basis of opinions on issues.
Value Assumptions & Conflicts

- These assumptions are important for the critical thinker because:
  - Many arguments between individuals and groups are primarily based on strongly held values that need to be understood, and, if possible, respected.
  - An issue that continues to be unresolved or bitterly contested often involves cherished values on both sides. These conflicting value assumptions can be between groups or within an individual.
Value Assumptions & Conflicts

- Death penalty issues:
- What values are at stake here?
  - Should we have and enforce the death penalty?
  - Should rapists receive the same penalties as murderers?
  - Should we allow lighter sentences for plea bargaining?
Value Priorities

- 32 “We need to order our value priorities when a personal, social, national or international issue involving values is at stake.”

- Example:
Questions for Discussion

- Death penalty issues:
- What values are at stake here?
  - What are the priorities we place on justice and mercy?
  - Are we fair in our distribution of punishment? Are we deterring crime? (two reality based issues)
Ethics—An Important Dimension of Values
Without civic morality, communities perish; without personal morality, their survival has no value.

Bertrand Russell

p. 34
Libertarianism

• Value Assumption: The highest value is to promote the liberty of all.

• Principles: Behavior is considered ethical when it allows for one’s individual freedom and does not restrict the freedom of others.
Utilitarianism

- Also called Consequentialism because the calculation for what is right is based on the best possible consequences for an act.
- Value Assumption: The highest value is that which promotes the greatest general happiness and minimizes unhappiness.
- Principles: Behavior is judged according to its utility (usefulness) in creating the greatest human well-being. Actions are considered in terms of “happiness” consequences.
Egalitarianism

• Value Assumption: The highest value is equality. Justice and fairness are synonymous with equality.

• Principles: Behavior is ethical when the same opportunities and consequences apply to all people. We should treat others as we wish to be treated.
Religious Values

- Judeo-Christian Principles
- Value Assumption: The highest values are to love God and to love one’s neighbor.
- Principles: Ethical behavior is based on biblical principles and other prescriptions and on the desire to please and honor God.
Prima Facie Values

- Universal Ethical Principles:
- Value Assumption: Universal ethical principles exist and are self evident (*prima facie*) and obvious to rational individuals of every culture.
- Principles: Individuals should act in accordance with these principles for the betterment of the individual and the society.
Notice that the Declaration of Independence contains references to all the values noted above.

Some arrange the values in the Declaration in order of importance.

Can they be organized without some priority?
Values versus temptation: There is no fast lane to self-esteem. It’s won on these battlegrounds where immediate gratification goes up against character. When character triumphs, self-esteem heightens.

The road to unhappiness and low self-esteem is paved with the victory of immediate gratification.
Ethics in Argumentation

- Be honest about their conclusions and reasons.
- Not leave out or distort important information.
- Have thoroughly researched any claims they make.
- Listen with respect, if not agreement, to opposing viewpoints.
- Be willing to revise a position when better information becomes available.
- Give credit to secondary sources of information.
Ethical Decision Making

- Every man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Worship,” The Conduct of Life. 43
1. The Role Exchange Test: Put yourself in someone else’s position when having to make a judgment about them. 43

2. The Universal Consequences Test: You evaluate the general consequences of everyone taking an action you might take. If you would find it unacceptable if everyone took the proposed action because of an overall bad consequence, then the action is probably wrong. 44
Ethical Decision Making

3. The New Cases Test: Test your decision on a case using a new case that applies to you or to someone close to you. If you would choose differently than you chose on your first decision, it is time to reevaluate that decision.

4. Higher Principles Test: This test asks you to determine if the principle on which you are basing your action is consistent with a higher or more general principle you accept.
Common Rationalizations

- 47-48 If it’s necessary, it’s ethical.
- If it’s legal and permissible, it’s proper.
- I was just doing it for you.
- I’m just fighting fire with fire.
- It doesn’t hurt anyone.
Common Rationalizations

- It can’t be wrong, everyone’s doing it.
- It’s OK if I don’t gain personally.
- I’ve got it coming.
- I can still be objective.
Review

- 50 Chapter Highlights
- 50-51 Chapter Checkup