

Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

Watch this clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOpf6KcWYyw>

What is the right thing to do in this situation? If this kind of question intrigues you, then you are on the right course.

This course explores how human beings decide what is right and wrong, good and bad. It examines the ways in which different thinkers have to define what it means to live well. It also investigates some of the most prominent ethical issues of our time.

One of the things that distinguish humans from other animals is our ability to make moral decisions. We deliberate before making choices. We may feel guilt when we do things that we feel are wrong. We're motivated to take a risk because of what we believe is right. We disagree passionately with each other over how we should live. Humans have a moral dimension.

Big Questions

There are a number of big ethical questions that commonly interest philosophers. You will learn how different philosophers try to answer them, but firstly consider them here for yourself! Have good reasons. Strong candidates can see explain from different perspectives

1. If I do a good thing for a bad reason, does it matter?

.....
.....
.....

2. Do the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one?

.....
.....
.....

3. Is what's wrong for you necessarily wrong for me?

.....
.....
.....

4. Is an action right or wrong depending on the situation?

.....
.....
.....

5. Are we free to make moral choices?

.....
.....
.....

6. Is being moral about following rules?

7. Can we have morals without religion?

8. Should I help my family before I help a stranger?

If you're going to study ethics seriously, you must be prepared to examine your views critically and be open to a range of ideas that may be quite different from your own. What you read may challenge your beliefs and ideas.

Consider the following scenarios and jot down your thoughts/ideas.

1. You witness a car crash. The wreckage is burning, but you may be able to save one of the two passengers. To your horror, you realise that one is a member of your family and the other is a famous cancer specialist on the brink of a breakthrough. Who do you save and why?
2. Your ship goes down and you're lost in the sea with two others, in a life raft. You have no food. Without a supply of food, there's no hope of rescue before you starve to death. Two would survive by eating the third: otherwise, all three will die. What do you do and why?
3. Siamese twins are born, attached at the abdomen and sharing several major organs. If nothing is done, both will die. If the twins are separated, one will die and one will live. What should be done and why?
4. A railway drawbridge operator is closing the bridge for the express train that's about to arrive when he sees his son trapped in the machinery. To close the bridge will kill his son but save the train. To open the bridge will save his son, but the train will not be able to stop in time. What should he do and why?
5. An unattractive man offers to give a million pounds to the charity of your choice if you spend one night with him. What do you do and why?