

## Why Bother With Ethical Theory?

1. Intro: in reverse order:
  - a. Why bother with ethics?
  - b. Why bother with ethical theory?
  - c. What is ethical theory?
  
2. The difference between normative ethical theory and metaethical theory
  - a. Examples of normative: situation ethics, virtue ethics, utilitarianism, aspects of natural law theory and Kant
  - b. Examples of metaethics: emotivism, divine command theory and the relation between ethics and religion, intuitionism, prescriptivism, aspects of Kant
  - c. Practical ethics as the third branch
  
3. Why bother with metaethics?
  - a. Related to tonight's talk
  - b. What kind of world is this – are there 'values' already or do we confer value? If the latter, how free are we in the values we confer – is it a matter of the will or does human nature restrain us? What's the relationship between God and morality?
  - c. Moral psychology: what does morality mean to us as human beings? How is it part of our lives?
  
4. Why bother with normative theory?
  - a. Notice the key concepts at the heart of each normative theory, an intuitive idea of human nature
  - b. The desire to know how to decide – practical guidance
  - c. The attempt to understand ourselves, to be 'consistent', to be thought-ful; the instinct to know and its importance
  - d. The point is harder to see without objectivity, but not impossible – the importance of authenticity and integrity
  - e. Does this need to be theory? Contentious, e.g. situation ethics, particularism; but these are still theories about theory
  
5. Why bother with ethics?
  - a. Why be moral? Three types of answer:
    - i. Response to value: there can be no answer that will satisfy by logic, but this needn't be a problem – e.g. Kant on reason
    - ii. Psychology: what it will do for you as a person
    - iii. Living with others: situating yourself in community
  - b. Why think about it (i.e. why *ethics*)? Back to the justification for normative theory