



Class 4: Introduction to Ethics

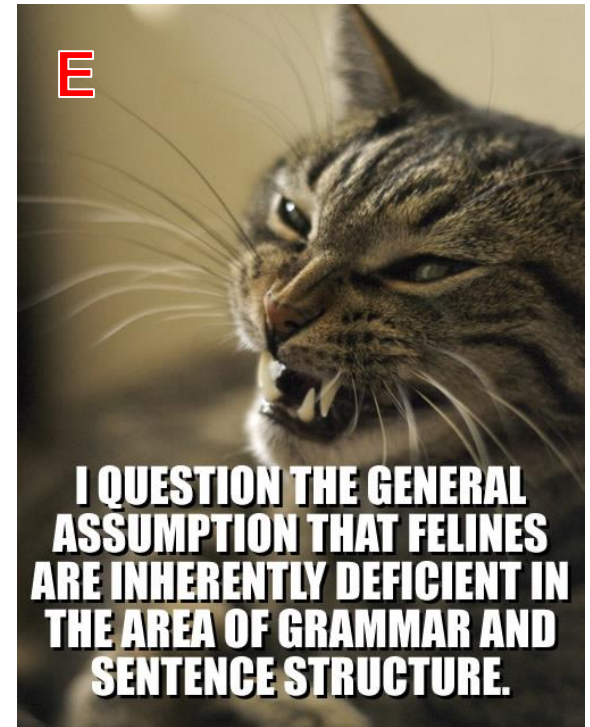
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Participation Quiz

Pick your favorite LOLcat (answer sincerely or ironically, as you prefer):



The point of today's class

To:

- Introduce the concepts of morality, ethics, an ethical point of view, and ethical theories
- Examine some of the reasons why certain ethical arguments are stronger than others
- Get you to practice your powers of persuasion

Define ethics—how is it different from morality?

Ethics

Study of morality

Morality

What people ought to or ought not to do

Why do we have a course about ethics and technology?

- Generally need a way to decide the best thing to do
- New problems accompany new technologies
- “Common wisdom” may not exist for novel situations brought about by new technologies

New technologies lead to new ethical questions

Is it wrong for a mom to punish her kids by selling their toys on eBay?



Selling 8 Beyblades to Replace DESTROYED Bathtub

Item condition: Used

Time left: 8d 02h (Feb 13, 2011 11:24:51 PST)

Bid history: 18 bids

Current bid: **US \$69.00**

Your max bid: US \$ **Place bid**

(Enter US \$70.00 or more)

Other info
daney21 (52)

Save this seller
See other items

Other iter
Item number:
Item location:
Ships to:
Payments:

Save You'll earn **\$1.38** in eBay Bucks. See conditions

We are selling 8 Beyblades, 2 of them light up. As you can tell they are not happy about this! They have been using their bathtub as a "battle arena" and Beyblades + Bathtub = Destruction!!! With the metal ones they managed to scrape the enamel off the tub, take a chunk of tub out and break off the soap holder. SO if you "win" this auction DONT play with in a bathtub!!! We have recieved a quote of \$500.00 to replace the tub, some tiles, and soap holder + labor of course! They had approssamently \$125.67 in their piggy banks that will be going toward the cost. We will use the profit from this auction towards the balance and then it is onto other toys!

New technologies lead to new ethical questions

Is it wrong for a father to punish his daughter by shooting her laptop and posting the video to her facebook page?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kl1ujzRidmU>

0:00 – 1:20; 6:10 – 7:30

34 million views...



We need an ethical framework because we live in society

- **Society**
 - Association of people organized under a system of rules
 - Rules: advance the good of members over time
- **Morality**
 - A society's rules of conduct
 - What people ought / ought not to do in various situations
- **Ethics**
 - Rational examination of morality
 - Evaluation of people's behavior

How do we evaluate whether an action is ethical?



Ethical dilemmas

Scenario 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEkmO3gQQAs>

Questions we may ask when evaluating something from an ethical point of view

- Did Sheldon do anything wrong?
- Who benefited from Sheldon's course of action?
- Who was hurt by this course of action?
- Could Sheldon have achieved his goal in a better way?
- **What additional information, if any, would help you answer the previous question?**

Scenario 2

Kao lives in Laos and really enjoys watching movies. The only way to watch movies that he can afford is to buy the illegally pirated versions sold on the streets of Vientiane, which he does when he has the money.

Is what he does unethical?

Scenario 3

I also really enjoy watching movies and am a tourist in Laos. I buy the pirated ones on the streets to take back to Canada; I also know this helps the local economy.

Is what I did unethical?

Questions

- Who benefits?
- Who gets harmed?
- What other ways can Kao or I achieve our objectives?
- What additional information would you need to evaluate whether this was an ethical decision?

- **Ethics:** a rational, systematic analysis
- **Workable ethical theory:** produces explanations that aim to be persuasive to a skeptical, yet open-minded audience
- Good, persuasive **arguments.**

What makes an ethical theory persuasive?

What makes a good argument?

In pairs:

New technologies have made us more social

Person A: (Higher in the alphabet): Argue for

Person B: (lower in the alphabet): Argue against

Try to convince your partner

Report back: what was convincing? What wasn't?